

The Idea of Friendship
in the Literary, Historical and Legal Works
of Alfonso X of Castile (1252-1284)

Submitted by Antonella Liuzzo Scorpo, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* in Hispanic Studies, March 2009.

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Antonella Liuzzo Scorpo.....

Abstract

This research project explores an area which had been touched only tangentially, being a comparative analysis of the idea and interpretations of friendship which emerge from the three vernacular collections attributed to the supervision of King Alfonso X of Castile (1252-1284): namely the Marian songs *Cantigas de Santa María*, the law code known as the *Siete Partidas* and the chronicle *Estoria de España*. These sources have been examined by adopting a thematic approach which has highlighted the existence of categories such as spiritual, religious and political friendships, as well as other forms of amicable relationships, including those between representatives of different religious, ethnic and social groups. Additionally, this study demonstrates that there was a conscious adoption of a specific lexicon of *amicitia* which contributed to reinforce either the opposition or the coincidence between friendship, companionship and counsellorship.

Despite the undeniable inheritance of both classical eastern and western traditions, the works of the ‘Learned’ King present a peculiar idea of friendship which was deeply affected by contemporary historical contingencies and by the political and cultural projects of a sovereign who wanted to be regarded as a friend of his people, without denying, however, the unbridgeable gap which existed between different social groups. Interestingly, even if the Alfonsine works display a complicated range of relationships which envisage clear differences, they still outline a perfectly-balanced system within which the general and untouchable rules of friendship predominated, although in some cases certain variants were allowed in order to adapt such general requirements to contemporary social and political situations.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>AHDE</i>	<i>Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español</i> , Madrid
<i>CSM</i>	<i>Cantigas de Santa María</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Estoria de España</i>
<i>GE</i>	<i>General Estoria</i>
<i>PCG</i>	<i>Primera Crónica General de España</i>
<i>PMC</i>	<i>Poema de Mio Cid</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i> , Baltimore
<i>SP</i>	<i>Siete Partidas</i>

English translations of the *Cantigas de Santa María* have been taken from the *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa María*, edited by Kathleen Kulp-Hill, and of the *Siete Partidas* from the translation by Samuel Parsons Scott, edited by Robert I. Burns. Unless otherwise stated, all other translations, and in particular those taken from the *Estoria de España*, are my own. Additionally, some editorial corrections have been made when and where it has been considered appropriate.

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Introduction

Friendship is the relationship established between two or more individuals who cooperate and support each other by exchanging mutual favours, esteem, affection and loyalty. It frequently assumes personal and emotional connotations, at least as far as its modern interpretation is concerned.¹ By contrast, in the past, it tended to be considered mainly as a political and social compromise between the individuals involved, without necessarily any sentimental commitment. In order to present an overview of those changes experienced in mentality and in the forms of behaving amicably, in Chapter I of this study a brief history of friendship has been mapped out, from its classical philosophical definitions as *philia* and political connections between fellow citizens, to its medieval reinterpretations. If the philosophical speculations on friendship and the influence that they played on late medieval production represent one part of the equation, so too was the strengthening of bonds of friendship as attested by historical and literary sources across Medieval Europe. This constitutes a fundamental premise in order to approach the central area of this research project which consists of an analysis of the interpretations and representations of friendship in the three major collections supervised by King Alfonso X of Castile (1252-1284); namely, the legal corpus *Siete Partidas*, the Marian songs *Cantigas de Santa María* and the chronicle *Estoria de España*.

These works, representative of the culturally flourishing thirteenth-century Castile, have not been chosen randomly. María Isabel Alfonso's words justify such a choice:

Nadie, que yo sepa, ha emprendido la tarea de estudiar esta institución en España detenidamente y en todos los múltiples aspectos con que aparece en nuestros documentos medievales. Pienso que su estudio sería labor interesante no sólo como aportación a la Historia de las Instituciones sino también a la Historia de las mentalidades, dado que la "amicitia" es fundamentalmente un modo de entender y plantearse las relaciones sociales en conexión, claro está, con el desenvolvimiento de determinadas formas económicas.²

¹ *Love and Friendship: Rethinking Politics and Affection in Modern Times*, ed. by Eduardo A. Velasquez (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington, 2003).

² María Isabel Alfonso, 'Sobre la "amicitia" en la España medieval', *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, CLXX (Madrid, 1973), 379-386.

More than forty years later, only Carlos Heusch has dedicated attention to the juridical interpretation of friendship as proposed in the *Siete Partidas*,³ while Marilyn Stone has studied marriage and friendship in the Fourth *Partida* exclusively.⁴ Apart from these two studies, however, no other research has been undertaken on the subject, even if, as Stone herself has suggested, it would be extremely helpful to explore other Alfonsine works, in order to have a clearer picture of how friendship was perceived, lived and represented in thirteenth-century Iberia. More recently, a series of collected editions about friendship in the Middle Ages have been compiled; however, despite their effectiveness and thoroughness in analysing a series of French, Italian and German case studies, far less attention has been dedicated to the Iberian context.⁵

In short, it might be reasonably asserted that there has been a significant paucity of studies about friendship in the Iberian Middle Ages, and particularly in the thirteenth century. The present research project seeks to fill, at least partially, such a gap by providing a comparative analysis of the ideas and interpretations of friendship as emerging from the multifarious production attributed to Alfonso X of Castile's scriptorium.

Perhaps the most original and innovative characteristic of this study is the comparative analysis of the three collections – which might each be defined as encyclopaedias in their own fields – whose common feature was the fact that they were written in the vernacular, a powerful instrument adopted, most probably, in an attempt to generate a sense of a unique supra-regional identity among the inhabitants of the Peninsula. Moreover, in these masterpieces, oriental and classical traditions blend together, and all the aspects of social, political, spiritual and personal life of thirteenth-century subjects can be glimpsed.

The parameters which have been adopted in order to structure coherently all the categories which have emerged from the analysis of these three works are numerous, and they include the typologies of the parties involved, their peculiarities – gender, age, position and social status – and the situations which led to the tightening of their amity

³ Carlos Heusch, 'Les fondements juridiques de l'amitié à travers les Partidas d'Alphonse X et le droit médiéval', *Cahiers de Linguistique Hispanique Médiévale*, 18-19 (1993-1994), 6-48.

⁴ Marilyn Stone, *Marriage and Friendship in Medieval Spain: Social Relations According to the Fourth Partida of Alfonso X* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

⁵ Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1994); *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Julian Haseldine (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999). See also more specific studies, such as Courtney DeMayo, 'Ciceronian *Amicitia* in the Letters of Gerbert of Aurillac', *Viator*, 38 (2007), 319-338; H. M. Canatella, 'Friendship in Anselm of Canterbury's Correspondence: Ideals and Experience', *Viator*, 38 (2007), 351- 368; Constant J. Mews, 'Cicero and the Boundaries of Friendship in the Twelfth Century', *Viator*, 38 (2007), 369-384; Cary J. Nederman, 'Friendship in Public Life during the Twelfth Century: Theory and Practice in the Writings of John of Salisbury', *Viator*, 38 (2007), 385-397.

bonds. All of these ingredients, mixed together in different quantities and qualities, generated the several varieties of friendship, which the seven chapters of this study explore.

To be more specific, after the introduction to chapter one, which deals with the ancient philosophical theories on friendship and its numerous interpretations which developed across Medieval Europe, the focus moves on the Iberian Peninsula, and specifically on Alfonso X of Castile and his production. The subsequent sections have been organized thematically. One of them is dedicated to ‘Spiritual Friendships’: the abstract links between human beings and the supernatural figures; in which attention has been devoted to the connections between and among the intermediary figures of the Saints and the Virgin, the latter being portrayed sometimes with extraordinarily human characteristics. The discussion moves then to ‘Religious Friendships’, which recall part of the characteristics of the spiritual connections, but only to secularize them, as is evident from the analysis of the relationships established by clergymen either within or outside the cloister, as well as those between these clergymen and the believers. In presenting the relationships concerning the secular spheres, another category which has been examined is that of ‘Political Friendships’, whose rules were applied to cases of military armistices and alliances among other things. Following the same line of thought, and considering the multicultural and multi-ethnic environment in which Alfonso X operated, a further section has been devoted to cases of political friendships signed between Christian rulers, and the possible coalitions agreed between them and Muslim leaders. Finally, cases of ‘Other Friends and Friendships’ have been presented, by examining the typologies of relationships which were catalogued as unconventional and where the individuals involved were regarded as ‘others’ for their gender or for their ethnic and religious backgrounds. In the context of this last categorization, relationships with women, between women, with Muslims, Jews and heretics, as well as cases of tutorship and companionship have been also discussed.

At this point, what should be pointed out is that not only is this study an attempt to answer the need for specific research in this area, but it seeks to provide an interdisciplinary answer, since it engages with aspects concerning both literature and history. Moreover, this analysis seeks to demonstrate that social, legal, political, religious, ethnic and personal aspects were at stake (some of them simultaneously, some others excluding each other) in shaping the multifarious meanings and typologies of friendship.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that, as Duby has stressed: ‘our sources of information reflect reality to a certain extent, but all or nearly all of them were inevitably written at some distance from this reality’.⁶ In the case of the Alfonsine production, despite the fact that it was regarded as the product of a privileged and separated circle – the royal scriptorium – it is highly significant because it presents a wide range of aspects and features depicting the lives and customs of the lowest subjects. Therefore, reading the Alfonsine works is like peering into thirteenth-century life through a two-way mirror, which gives access to both the highest and the lowest ways of establishing and maintaining friendships.

Despite some innovative features which characterized the Alfonsine works, they still suited the medieval canon of ‘originality’, which implied the necessary acknowledgement of the sources and allowed only certain re-adaptations. It is well-known that the Alfonsine collections were imbued with elements from different times and traditions which had converged into the bosom of the Peninsula (from the Roman legislative code, the Arabic chronicles by Ben-Al jama, the Greek philosophical and gnomic texts translated into Arabic, and the miracle stories about the Virgin Mary originating in France, among others).⁷ Considering this, the question which might arise is to what extent was the Alfonsine court talking to us, or it was rather Ben-Al jama’s or the Roman jurist’s voices translated and incorporated into the Alfonsine production? Undeniably there are clear points of coincidence, but there are as many and even more which are peculiarly Alfonsine.

And with regard to these Alfonsine peculiarities, the vocabulary and lexicon of *amicitia* occupy a significant position. As Esther Pascua has proposed, talking about official treaties of peace between kings in pre-vernacular sources, a whole range of words such as *fides*, *amor*, *placitum*, *convenientia*, *concordia*, *pax*, *securitas* and of course *amicitia*, were used ‘in the attempt to exhaust the rich world of personal relations of medieval society’.⁸ Similarly, in the Alfonsine vernacular works, different terms (such as *amigo* or *compannero*) defined relationships as being conceptually different, even if sometimes coincident in practice.

⁶ Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), see particularly “Towards a History of Woman in France and Spain,” pp. 95-101, at p. 100.

⁷ On intertextuality and intersubjectivity see, for example, *Essays in Semiotics = Essais de sémiotique*, ed. by Julia Kristeva, Josette Rey-Debove and Donna Jean Umiker (The Hague: Mouton, 1971).

⁸ Esther Pascua, ‘Peace Among Equals: War and Treaties in Twelfth-Century Europe’, in *War and Peace in Ancient and Medieval History*, ed. by Philip de Souza and John France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 193-210 (p. 194).

Another interesting aspect of ‘contemporary’ interest is the description of the amicable relationships with the members of other religions. Additionally, it has not to be forgotten that the extent of this research project embraces all social sectors, by carrying out an analysis of friendships between equals (such as secular and religious rulers) as well as between unequal parties, including the connections with the spiritual world. This is possible because of the aforementioned peculiarity of the Alfonsine works themselves, which were elaborated at court, but they often described a lower and more common reality. Nonetheless, it is anything but certain that Alfonso aimed at writing or commissioning works for a wider and non-courtly public. In fact, the sovereign wanted to be respected and loved as a friend by his subjects, but, despite the ‘enlightened’ didactic norms and moral rules promoted through his literary production, his status in some occasions prevented him from behaving as such in practice.

After all these considerations, it is to be hoped that this study is potentially interesting for different audiences. First, it is addressed to experts on thirteenth-century Castile, who will, for the first time, come across a comparative analysis on the subject; secondly, it might also be read by non-experts who will discover through the works of the Learned King what friendship meant for Medieval Iberian subjects, discovering characteristics which were strictly connected to contemporary historical contingencies, as well as envisaging elements which might be still applicable in the present. Last but not least, due to its interdisciplinary nature, this study explores fields and subjects which touch tangential, and sometimes overlapping, research fields such as cultural history, philosophy and literary studies, among others.

Chapter I

A Philosophical and Literary History of Friendship

§ 1. An Introduction

Friendship, as an anthropological, philosophical, social and political concept has a very long history but quite a short historiography.¹ In fact, apart from a few exceptions,² until the 1980s research had been focused predominantly on the interpretations of friendship attributed to the classical authorities.³ By contrast, since the 1990s an increased number of studies have centred on the social value of friendship and the way it affected public life from the Middle Ages onwards.⁴ A remarkable importance was assigned to the fact that, according to the medieval perception, friendship was not restricted to exclusively civic and political fields, in which most of the ancient Greek philosophers had placed it, but instead, filtered through the predominant Christian mentality, it went as far as to include both the spiritual connections between fellow citizens in the first instance, and between men and the supernatural in the second instance. This assumption, according to which *amicitia* is an extremely complex and multifaceted issue that has affected several spheres of human life, has reinvigorated interdisciplinary studies in this area. An important contribution to explorations of the value and perception of friendship in medieval society has been provided by a number of miscellaneous sources, including a broad range of materials which go far beyond the philosophical and historical records. A closer look at both historical and documentary texts (charters, juridical works, parish registers, commemorative texts such as *libri vitae* and necrology), and literary works of various genres, illustrate the conventional forms and rituals which regulated friendship.

¹ Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The Origins of Classical Notions of Politics in the Theory and Practice of Friendship* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1978); Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther* (New York: Random House, 1966; repr. London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-87). Additional information about the historiography of friendship in Preston T. King and Heather Devere, *The Challenge to Friendship in Modernity* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2000).

² *An Anthology of Friendship*, ed. by Edward Carpenter, 3rd edn (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1915); Robert Flacelière, *Love in Ancient Greece*, trans. by James Cleugh (London: Crown Publishers, 1962).

³ J. Leclercq, 'L'amitié dans les lettres au Moyen Age', *Revue du Moyen Age Latin*, 1 (1945), 391-410; L. Dugas, *L'amitié antique* (Paris: Alcan, 1894).

⁴ *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, edited by Julian Haseldine is a collected edition proceeding from the conference 'Friendship and Friendship Networks in the Middle Ages' King's College, London, 11-13 April, 1996, in which Haseldine argued that in the Middle Ages the institution of friendship was both the fulcrum of and the instrument to maintain political and social order. See also *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex and Marriage in the Medieval World*, ed. by R. Edwards and S. Spector (Albany: State University of New York, 1991); Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*; Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: The Political Importance of Group Bonds in the Early Middle Ages*, trans. by Christopher Carroll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Moreover, the adoption of both diachronic and synchronic approaches in analysing those sources may help to explain how friendship was viewed and experienced by contemporaries and how its perception was adapted to, or modified from, other cultural and geographical contexts.

In this chapter a history of friendship will be mapped out, from classical philosophical ideas to medieval reinterpretations which emerged across Europe. This will be followed by a more detailed analysis of the Iberian context and its peculiarities, focusing on some of the most significant literary works which preceded, and inevitably influenced, the thirteenth-century production attributed to Alfonso X of Castile and, especially, the idea of friendship which arises from them.

§ 2. Philosophical Interpretations of Friendship

Before reaching the core of this study, which consists of an analysis of the different typologies and characteristics of friendship emerging from the literary, historical and legal production supervised by Alfonso X of Castile, a brief history of friendship from its origins to its thirteenth-century interpretations must be given. In order to attempt such a disquisition on the origins and development of the idea of friendship through the ages, one can neither omit nor ignore its illustrious and influential Hellenic origins.⁵ In Ancient Greece, as the Homeric epic poems attest, the definition of friendship also included the categories of political allies, *xenoi* (foreign collaborators), individuals linked by blood ties and those associated by inter-marital connections. A good description of those relationships may be found in Konstan's study on *Friendship in the Classical World*, which proved that in Greek and subsequently in Roman societies, those social and political connections were also imbued with emotional factors and were bolstered by affection and generosity. In Konstan's point of view, both those historical contexts 'did produce a space for sympathy and altruism under the name of friendship that stands as an alternative to structured forms of interaction based on kinship, civic identity, or commercial activity.'⁶ Paul Miller, in his Homeric studies, opposes this assumption by arguing that 'Homeric "friendship" appears as a system of calculated

⁵Anthony Arthur Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd edn (London: Duckworth, 1986); David Konstan, 'Greek Friendship', *The American Journal of Philology*, 117 (1996), 71-94; *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*, ed. by Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, 2nd edn (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1997); *Aspects of Friendship in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the Seminar Für Alte Geschichte, Heidelberg, on 10-11th June, 2000*, ed. by Michael Peachin (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2001).

⁶Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, pp. 5-6.

cooperation, not necessarily accompanied by any feeling of affection.⁷ The debate about this subject was complicated further by the philological analysis of the available sources, which proved that in Homeric Greek the term *philos* (φίλος), despite its different nuances, was generally adopted as an adjectival form, with the meaning of ‘dear’, rather than as a proper appellation indicating a friend.⁸ At the same time, family affection, companionship and *eros* (passionate love) were frequently assimilated into the same generic label of *philia* (φιλία); a term which was adopted to define respectively love or friendship, and in some cases even both.

During the classical period, which lasted from the sixth-century democracy of the independent city-states to Alexander the Great’s demise in 323 BC, the Greek peninsula experienced an exceptional growth of male amity bonds, which constituted the bases of public life. In fact, it was commonly believed that nature had endowed human beings with associative skills, which the democratic civic participation in the *polis* contributed to bring together on a regular basis. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that friendship acquired such a name only when the involved parties exchanged mutual help and solidarity in difficult situations.⁹ Loyalty and good will, in fact, were the pillars on which both friendly and political associations were built. This also suggests that, although familial ties might be regarded as incentives to forge solid friendships, they could not guarantee that the relationships that they had fostered would be solid and valuable, since the virtues on which any *amicitia* should be forged were not assured solely by consanguinity. Therefore, kinsmen might well be friends, but only if they respected the aforementioned requisites of behaviour.

Moving chronologically forwards in this history of friendship, the experience of the Pythagorean brotherhoods (from the sixth century BC) merits attention. These were associations of men who shared their lives and material possessions believing that in such a way they could reach a harmonious and steady union in life. In their assumption, the creation of a community (κοινωνία) was based on the mathematical equality of the individuals involved, and did not include outsiders, only the initiated members of their restricted sect. They also had to prove their reliability in order to be trusted and to gain the honorific titles of ‘friends’. Moreover, the Pythagoreans considered the amicable bonds as the keystone of an ethical life, since they might induce the involved parties to

⁷ Paul Millett, *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 120-121.

⁸ Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, pp. 28-31; Gabriel Herman, *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 38.

⁹ Lynette G. Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435-323 B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

acquire and share both virtues and goods, spontaneously. It was generally believed that Pythagoras (580/572 BC-500/490 BC) himself had professed that ‘what belongs to friends [is held in] common.’¹⁰

Subsequently, Epicurus (c. 341 BC-370 BC) distinguished between the meanings of the terms *philo*i (friends) and *philia* (friendship). He used the former to define individuals who needed a close connection with someone who could be useful for them; while he considered the latter as the purest and uncorrupted form of human support for which all men yearned. Nevertheless, Epicurus believed that the need for human association was not an original feeling, but it had been generated piecemeal, once individuals found themselves increasingly more bound to each other within a stratified social frame.¹¹ What was innovative in his thought was the fact that he proposed to abandon the conventional urban setting in which friendship had been conventionally rooted, and he rather opted for an idealized peaceful countryside, which could offer an idyll of happiness and serenity to those who found refuge in it. In fact, such an unconventional atmosphere and setting would allow even women and children, usually excluded from public and civic events, to enjoy a communitarian life based on empathy and emotions. Such a proposition allows us to recognize that, in the Epicurean conception, friendship represented a form of wisdom in practice as well as an instrument to achieve some relief from human suffering.¹²

Subsequently, Socrates (469 BC-399 BC) reformulated the idea of friendship by assuming that it was an educative link between people not necessarily of equal status. In order to prove his point, he suggested the examples of the relationships between masters and disciples, which demonstrate how contacts with good friends would also support the process of self-knowledge, which should bring both parties to the acquisition of the truth. Socrates’ idea appeared also in Plato’s (c. 428 BC-c. 348 BC) dialogue *Lysis* in which Socrates plays the role of one of the protagonists. The tangled syllogisms regarding the essence and practices of friendship, which characterized the entire

¹⁰ Christoph Riedweg, *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence*, trans. by Steven Rendall with Christoph Riedweg and Andreas Schatzmann (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 98-104 (p. 102).

¹¹ D. K. O’Connor, ‘The Invulnerable Pleasure of Epicurean Friendship’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 30 (1989), 165-86.

¹² John M. Rist, ‘Epicurus on Friendship’, *Classical Philology*, 75 (1980), 121-29; J. Rocca, ‘Epicurean Friendship’, in *Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. by K. Boudouris, 2 vols (Athens: International Center for Greek Philosophy and Culture, 1993), II, 193-204; David Konstan, ‘Friendship from Epicurus to Philodemus’, in *Epicureismo greco e romano: atti del congresso internazionale (Napoli, 19-26 Maggio 1993)*, ed. by G. Giannantoni and M. Gigante (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1996), 387-396; Eric Brown, ‘Epicurus on the Value of Friendship (*Sententia Vaticana* 23)’, *Classical Philology*, 97 (2002), 68-80.

colloquium, do not reach any unequivocal definition, apart from the fact that friendship is described as the core of any ‘educative love’.¹³

At this point, attention needs to be devoted to two philosophical milestones which proved fundamental in developing a theory of friendship in the classical Greek world and beyond it: the *Ethica Eudemea* and the *Ethica Nicomachea* by Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC).¹⁴ What emerges from these works is that *amicitia* is considered one of the most relevant bonds connecting people during their lives, comparable only with blood and family ties.¹⁵ The idea of friendship as *philia* was related with that of *physis* (φύσις), that is to say nature, since man was considered to be naturally endowed with human generosity which spontaneously compelled him to love others. Friendship was regarded as a necessity to the extent that no one, despite all the acquired material benefits and transient joys – which were providers of a merely material self-sufficiency – would have chosen to live without friends. In fact, man was thought to be able to reach happiness only by sharing love and his own life with his friends.¹⁶ Such a statement was reinforced by the idea that a friend was ‘the other self’,¹⁷ a physically autonomous individual who was connected to his friend by sharing with him a single soul. According to Aristotle, it was only through such a communion that man could finally experience the harmonious balance between rationality and affection.¹⁸ In addition, Aristotle accommodated within a threefold analytical framework – the good, the useful and the pleasant – all the potential outcomes of *philia*. However, among the three categories, only friendships which relied on the moral excellence of the individuals involved – the good – were destined to last forever, while the other two typologies, being incidental connections depending respectively on the utility and the

¹³ Julia Annas, ‘Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism’, *Mind*, 86 (1977), 532-54; David Bolotin, *Plato’s Dialogue on Friendship: An Interpretation of the Lysis with a New Translation* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1979); A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Ethica Eudemea*, trans. by M. Woods, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); *Ethica Nicomachea*, trans. by David Ross, rev. by J. L. Ackrill and J. O. Urmson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). Aristotle’s works reached the Iberian context in 1240 when Herman el Alemán, who worked in the school of translation of Toledo, translated Averroes’ commentary from Arabic to Latin (probably in the monastery of the Santísima Trinidad, as stated in the fifteenth-century *Itinerarium Hispanicum* by Jerónimo Monetarius: ‘de monasterio sancte Trinitatis [...] in hoc loco traductus est liber ethicorum et addicio Averrois, ut in fine libri ethicorum Averrois scriptum est.’ (Hieronymus Münzer, *Itinerarium Hispanicum*, ed. by Ludwig Pfandl, *Revue Hispanique*, 48 (1920), 1-178 (p. 121). Further reading: Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994).

¹⁶ Nancy Sherman, ‘Aristotle on Friendship and Shared Life’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 47 (1987), 589-613.

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, 1166a: 31; *Eth. Eud.*, 1245a: 30.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1157b: 25-33, 1156b: 21, 1167a: 3-5, 19-20.

delight that some relationships could temporarily provide, would dissolve once the pragmatic reasons connecting the parties had been fulfilled or expired. Therefore, the purest form of friendship was nothing but natural and sincere love, benevolence and *eunoia* (goodwill) which consisted of a reciprocal good will for its own sake.¹⁹

Another relevant point emerging from the Aristotelian theory is the necessity of equality between parties. Although it was regarded as a *sine qua non* condition, it did not refer to any symmetrical social or institutional status, but rather to the mutual exchange of love between the protagonists. In support of this, Aristotle adduced examples of friendly relationships between superiors and subordinates, such as marital couples²⁰ and parental connections: ‘for when the love is in proportion to the merit of the parties, then in a sense there arises equality, which is certainly held to be characteristic of friendship’.²¹ Moreover, Aristotle, as well as his late commentator Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274), asserted that friendship consisted of loving others rather than being loved. In fact, the potentially unlimited human love was in itself the parameter which enabled the unequal to become equal.²² Discussion of this continues in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in which *philia* is defined also in terms of emotions, where it is interpreted as the result of a process aimed at persuading the audience, since it was thought that the orator could stimulate feelings of friendship or hatred through his speech. In contrast to the *Ethics*, in which friendship is defined in terms of virtues – that is to say making and maintaining friends, as well as acting for others’ sake – in the *Rhetoric*, rather, *philia* relies on an awareness of others’ friendly attitudes. In other words, one could love another person only if the counterpart’s good will was recognized, that is to say if the other was evidently ready to reciprocate that love:

¹⁹ Aristotle denied the existence of any form of disinterested friendship, since it would have justified the phenomenon of *autarkeia* (self sufficiency) with the subsequent corollary according to which man would not need any amicable relationship. Nevertheless, Aristotle also believed that both pure and utilitarian friendships were based on mutual benevolence.

²⁰ In the commentary of Aristotle’s work carried out by Thomas Aquinas the relationship between husband and wife is depicted as a form of friendship aimed at achieving practical goals. By supporting such a theory, Aquinas regarded pleasure and utility as two fundamental virtues regulating this bond. See E. Kooper, ‘Loving the Unequal Equal: Medieval Theologians and Martial Affection’, in *The Olde Daunce*, pp. 44-56.

²¹ Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, VIII, 1158b: 27-29.

²² This concept was re-examined later in the light of the Christian perspective according to which people were considered equal when they loved God and received His love in return.

Let 'loving' be for someone what one regards as goods, for his sake but not for their own, and being productive of these (goods) as far as one can. A friend is one who loves and is loved in return; and people think that they are friends when they think that their mutual relation is of this character.²³

Aristotle's meditation on the subject went further and it drew upon the characteristics which individuals should possess in order to be considered friends, which features they should have in common and how many of them could claim that position, since only a few proved to demonstrate moral virtues and exemplary behaviour.²⁴ With regard to the latter, as Plato had already argued, a friend should dedicate himself to love the other completely; consequently it would be impossible for a person to please many individuals at once. In particular Aristotle did not propose the idea of a universal friendship, being perfectly aware of its limitations and considering also the fact that proof, usually supplied by time and circumstances, was necessary in order to select friends and to test their reliability:

Those who are friends to many [poluphiloi] and treat everyone in an intimate manner do not seem friends to anyone, except in the political sense [politikōs]; they also call them ingratiating [areskoi]. Now, it is possible to be a friend to many in the political sense and not be ingratiating, but truly decent.²⁵

The quotation reported above portrays a form of superficial friendship between city-fellows relying on mere pragmatic interests. But Aristotle accepted also the possibility of an 'enhanced' friendship, though only in terms of *politiké philia* (civic friendship),²⁶ that is to say among virtuous citizens joined by *homónoia*, which is unanimity in actions performed for both the citizens' and the city's sake.²⁷

To conclude this section on Aristotle, it needs to be mentioned that the philosopher also answered the question 'why does man need friends?' by adopting a metaphysical approach to the issue according to which friendship found its reason of being in the broader context of *telos* (end), the final goal of human life. Individuals should emulate their virtuous friends as well as love them, since they were 'the other selves'; hence, those who observed their friends' actions and behaviours attentively,

²³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 138:1.

²⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1359b:2-17. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle listed all the characteristics that a man should possess in order to be regarded as a friend, which contingencies drove men to join together and which, instead, turned them into enemies. He also presented a sort of transitive rule of friendship according to which a friend's friend is one's own ally, as well as a friend's enemy is inevitably one's own foe.

²⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, 9.10, 1171: 15-19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1155a: 22-23. He also added the definition of *hetairiké philia* (comradely affection), which he depicted as a relationship similar to the connection existing between siblings.

²⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. Eud.*, 1241a: 15-35; *Eth. Nic.*, 1167a: 11, 1167b: 15.

were likely to grasp their own essences and to achieve a deeper self-knowledge, since others' lives acted as mirrors and spectacles of their own attitudes.²⁸

The Aristotelian rejection of any model of universal friendship was overturned by the early Stoics, among which Zeno (333 BC-264 BC) and Chrysippus (c. 280 BC-c. 207 BC) particularly, who elaborated the concept of *philantropia* based on the unity between nature and reason.²⁹ Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) adhered to the Stoic thought completely. He believed that everything was part of a comprehensive *Logos* (Word) or *Pneuma* (Spirit) which included all human beings, who were considered detached branches, now separated from the same original unity. In Seneca's opinion everything was interwoven by an impersonal form of *amicitia*, which was one of the points allowing him to assert that no friend was unique and irreplaceable and that a worthy substitute could always be found.³⁰

Those interpretations had been forestalled already by Aristotle, whose thought inspired both Cicero (c. 106 BC-43 BC) and later classical thinkers.³¹ The radical movement, from Greek to Latin thought, introduced an innovative perspective: *benevolentia* was no longer considered the seed of friendship but it was rather seen as the result of a long process of acquaintance, while *consensus* and unanimity – as the Stoics had already claimed – were regarded as the genesis of *amicitia*. According to Cicero, who managed to synthesize the previous Aristotelian and Stoic conclusions on the subject, friendship was simultaneously a personal, universal and natural link. He argued that man retained a natural sociability; therefore, the human search for amity was not generated by need or desire, but rather by the natural essence which pushed individuals to join those with whom they felt an affinity in terms of virtues. To Cicero a friend continued to be 'another self' on an ontological level and their amity was revered as an everlasting chain, so deeply rooted in both the parties that even death appeared to be powerless in comparison.

Scholars have long been aware of the fact that social and political changes inevitably influenced the ways of interpreting and forging interpersonal links. As a matter of fact, in the Roman Republic (509 BC-27 BC) both the individuals with whom

²⁸ On the concept of friend as 'another self' see Michael Pakaluk, *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991).

²⁹ The two thinkers believed that an ideal *polis* was made of wise men exclusively, and the same Zeno declared that 'in the Republic the good alone are true citizens, or friends, or kindred or free men', in Diogenes Laërtius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. by C.D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 7.33; quotation reported also in *Topics in Stoic Philosophy*, ed. by Katerina Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 181.

³⁰ Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 9.5-6.

³¹ Cicero, *Laelius de amicitia & Somnium Scipionis*, ed. and trans. by J. G. F. Powell (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990).

one could exchange mutual affection and benefits as well as political allies were regarded as, and addressed with, the appellation of *amici*. Owing to the deep-rooted patriotism of the republican citizens, even if friendship was revered as an important social connection, it could neither justify nor allow any betrayal against the Republic, even if carried out in a friend's name.

In time, the idea of friendship transformed according to the altered social and political contingencies generated by the transition from the Republic to the Empire. The imposed social stratification continued to allow relationships of friendship, but most of these were essentially forms of patronage provided by a wealthy *patronus* (lord) to those who claimed his protection (*clientes*). Additionally, although a large majority of them were cases of literary patronage,³² they recall a striking parallel with the vassalatic bonds which would later dominate the similarly stratified medieval society.

With the advent of Christianity, the Fathers of the Church remodelled Cicero's idea of natural friendship and elaborated new theories aimed at providing a divine justification for the world and for nature.³³ However, in contrast with the pagan line of thought, the individual and personal sphere was subordinated to the divine one. St. Ambrose (c. 339-397), together with other Christian writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, rescued the Stoic point of view by adopting it as a philosophical bridge between the two classical concepts of *philia* and *agape*, respectively love between equals in virtues and undifferentiated love for all human creatures.³⁴ Ambrose stressed the importance of self-disclosure, exchanges of thoughts, desires and worries which made of a friend 'the medicine of life, and the blessing of immortality.'³⁵ Recalling Seneca's and Cicero's ideas,³⁶ Ambrose emphasised the necessity of honest speaking and confession among friends, but he circumscribed the accomplishment of such actions only within the brethren, that is to say among those who shared a common life and faith. This demonstrates how the original Greek ideas of friendship legitimately entered the Christian doctrine only after having been filtered through the Evangelic idea according to which *amicitia* was a form of generous love.³⁷

³² Karl Julius Holzknacht, *Literary Patronage in the Middle Ages* (London: Cass, 1966); Barbara K. Gold, *Literary Patronage in Greece and Rome* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

³³ Philippe Delhaye, *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, trans. by S. J. Tester (London: Burns & Oates, 1960).

³⁴ Mary Dorothea, 'Cicero and Saint Ambrose on Friendship', *The Classical Journal*, 43 (1948), 219-222.

³⁵ *Ecclesiastes*, 6: 16, in Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, p. 150.

³⁶ Seneca, *Ep. mor.* 3.2-3; Cicero, *De amicitia*, 22.

³⁷ E. G. Cassidy, 'He Who Has Friends Can Have No Friend: Classical and Christian Perspectives on the Limits to Friendship', in *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, pp. 45-67.

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) speculated on the subject by following the same path. In his conception the possibility to experiencing perfect friendship among human beings was wholly denied and the sole exception was by links forged in the name of God. In such terms he believed that true love for human creatures could be fully achieved exclusively by loving the Father.³⁸

There are no significant examples which might suggest the existence of any philosophical speculation about friendship in the following century. In fact, the topic was readdressed only in the sixth century, when Isidore of Seville (c. 562-636), one of the most prolific writers and historians of the Middle Ages, tried to combine these classical pagan conceptions with contemporary Christian thought. In his *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, Isidore defined a friend as the guardian of the soul, and he listed a series of fundamental features that any relationship should possess in order to be labelled as friendship. First of all ‘Illa uera est amicitia, quae nihil quaerit ex rebus amici, nisi solam beneuolentiam, scilicet ut gratis amet amantem’.³⁹ Secondly, Isidore argued that friendship was a fundamental complement of people’s lives, since it was the connection which made them share their joys and pains with others.⁴⁰ However, he also provided a series of warnings about the dangers which false friends might cause, as well as about the difficulties in preserving a friendship in time.

During the Carolingian period, Hrabanus Maurus (784-856) in his *Commentaria in Ieremiam*,⁴¹ apart from restating Cicero’s ideas on friendship, reiterated these same warnings against false friends and he also confirmed the difficulty of choosing trustworthy companions. As the study by Miguel Rodríguez-Pantoja suggests, more detailed reflections on friendship appeared only in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, during the scholastic period.⁴² Aelred de Rievaulx (1110-1167) with his treatise *De spiritali amicitia* and Peter de Blois (Petrus Blesensis) with his *De amicitia Christiana*

³⁸ Marie Aquinas McNamara, *Friendship in Saint Augustine* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1964); Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Donald X. Burt, *Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine’s Practical Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999).

³⁹ Isidore of Seville, *Sententiarium Libri III*, XXX, 30.2b, ‘a real friendship is when there is no claim of a friend’s possessions, but only for a benevolent and spontaneous love for the other’.

⁴⁰ Ibid. XXVIII, 28.4, ‘amicitia et prosperas res dulciores facit, et aduersas communiōne temperat leuiioresque reddit [...]’, ‘friendship makes things favourable and delightful, and it moderates opposite things in sharing, and it restores lighter things’.

⁴¹ PL., vol. 111, col.1195C-1196A.

⁴² Miguel Rodríguez-Pantoja, ‘Con Cicerón por los caminos (zigzagieantes) de la amistad’, *Anuario Filosófico*, 34 (2001), 433-462. See also L. Alfonsi, *La letteratura latina medievale* (Milano: Sansoni, 1972), pp. 9-10.

are two emblematic examples of Christian thinkers who attempted to bring individual and universal ideas of friendship together within the sphere of love for God.⁴³

A further reconciliation between human love and the Christian idea of divine charity was attempted by Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225- 1274) who saw in the perfection supplied by grace a bridge between the two. His theology sought a compromise with Aristotelian philosophy, something very rare for Medieval European Christian doctrines which usually showed, as already mentioned, a certain indifference towards the subject. To Aquinas, real friendship existed whenever someone acted for the good of the others. The main impasse between Aristotle's and Aquinas's conceptions rested on the fact that the former claimed the reciprocity of love as the basis of the relationship, while the latter tried to justify the symmetry between friendship and charity. Moreover, according to Aquinas, even enemies could be loved since they were 'friends of other friends', united by the same love for God. Mention should also be made of Aquinas's political interpretation of *amicitia* based on the idea that man was simultaneously a natural and social character, able to create contacts by communication. It must be borne in mind that concern for the stability of the system in which men lived pushed them to forge alliances based on 'concord' (peace) and utility, that is to say forms of *amicitia super aliqua* (friendship above all/everything). Aquinas saw in mutual friendship and *dilectio* (esteem) the bases for a peaceful social and political life which the law itself had to guarantee *ut faciat amicitiam hominum ad invicem* (in order to create mutual friendship between men).⁴⁴ A single example will suffice to demonstrate the importance that reciprocal benevolence assumed in Aquinas's thought 'et dicit quod adhuc apponendum est ad complendam rationem amicitiae, quod sit benevolentia mutua non latens'.⁴⁵

In fact, not only was it considered a necessary prerogative, but it had also to be shown frankly and in public. For this reason the two fundamental requirements, adduced already by Aristotle, were conviviality and communication among friends. In point of fact, as Sère has observed 'si l'amitié comme relation doit s'éprouver de manière immédiate, l'amitié comme sentiment est en revanche médiatisée par des signes

⁴³ The theme of divine and Christian love will be explored in more depth in Chapter III of this study dedicated to Spiritual Friendship.

⁴⁴ J. M. Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 227. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Latin Text and English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices and Glossaries* (London: Blackfriars in conjunction with Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963-81), I-II q. 99 a. 2c.

⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* (Rome: Edizioni Léonine, 1969), t. 47, vol. 2, L.VIII, lectio 2, *Vel apponendum*, p. 446, 1:101-102, 'and it also says that it is necessary to put together with the full reason of friendship also the mutual benevolence which must not be hidden'.

extérieurs qui la manifestent'.⁴⁶ The disclosure of the paradigm of signs and representations attributed to friendship demonstrated that between the pure feeling and its public accomplishment, in most cases, there was only an apparent separation, which was overcome in practice.⁴⁷

Admittedly much remains to be said about the philosophical interpretations of friendship through the ages. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the present study this brief overview has highlighted some significant stages. While the greater emphasis dedicated to the ancient doctrines and particularly to the Aristotelian theories might appear disproportionate, it is a necessary premise in order to reach the core of the present study, since it provides the background which supports a full understanding of Alfonso X's thought and justifies the characteristics of his production. In order to be clearer, it is worth underlining that Aristotle's works, translated from Greek into Arabic (most of them between 1126 and 1198), constituted a model of reference, probably well known also by the Alfonsine scriptorium.⁴⁸

§ 3. Friendships in Medieval Europe: Typologies and Enactments

If the philosophical speculations on friendship and the influence that they played on the late medieval production represent one part of the equation, so too did the concrete strengthening of bonds of friendship, as historical, and sometimes literary, sources report. A number of scholars have devoted special attention to map out how social relationships, amongst which also friendship, developed during the Middle Ages across Europe. Among them, some of the most eminent voices were those of Marc Bloch and, more recently, Georges Duby, Adam Kostó and Gerd Althoff.⁴⁹

One of the first, but not for this reason less revealing, studies on social relationships during the middle ages is *Feudal Society* by Marc Bloch. By taking into

⁴⁶ Benedicte Sère, 'De la vérité en amitié. Une phénoménologie médiévale du sentiment dans les commentaires de l'Éthique à Nicomaque: (XIIIe-XVe siècle)', *Revue Historique*, 636 (2005), 793-848 (p. 800).

⁴⁷ J. Cl. Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990); J. A. Burrow, *Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁴⁸ Before 1150 only a few Aristotelian works were available in Latin translation in Europe and only from the twelfth century onwards a consistent amount of Latin translation was undertaken on the basis of Averroes' Arabic versions of the Greek originals.

⁴⁹ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. by L. A. Manyon, 2 vols, 2nd edn (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965); Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1980); *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*; Adam Kostó, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia: Power, Order, and the Written Word, 1000-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. by Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2002); Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*.

account a legal document of the eleventh century from the Ile de France which he himself had brought to light, he demonstrated how the definition of friends appeared whenever mothers, brothers, sisters and any other relatives connected to each other by blood ties, or by marital links, were described.⁵⁰ Therefore, amongst the emotional and social relationships that individuals might establish, blood-ties were regarded as the *non-plus ultra*, although friendship progressively acquired similar relevance. Bloch provided an example of this by mentioning the case of vassalage and, in particular, the case of the hero, who was usually surrounded by warriors, linked among themselves and to him, either through feudal or kinship relationships. According to Bloch, these bonds deserved the definition of friendships, since they conformed to the characteristics of fictitious fraternities.

On the same line, Gerd Althoff has supplied an exhaustive description of the taxonomy of *amicitia* in medieval Central Europe, paying particular attention to the case of Germany. Other studies, despite their general titles, are indeed focused on the way in which bonds of friendship were established and interpreted in certain geographical contexts and historical periods.⁵¹ A consistent number of the adopted sources are questionable in terms of historical reliability, due to their authors' specific points of view. Such a lack of objectivity might be explained by taking into consideration the authors' genders or by considering whether they were members of the Church, nobles, minstrels, or they were politically committed. If that was the case, it would be correct to assert that a general definition of 'friendship in Europe' did not exist. Such a deduction would be reinforced by the fact that most of the analysed texts were written in the vernacular, rather than in Latin; the former being a linguistic code which itself reflected some of the social and regional peculiarities of the context in which they were produced.

Nevertheless, most of the seemingly different European works in fact demonstrate undeniable common roots, from which some *clichés* flourished and were subsequently disseminated to various geographical areas. With regards to this point, two important considerations should be made: first, during the Middle Ages friendship remained one of the fundamental social networks in which man could take part, although it was rarely recognized as a self-sufficient, disinterested and independent link. Secondly, the Aristotelian conception of friendship, considered a privileged bond and an

⁵⁰ Bloch, *Feudal Society*, p. 124.

⁵¹ Apart from the already cited collections *Friendship in the Middle Ages* and *The Olde Daunce*, see for example William A. Stowell, 'Personal Relationships in Medieval France', *PMLA*, 28 (1913), 388-416.

essential element in human life, was still a recurrent idea adopted and reformulated several times.

Indeed what emerges from historical, juridical, religious and literary sources proceeding from medieval central Europe (mainly France and Germany) is a definition of friendship which was – at least in earlier times – far from any pure expression of subjective feelings and emotions, but it was rather regarded as a contractual link, endowed with utilitarian goals, which implied also the obligation of mutual military and economic support. It was seen as a permanent agreement, even transmitted as an inheritance.⁵² Moreover, friendship – which was not always catalogued as such⁵³ – was considered to be one of the most privileged and strongest social bonds together with kinship, *consanguinitas*, godfatherhood and feudal relationships.

It is also remarkable that together with the documentary sources (charters, treaties and chronicles), epic poems and particularly the *chansons de geste* disseminated the idea that friendship was a pragmatic agreement, which – if not subordinated – was in any case a consequence of certain pre-existing companionships of arms.⁵⁴ Terms such as *prochains amis* (fellows/neighbours) or *naturels amis* (natural friend) frequently appeared in the ancient romances as synonyms for relatives,⁵⁵ reminding us also that the concept of family was enlarged to embrace all the closest figures – including friends and slaves – who would help both in everyday difficulties and on the battlefield.

The emergence of defensive obligations which the parties had to mutually swear finds its explanation in the medieval social context, where hostility and violence rendered support and protection essential for survival. As a matter of fact, kinship and family provided the protection universally required in order to face such threatening conditions. Subsequently, and not surprisingly, friendship also assumed an enormous importance both as a private and a political link. Not only was it revered as an eternal bond essential for peaceful living, but it was even reinforced by ritualized performances, apparently spontaneous, but in fact previously agreed during councils which were held

⁵² A similar idea of inheritance of friendship, although interpreted in a more emotional way, appeared also in Tacitus. Similarly, the *topos* of Arabic origins of ‘half-of a friend’ appears in other works produced in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages with little variance. See Kenneth S. Scholberg, ‘A Half-Friend and a Friend and a Half’, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 35 (1958), 187-98. Further reading: Gaetano Lalomia, ‘I complessi percorsi del racconto del *medio amigo* nella Castiglia medievale’, in *Testi, generi e tradizioni nella Romània medievale. Atti del VI Convegno Nazionale della società italiana di filologia romanza, Pisa il 28-30 settembre 2000* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2002), pp. 79-96.

⁵³ Terms such as *fides*, *pax*, *foedus* and other variants, in the languages in which the texts were elaborated, appeared. Huguette Legros, ‘Le vocabulaire de l’amitié et son évolution sémantique au cours du XII siècle’, *Cahiers de Linguistique Hispanique Médiévale* 23 (1980), 131-39.

⁵⁴ J. F. Jones, *The Ethos of the ‘Song of Roland’* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press 1963), p. 143.

⁵⁵ Legros, ‘Le vocabulaire de l’amitié’, pp. 132-33.

in order to discuss and establish the meanings and value of the formulae and gestures.⁵⁶ Moreover, a pact of friendship could be strengthened by marriages, which linked the couple as well as their families, but also through other rituals such as the *convivium* (a banquet in which those who swore their loyalty were welcomed to celebrate together with those who received the oath), vows, kisses and public celebrations. These were commonly recognized as the official symbols indicating that an individual, by establishing and celebrating a friendly agreement, was also improving his status by climbing the social ladder.⁵⁷

Equally revealing is that ancient Aristotelian ideas – of community of goods and benefits shared for convenience and utility – still predominated during the Middle Ages, and they also included the moral and pragmatic duties of sharing both responsibilities and debts. Interestingly, in the Medieval Near East, for instance, certain forms of commercial friendships among traders were viewed positively and were considered as moral bonds, far more important than mere business. Nonetheless, in those specific cases, friendship was legitimized in the name of religion. In fact, those who claimed to be Mohammad's believers deserved the title of his friends and were consequently regarded as companions among themselves. This would explain why 'spiritual bonds of the greatest variety became the basis of sustained personal relationships transcending family attachments.'⁵⁸ Such a view was acknowledged as a turning point in the Islamic perception of friendship, above all if compared with the ancient epic tradition in which blood ties and kinship were regarded as the only valuable connections upon which men could rely. Such a phenomenon, regarding pre-Islamic Arabia, is celebrated in the following verses:

Take for your friend whom you will in the days of peace.

But know that when fighting comes your kinsman alone is near.⁵⁹

It is clear that in classical Islamic thought, even if friendship was regarded positively, its position was indeed far behind the beneficial and praiseworthy consideration enjoyed by

⁵⁶ *Medieval Concepts of the Past*, ed. by Gerd Althoff, pp. 71-88.

⁵⁷ G. Althoff, 'Friendship Between States', in *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 12-25. Further reading: *La sociabilité à table. Commensalité à travers les âges*, ed. by Martin Aurell and others (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 1992); Maurice Aymard, 'Amitié et convivialité,' in *Histoire de la vie privée*, ed. by P. Ariès and G. Duby, 2nd edn (Paris: Points-Seuil, 1999), pp. 455-99.

⁵⁸ Shelomo D. Goitein, 'Formal Friendship in the Medieval Near East', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 115 (1971), 484-489 (p. 486).

⁵⁹ *Hamāsa of Abū Tammām*, ed. by G. Freytag (Bonn: Baaden, 1828), p. 327, in Goitein, 'Formal Friendship', p. 485 and R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956; repr. 1969), p. 84.

kinship. The same situation was experienced in Ancient Greece where, despite the common belief according to which ritualized pacts of friendship assumed the same value as, or even a higher value than, that recognized to kinship, in fact:

the partners in the relationship cannot, for the most part, assume a real kinship role: a blood-brother is not a substitute brother, nor is a godfather a surrogate father. In terms of their place and function in the total network of social relations, they all are rather special kinds of friend. In other words, real and simulated roles are complementary, not interchangeable. Only to a limited extent does the range of their duty overlap.⁶⁰

Moving back to Western Europe, Gerd Althoff's observations on friendship and co-operative groups merit further attention.⁶¹ Both were aggregations of individuals joined together by the common aim of achieving pragmatic goals, but in fact the former usually involved a restricted number of people – two or a few more – while the latter, termed *coniuratio* or cooperative unions, included an increased number of participants. By observing the picture of early medieval Germany described by Althoff it is possible to note how friendship was depicted in terms of political treaties; that is to say, agreements usually signed among 'equals' such as rulers, kings and emperors. In time, however, those alliances were enhanced to include Popes and, subsequently, even subordinated subjects, particularly the growing aristocracy whose favours and protection the sovereigns increasingly needed. The magnates also began to sign pacts of friendship both among themselves and with the king. The formula was beneficial for both parties. The nobles, for instance, used consanguinity, familiarity and friendly affiliations to control and limit royal power, while rulers by no means resisted the creation of those chains because they dispensed manpower and military support for the safeguard of their kingdoms. In order to prevent any form of connection based on dependence and subordination, those who signed a treaty were also exonerated from paying any tribute.

Such circumstances give us sufficient indications to assert that in the Middle Ages a relationship could rarely, if ever, be detached from the social and political spheres of life. The characteristics attributed to a perfect friend became the parameters used to select the candidates who could access the highest social spheres, in order to become trustees and counsellors of the figures in power. Nevertheless, in contrast with those examples of loyal companions and trustworthy counsellors, there were also cases

⁶⁰ Herman, *Ritualized Friendship*, p. 33.

⁶¹ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 65-101.

of *coniurationes*. These were groups of individuals bounded by the vow of mutual help and support, with the aim of committing subversive acts against the royal power.⁶²

At this point it is interesting to quote, as significant examples among others, the agreements defined as friendships which characterized the Saxon era (c. 919 – 1024), experiencing a turning point in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when these general verbal pacts were replaced by written contracts, which established the terms regulating the alliances. In other words, whilst in the early Middle Ages pacts of friendship (of which very little is known, owing to the lack of sources, most being in all likelihood merely oral pacts) were based on the general oath to help the ‘other’ in any aspect of life, in the twelfth century the duties formulated through written formulae were rigidly stated:

the path goes from alliances which vaguely bound the treaty partners in all cases and for all time, to the concrete, written establishment of rights, obligations, and duration, that bound the partners only with respect to that which was laid down in writing.⁶³

If this is an historical perspective on the issue, the changes which affected the relationships of friendship, from both social and personal points of view, also deserve particular attention from a literary perspective. Up to this point, amities were somehow legitimized in the name of God (even the companionship of arms was usually motivated by a religious agency, as demonstrated by the links among the crusades and the agreed friendships between military orders). With the passing of the time a more mundane spirit predominated; friends were chosen because of the pleasure they could give, rather than for their innate moral virtues. This point has been discussed by Oschema,⁶⁴ who supported his theory with a series of illuminating literary examples whose most significant, in such a frame of references, is probably the legend of *Ami et Amile*.⁶⁵ The protagonists of the story are two friends, who committed immoral actions in the name of

⁶² The definition of ‘companions in bad actions’ is also detectable in the Alfonsine works. For a definition of the medieval categories of guilds and urban affiliation see Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 65-101.

⁶³ Althoff, ‘*Amicitiae* [Friendships] as Relationships Between States and People’, in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, ed. by Lester K. Little and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Malden, Mass; Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 191-210 (p. 210).

⁶⁴ Klaus Oschema, ‘Reflections on Love and Friendship in the Middle Ages’, in *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed. by Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter and Miri Rubin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 43-65.

⁶⁵ *Ami et Amile: chanson de geste*, ed. by Peter F. Dembowski (Paris: Champion, 1969). The story was a legend diffused across Europe in the Middle Ages and translated into different languages. For further reading: A. H. Krappé ‘The Legend of Amicus and Amelius’, *The Modern Language Review*, 18 (1923), 152-61; Emma Herrán Alonso, ‘«Amicus» o la historia de la amistad verdadera. Otro testimonio peninsular’, *Hispanic Review*, 71 (2003), 549-63.

their mutual affection. Amile, in trouble because he seduced the Emperor's daughter, asked for Ami's aid and begged his friend to rescue him by impersonating him during his trial. Ami accepted, but the role he had to play led him to commit bigamy; in fact, once he won the suit, he had to marry the princess, even though he was already married while he was impersonating Amile. A form of ethical order was finally re-established by the intervention of a *deus ex machina*, that is divine providence, which caused Ami a mortal illness from which he could be rescued only with the blood taken from Amile's son. Although the religious interpretation of the characters' actions does not disappear completely, the story brings various other issues to the readers' attention, of which the most thought-provoking case is perhaps the dilemma over whether ethical values and moral constraints might legitimately be betrayed for a friend's sake.⁶⁶

Another interesting example of the influence which the bond of friendship exerted on both the private and public spheres of human life is envisaged in the correspondence between Peter of Celle and his circle of friends from southern England and northern France, most likely undertaken in the twelfth century.⁶⁷ The vocabulary used in his letters belonged to the semantic area of *amicitia*, even though the writer had no personal acquaintance with the recipients, most of whom held positions at the highest levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. His epistolary exchanges may be catalogued as the balance between the political constraints of the letters of Pope Gregory VII and John of Salisbury,⁶⁸ and the purer spiritual claims promoted by St. Anselm's writings.⁶⁹ On first reading, one is led to speculate that Peter of Celle's letters embodied an excellent summary of Western European interpretations of friendship up to the twelfth century. However, it should be borne in mind that they were imbued with exhortations and rhetorical communication among scholars, hence deprived of any emotional and spiritual involvement, and further, of any feature of secrecy and privacy.

⁶⁶ Micheline de Combarieu, 'Une extrême amitié', in *Ami et Amile*, pp. 15-38; Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, pp. 87-136.

⁶⁷ *The letters of Peter of Celle*, ed. by Julian Haseldine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The kinds of letters he wrote were only in part pure messages of friendship; some of them were, in fact, business correspondence, while there was also a third typology which presented characteristics similar to both of the aforementioned types. See Haseldine, 'Understanding the Language of *Amicitia*. The Friendship Circle of Peter of Celle (c.1115-1183)', *Journal of Medieval History*, 20 (1994), 237-260.

⁶⁸ Gregory VII, *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII: Selected Letters from the Registrum*, trans. by Ephraim Emerton (New York: Octagon, 1966); *The Letters of John of Salisbury: The Early Letters (1153-1161)*, ed. by W. J. Millor and H. E. Butter, 2 vols (London: Nelson, 1955); *The Letters of John of Salisbury: The Later Letters (1163-1180)*, ed. by C. N. L. Brooke, W. J. Millor, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); J. McLoughlin, 'Amicitia in Practice: John of Salisbury (c.1120-1180) and His Circle,' in *Traditions and Innovations: Essays on British Literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by David G. Allen and Robert A. White (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1990), pp. 165-81.

⁶⁹ Saint Anselm, *Opera omnia ad fidem codicum recensuit Franciscus Salesius Schmitt* (London: Nelson, 1946).

Together with the previously examined examples of political and military treaties, vassalatic chains, commercial agreements, religious brotherhoods and all the other variants of friendship, these medieval interpretations leave an important question to be answered: what is the connection between love and friendship? Both lovers and friends were generally labelled with the appellations of *amici*. In fact, *amor* and *amicitia* had very loosely-defined borders, at least from a purely lexical point of view, and this rendered any attempt at a clear definition and classification very difficult to undertake since ‘love between man and woman was expressed in terms of friendship, and friendship between man and man was expressed in terms of love’.⁷⁰ In medieval French, for instance, *amor* signified both ‘amour’ and ‘amitié’.⁷¹ Similarly, in medieval Castilian *amigo* and *amiga* were frequently adopted to define those who were linked in a sexual or amorous relationship. The same polyvalent connotations of *amare* are noticeable also in the vernacular Italian.⁷² By contrast, a neater separation might be envisaged in the early medieval Latin production in which *amicitia*, though defined as both a personal and private link, was regarded as a bond much stronger than love, since ‘itaque amicitia semper prodest, amor etiam aliquando noce.’⁷³ The rituals of love usually mirrored the vassalatic conventions and formulae,⁷⁴ and for this reason it is not surprising that for friendship ‘en l’absence d’un vocabulaire propre, son champ sémiotique se confond avec celui de l’amour.’⁷⁵ Romances and poetry abounded with those parallelisms between love and friendship and further examples might be taken from the Iberian *cantigas de amor* and *cantigas de amigo*, which will be discussed in the following section.

⁷⁰ Garvase Mathew, ‘Ideals of Friendship’, in *Patterns of Love and Courtesy, Essays in Memory of C. S. Lewis*, ed. by John Lawlor (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), pp. 45-53 (p. 46).

⁷¹ H. Legros, ‘Le vocabulaire de l’amitié’, pp. 131-139.

⁷² The thirteenth-century *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri is a case in point. In fact, the examples of friendship which appear in this work lack a proper definition and they are explained, instead, by adopting the words *amore* and *amare*. See also the definition of ‘amistade’ or ‘amistate’ and ‘amico’ in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, ed. by Aldo Ferrabino, 5 vols (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1970-1976), 1: 202-212.

⁷³ F. J. E. Raby, ‘Amor and Amicitia: A Mediaeval Poem’, *Speculum*, 40 (1965), 599-610 (p. 601). The quotation is attributed to Seneca, *Ep. mor.* VI (35), ‘whereas friendship is always worthy, love can sometimes cause harm’.

⁷⁴ For further details see Alfred Jeanroy, *La poésie lyrique des troubadours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1934), p. 91; C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition*, 2nd edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 1-43; *The Meaning of Courtly Love: Papers of the First Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, March 17-18, 1967*, ed. by F. X. Newman (Albany [N.Y.]: State University of New York Press, 1968). As confirmed by Lewis, the concept of ‘feudalization of love’ had already appeared in Eduard Wechssler, *Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1909; repr. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1969), p. 177. See also Chapter III on Spiritual Friendship about the relationships between the Virgin Mary and her lovers, pp. 127-131, and Chapter VII ‘Other Friends and Friendships’, pp. 263-269.

⁷⁵ Legros, ‘Le vocabulaire de l’amitié’, p. 139.

All of the aforementioned definitions treat the value, significance and interpretations of friendship across Europe during the Middle Ages. They showed that, despite the different backgrounds from which they emerged, certain common traits were continuously present, above all in terms of moral values and attitudes that friends should possess and share in order to be defined as such.

§ 4. Friendship in Medieval Iberia

The pattern of friendly connections outlined above is also reflected in the Iberian Peninsula. The term *amistad* (friendship) was recurrently used as a synecdoche to indicate spiritual and sensual love, kinship and companionship, formal and private alliances – of both offensive and defensive character – pacts of mutual support, as well as any ritualized form of brotherhood. With regard to the latter, as demonstrated by research over the last century on medieval law, the history of institutions and the history of mentality, within the historical and ideological framework of Medieval Iberia friendship and brotherhood frequently coincided. One of the earliest to adopt such an historical and sociological approach was Eduardo de Hinojosa in ‘La fraternidad artificial en España’, a study in which he pointed out the strict connection existing between friendship, peace, security and treaty.⁷⁶ His statement was reinforced by a series of official documents, from the kingdom of León, which displayed a wide range of different agreements dubbed as *hermandades*, *amizdades* or *fraternitas*. The *hermandades* relied upon the fact that their members shared all their goods, and their daily lives, with the other parties. These were two fundamental conditions in order to belong to the same brotherhood, which was not restricted to blood ties. Also the law code of the *Siete Partidas*, elaborated by Alfonso X’s scriptorium in the thirteenth century, as will be examined later, presented and regulated the existing typologies of brotherhoods including the *hermandades*, usually established in order to achieve material or commercial profits.

The benefits which the ‘brothers’ achieved consisted of enjoying equally the profits derived from the properties which they held in common or from the goods on which they claimed a shared benefit. Particularly interesting are the cases of brotherhoods signed among people who shared ecclesiastical estates which, unlike

⁷⁶ Eduardo de Hinojosa y Naveros, ‘La fraternidad artificial en España’, *Revista de Archivos, Museos y Bibliotecas*, XIII (1905), 1-18, published also in *Obras. T. I. Estudios de investigación* (Madrid: Ministerio de Justicia y CSIC, 1948), 259-78. See also *El elemento germánico en el derecho español* (Madrid, 1915; re-ed. Marcial Pons, 1993), p. 380.

previous centuries, were now classified as private property in the hands of the lay owners who kept them. It is worth pointing out that entering a brotherhood was not only a matter of economic and commercial profit, but on several occasions it represented a social tool of integration and protection, aimed at defending its participants from the numerous external threats. An agreed brotherhood was also a way to reconcile enemies that had been divided by anger or by previous crimes and offences committed against each other's honour. For example, Hinojosa mentioned the case of Pedro and García Fernández who, in 1228, signing a perpetual peace with Rodrigo Egea and receiving him as *hermano*, finally put an end to the ongoing rivalry between the two families.⁷⁷

In this way, it may be argued that the majority of the alliances signed in medieval Iberia⁷⁸ rotated around two main points: first, the community of properties, profits and inheritances which those who had no direct heirs had to pass to the other acquired 'brothers' with whom wealth and possessions had been shared; secondly, the moral and pragmatic duty of mutual defence and protection. Hinojosa enlarged this to a pan-European basis, illustrating the numerous variants of agreed brotherhoods, from the French military 'brotherhood of arms', the Italian agrarian *consortium*, the Eastern pacts of amity legitimized by symbolic rituals, the charitable model of some Serbian brotherhoods in which members of the higher social classes hosted and helped the poorer parties, and he even included the cases of certain African tribes, whose members shared any kind of goods and possessions, including their wives. Hinojosa's pioneering study paved the way for other research projects, among which it is important to remember that by Emilio Sáez, who defined friendship as a network less strict and indissoluble than real brotherhoods.⁷⁹

It is reasonable to assert that the situation in the Iberian Peninsula did not differ excessively from that experienced elsewhere in Europe, since friendship was perceived as a *pactum amiciarum*, that is to say a social agreement aimed at protecting both public peace and the constituted order. In eleventh-and twelfth-century León and Castile in particular, the rise of the new *señoríos territoriales* and the strengthening of the municipal authorities were perceived as incumbent threats by the weakest social groups, which found protection within the brotherhoods that they established. An example of this is supplied by Prieto Bances, who distinguished between the concepts of friendship

⁷⁷ Hinojosa, 'La fraternidad artificial', pp. 277-78.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 257-266.

⁷⁹ Emilio Sáez, 'Un diploma interesante para el estudio de la fraternidad artificial', *AHDE*, XVII (1946), 751-52.

and alliance, which continued to be stringently dependent although not perfectly coincident:

pero la paz es diversa según su origen; hay paz nacida del amor y paz nacida del interés mutuo o de la violencia, y a estas distintas paces corresponden amistades distintas; en el primer caso tendremos la amistad natural, aristotélica; en el segundo, la amistad pactada, y en el tercero la amistad impuesta.⁸⁰

Another document, which was probably edited in 1297, describing the council which took place in Ovanos, where the principal representatives of the cities of Navarre were summoned, is equally revealing.⁸¹ According to this document, the assembled *bins homes* (nobles, good and wise men) signed a *dita amiztat* (a pact of alliance) according to which not only had they to behave with mutual respect, but they committed themselves to protect the kingdom of Navarre and its rulers from any dangers and enemies. In the oath that the parties swore, they also committed themselves to preserve the alliance, risking monetary penalties for non-compliance.

Additionally, the consolidation of the vassalatic structures and the adoption of a recognized code of knighthood occurred quite late in the Iberian Peninsula, above all if compared with the development that they experienced in other European countries. Nonetheless, with regard to these themes, very similar debates and questions flourished. For instance, attention was laid on the problem posed by the semantic coincidence between the terms *amor* and *amicitia*, particularly when it referred to formal relationships evidently endowed with emotional connotations. A case in point is the thirteenth-century poem depicting Charlemagne's mourning for his friend and vassal Roland's demise:

Tanto bueno amjgo uos me soljades ganare,
Por uuestra amor ariba, muychos me soljan amare.⁸²

The Emperor's words are imbued with a profound feeling of sorrow which inevitably suggests some kind of personal involvement. His feelings seem to be stronger and more intimate than the mere vassalatic and kinship affection, and this assumption is reinforced by the use of the word *amor* which clearly suggested such an emotive

⁸⁰ Prieto Bances, 'Los amigos en el fuero de Oviedo', *AHDE*, XXIII (1963), 203-246.

⁸¹ *Textos lingüísticos del medioevo español*, ed. by D. J. Gifford and F. W. Hodcroft, 2nd edn (Oxford: Dolphin Book Co., 1966), pp. 145-146.

⁸² *Textos Lingüísticos*, p. 147, 'thanks to you I gained very good friends, because by loving you first, they also loved me'.

orientation. Alongside the emotional experience, the traditional clichés persisted, such as the inheritance of friendship that the king gained through his friend's deeds as well as the status of 'companion of his friend's friends and enemy of his friend's foes'.

At this stage, it would be useful to explain the ambivalence, and sometimes coincidence, of the terms *amor* and *amistad* in the Iberian context, by analysing the numerous examples provided by the *cantigas de amor*, *cantigas de amigo* and *cantigas d'escarnho e de maldizer*. All those collections were composed in Galician-Portuguese, the adopted language for poetry; and despite a few features also appearing in the transpyrenean model of the troubadour *canço*, the peninsular elaboration presented elements of recognized originality.⁸³ As demonstrated by Paden, both the *cantigas de amor* and *cantigas de amigo* are recognizable for the presence of certain key words which appear from the very first stanzas of each poem, and which guide the readers in establishing the genres to which they belong.⁸⁴ A few examples would suffice to clarify this point. In the *cantigas d'amor*, the poetic male voice addresses his lover using the title of *senhor*, which was a female appellation referring to the lady who owned the poet's heart. Conversely, in the *cantigas d'amigo* the key-word which identifies the genre and which most frequently recurs is *amigo*, an epithet which the female poetic voice – which is now the protagonist – uses to address her counterpart. What needs to be stressed is that the denomination of *amigo* was used, in these cases, as a surrogate for 'lord', a title that the female protagonist was unable to use to define her lover, since it was already the appellation adopted to name the king. Despite the fact that the courtly formulae had a striking correspondence in their mirror-like vassalatic rituals, the wide range of semantic connotations related to the term *amigo* went beyond the political and amorous implications which the title of lord used to bear. In fact, *amigo* was used to indicate the lover, the companion, the vassal bounded by a fief and also 'a freeman who had committed himself to a lord, who enjoys his protection and serves him as his dependent'.⁸⁵

Attention must be called also to the fact that the medieval Iberian perception of friendship neither appears as rigidly classified nor as totally deprived of any emotional and philosophical implications, as the analysis of the literary, historical and juridical

⁸³ Linda M. A. Rodrigues, 'On Originality, Courtly Love, and the Portuguese Cantigas', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 27 (1990), 95-107. See also Julian Weiss, 'On the Conventionality of the *Cantigas d'Amor*', *La Corónica*, 26 (1997), 225-245.

⁸⁴ William D. Paden, 'Principles of Generic Classification in the Medieval European Lyric: The Case of Galician-Portuguese', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), 76-97.

⁸⁵ J. F. Niermeyer and C. van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, rev. by J. W. J. Burgers, 2 vols (Leiden: Wissenschaftlichen Buchgesellschaft, 2002), I, 53, cited in W. D. Paden, 'Principles of Generic Classification', p. 91.

context of the time would demonstrate. Both then and now friendship is regarded as a solid base of personal and social life, but it has also been strictly associated with the sphere of human humours and passions, almost to the point of being considered as inescapable and genetically encoded.

§ 5. Friendship in Pre-Alfonsine Literary Production

In order to outline the characteristics of the literary and cultural background which sustained the development of the Alfonsine conception of friendship, in this section attention will be devoted to a selection of didactic, narrative and doctrinal works of Greek and Sanskrit origin which were first translated into Arabic, and subsequently into the Castilian vernacular by the Alfonsine scriptorium in the thirteenth century.⁸⁶ A selection of pre-Alfonsine works, produced between the ninth and the twelfth century, but translated into the language of Castile only from the thirteenth century, such as *Calila et Dimna*, *Sendebâr*, *Libro de los buenos proverbios*, *Flores de filosofía*, *Secreto de los secretos* and the *Historia de la doncella Teodor* will be taken into account in order to illustrate how the phenomenology and typologies of friendship were assimilated, perceived, and sometimes modified, once they entered their new occidental cradle of reception. These works might be catalogued as pieces of ‘wisdom literature’ since they were mainly elaborated for the princes’ education. Moreover, all of them only partly preserved their original narrative structures, while they often suffered from evident moralizations imposed by the Christian context from which they were assimilated.

What emerges from these selected texts is a list of common features on which friendly connections should be based, such as loyalty, trustworthiness, affection, mutual advice and preservation of the other’s secrets. Take the *Calila et Dimna*, for example.⁸⁷ This is a didactic collection of short stories which a fictional philosopher narrates to an imaginary king in order to explain his moral teachings. In fact, the first addressee of the philosopher’s wise words is the sovereign – simultaneously the fictitious character and the real king-reader – whose moral education was forged through the thinker’s learned advice. Most of the protagonists of such narrations are anthropomorphized animals who should stand for everyman and, therefore, for any reader. In fact, in a broader

⁸⁶ The *Poema de Mio Cid*, even if it is a pre-Alfonsine work, will be taken into account only later, in Chapter VI, pp. 222-236.

⁸⁷ *Calila e Dimna*, ed. by J. M. Cacho Blecua and M^a. J. Lacarra (Madrid: Castalia, 1984).

perspective, one may note that the general target of the philosopher's wise teachings included all the good subjects, who might want to emulate their lord's exemplary behaviour. The core of his message is that before establishing any close friendship or trusting others blindly and completely, a person should reach a profound acquaintance with them. Hence the candidates had to show and prove virtues such as the aforementioned loyalty, honesty, wisdom and good advice, in order to gain such an ennobling title:

[...] et ivale toda vía queriendo más et pagándose más dél, atanto que fue el más privado de su compañía, et el que más él amava et preçiava.

Ca el mejor de los amigos es el que más lealmente conseja a su amigo.
Et una de las locuras et de las sandezes deste mundo es querer aver amigos sin lealtad [...].

[...] ca los amigos que meten sus faziendas uno en mano de otro faze más durar el puro amor.⁸⁸

In this context, the gnostic miscellanea *Flores de Filosofía* also deserve some attention.⁸⁹ The text, in which specific warnings to the sovereign again alternated with generic admonitions addressed to all the subjects, unfolds a series of fundamental requirements, such as *buen talente* (good intentions) and the rightful behaviour dictated by *buen seso* (wisdom), that those who claimed the title of friends should necessarily possess.⁹⁰ In particular, in the *Flores de Filosofía* the idea of friendship is imbued with a patent religious tone according to which *el bien fazer* (rightful behaviour), a value also advertised in the *Calila et Dimna*,⁹¹ becomes the prerogative in order to gain both God's love and companions' affection. In fact, a friend should be *sesudo* (wise) and he should *auer en Dios creença* (believe in God) and *amor de los omes* (love for mankind). In these statements the echo of the evangelic sermons is undeniable:

⁸⁸ *Calila e Dimna*, p. 137, 'and he was still loving him more and enjoying his company more, so much that he was the closest among the rest of his company and the one he most loved and respected'; p. 150, 'the best friend is that who gives the most loyal possible advice to his friend'; p. 170, 'one of the crazy and foolish things in life is the yearning for having friends who are not loyal'; p. 171, '[...] because friends who relied on each other make their pure love last for longer'.

⁸⁹ *Flores de Filosofía*, ed. by J. M. Lucía Megías (Alcalá de Henares: Servicio de Publicaciones, 1997).

⁹⁰ In *Flores de Filosofía* a conspicuous number of sentences (though not explicitly related to friendship) refer to the topics of *mansedad* (friendliness, docility), *mesura* (moderation) and *buen seso* (wisdom), which are also fundamental virtues for any good friend.

⁹¹ *Calila e Dimna*, pp. 112 and 234, 'non ay ningund amigo tal commo fazer buena vida', ('there is not as good a friend as living a respectable life') and 'et el omne bueno non ha deste mundo ninguna cosa nin ningund poder nin ningund amigo, sinon las buenas obras et non más', ('and the good man gets nothing from this world, neither power nor good friends, but just his good deeds and nothing more').

[...] non fagas a otro lo que non querrias que fiziesen a ti. Sabet que en amar adios se ajuntan todas las buenas maneras.⁹²

Among the pre-Alfonsine works, the *Historia de la donzella Teodor*, a dialogue-structured narration which is believed to have been adapted from one of the tales from the *Mil y una noches*, also deserves attention.⁹³ In contrast to the already cited miscellanea of sentences, here the moral teachings emerge directly from the narrative diegesis, that is to say from the plot of the story, rather than from the protagonist's rhetorical speech. Apparently anachronistically, above all if one bears in mind the medieval misogynous context in which the tale was set and composed, the girl Teodor, despite her youth, represents the perfect model of a wise, well-educated, discreet, generous and loyal friend. She acts with no fear or reserve in order to save the merchant to whom she is generously attached and grateful for the education and protection he offered her.

It is remarkable that all these works do not exclusively propose models of perfect and exemplary friendships, but they also present some ambiguous and thought-provoking cases. It is interesting to relate the story of the crows and the owls presented in the *Calila et Dimna*, which the philosopher narrated in order to provide an answer to the sovereign's question about how to prevent falseness and deceit from those who claimed to be his friends ('Dame agora enxemplo del omne que se engaña en el enemigo que le muestra lealtad et amor').⁹⁴ The principal plot, which contains several other 'stories within the story' recounted by the same fictional characters – known as *mise-en-abîme* narrative pattern⁹⁵ – focuses on the theme of 'natural enmity' which, in spite of any rational attempt to subdue it, is nearly impossible to overcome. The events involved a flock of crows which were attacked, and most of whom were murdered, by the owls which they had trusted. In the attempt to find the most opportune way to react

⁹²*Flores de Filosofía*, XIV:8, 'do not do unto others what you do not want others do to you. All the good principles joined together in loving God'. The same idea, though with minor lexical variants, also appears in the *Libro de los cien capítulos: (dichos de sabios en palabras breves e complidas)*, ed. by Marta Haro Cortés (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1998), p. 38, 'non fagas a otro lo que non querrias que fiziesen a ty. [...] En el temor de Dios se ayuntan las buenas maneras' ('do not do to others what you do not want others do to you. [...] The good actions are performed in the fear of God').

⁹³*Historia de la donzella Teodor*, ed. by Nieves Baranda and Víctor Infantes (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, S.A., 1995).

⁹⁴*Calila e Dimna*, pp. 224-252.

⁹⁵ For an introductory study see Cesare Segre, 'Le forme e le tradizioni didattiche', in *La littérature didactique, allégorique et satirique*, Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, vol. VI, n° 1, ed. by H. R. Jauss (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitätsverlag, 1968), pp. 58-145; M^a. J. Lacarra, *Cuentística medieval en España: los orígenes* (Zaragoza: Dpto. de Literatura Española de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 1979); M. Picone, 'Tre tipi di cornice novellistica: modelli orientali e tradizione narrativa medievale', *Filologia e Critica*, 13 (1998), 3-26.

against any future threats, the king of the crows summoned his loyal advisors. Amongst them, the voice of the sovereign's closest and wisest private advisor emerges, warning not to trust the mellifluous and falsely humble words of the enemies, and blaming the decision made by one of the crow's ancestors who chose an owl – '[...] por natura falso et engañoso'⁹⁶ – as their king. Looking at the events from the crows' perspective, it seems that they were stabbed in the back, but the owl's behaviour assumes negative connotations only if presented from the enemies' point of view. By contrast, the apparently deceptive action carried out by the owl-king was motivated by a loyal goal – the attempt to save his own flock – which makes him an example of good friend, even if only for one of the parties involved.

Another example, appearing in Book V of the *Calila et Dimna*, is worth discussing: a crow, after having witnessed the liberation of a flock of pigeons by the intervention of a mouse who introduced himself as their friend, was so staggered by the latter's loyalty that he pleaded for his friendship. The mouse rejected the proposal by explaining that a relationship between himself and the crow would be impossible to maintain since the two animals belonged to two biologically rival races, of which one would naturally prevail.⁹⁷ Again, the theory of enmity of nature appears, but it is expanded by distinguishing between *enemistad entre iguales* (enmity between equals) and *enemistad* arisen between subjects of unequal conditions. In both the cases the possibility to sign a truce, even though temporary, is not completely denied, but those who tie themselves with their enemies, believing in the possibility of an eternal friendship, are destined to be deceived since:

[...] et la paz et la tregua del que ha algo menester las más vezes enemistad se torna, et non deve el omne fiar por tal tregua nin ser engañado por ella; ca el agua, maguer sea bien escalentada con el fuego, non dexa por eso de amatar el fuego, si de suso se le echan. Et solamente tal es el que faze amistad con su enemigo commo el que lleva la culebra en su seno, que no sabe cuándo se le ensañará et lo matará.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Calila e Dimna*, p. 232, 'false and deceitful'.

⁹⁷ The same idea is expressed by the bull Schanzabeh (Sançeba) in a monologue in which he regretted that he had forgotten for a moment to be an herbivore and that, for this reason, he did not belong by nature to the lion's environment. In fact, between the two, Sançeba was the weaker and, consequently, the natural prey for the stronger. See *Calila e Dimna*, p. 157.

⁹⁸ The same example appears in story V of the *Disciplina Clericalis*, a tale re-elaborated from Aesop's original story, probably well known during the Middle Ages. *Calila e Dimna*, p. 207, 'and peace and truce with an interested person most of the time turns into enmity, and man should not either trust such a truce or be deceived by it; since it is like the water which, even though is warmed by the fire, still extinguishes the fire if it is thrown on it. And that who makes friend with his enemy is like the man who bears a snake on his chest and he never knows when it will mercilessly react and kill him'.

Despite the abundance and validity of the examples provided by the mouse in order to demonstrate his assumption, the crow insists by affirming that friendship ‘entre los buenos’ (between those who are good) goes beyond any racial distinction since it relies on the nobility of soul which is supposed to be independent from any rank or class distinction.⁹⁹

The examples of ‘enmity by nature’ do not stand alone and numerous other cases appear in which the value of friendship is undermined by avarice, cowardice and human vices. Again the *Calila et Dimna* provides a good example and particularly emblematic is the framing narrative of the two jackals, from which the collection derives its name. Dimna is represented as a betrayer and an evil-doer when it comes to social climbing. He does not listen to his friend Calila’s advice and he pursues his malevolent plot against the flourishing friendship – based on pure affection and mutual trust – between the king and the bull Sañeba, since he fears that the latter might usurp the privileged position of counsellor and friend which the jackal claims for himself. Although it may be generally asserted that the focus is usually on the positive characteristics of friendship, its practical accomplishment is constantly frustrated by interference caused by human passions and temptations, whose dominion is nearly impossible to subjugate.

As reported in the *Libro de los Buenos Proverbios* – a collection of aphorisms attributed to classical authorities – friendship can be either fortified or weakened by the actions and behaviour of subjects trusted as friends:

E dixo Socrat: - El que es de buenas mañas esse es de buena vida y la salut es vida perdurable y su amistad es poca y las buenas mañas fazen al omne grant amor y bien querençia.¹⁰⁰

This idea recalls Plato’s statement according to which *el amor* and *el desamor* are motivated by astrological affinities; therefore individuals found themselves involved in those relationships not by volition, guided by emotions and rational thoughts, but rather because some supernatural essence moved them towards those outcomes. By accepting the idea that everything had been written in the stars, the power of human free will is completely denied. Such a contradiction would equally question the value of the medieval didactic and moral collections examined above, which were aimed at

⁹⁹ The idea proposed by the crow recalls the Aristotelian concept of perfect friendship between those who are good or alike in virtues. See Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, VIII, 3 (6-9)-1156 b.

¹⁰⁰ *Libro de los Buenos Proverbios*, ed. by Harlan Sturm (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1971), p. 77, ‘and Socrates said: that who acts honestly lives a good life, and his health is sign of a durable life and his friendship is little and his good actions make him gain great love and affection’.

instructing the readers/listeners about how to recognize good friends and how to behave as such accordingly.

It would be appropriate here to stress the fact that the aforementioned *sententia* does not specify whether such a theory of a transcendental origin of human relations should be applied also to friendship, but the formula is so generic that it would be easy to apply also to that context. Moreover, as reported in the following statement attributed to Pythagoras:

Y castiguovos que ayades de los otros omnes los mejores por amigos y los mas nobles y que le seades buenos en dicho y en fecho de guisa que se aprovechen ellos de vos y vos dellos.¹⁰¹

Friendship is re-evaluated as a link based on mutual support between individuals who are genuinely noble souls.

§ 6. Other Pre-Alfonsine Categorizations: An Overview

From the aforementioned pre-Alfonsine literary corpus a taxonomy of friendship might be extrapolated, together with a whole spectrum of significant features, such as the genealogy of amity, the social implications which generated the bond or influenced its accomplishment, the definitions of friends, the proofs to verify the reliability of the relationships and the similarities and differences between the roles of friends, companions and counsellors. The modern sociological approach to the subject has broadened the perspective and parameters of definition by suggesting and taking into account biological factors such as gender, age and personality, as well as other influential elements like the physical environment, ideology, occupation and the geographical and social mobility of the characters involved.¹⁰² Even though it might appear somewhat anachronistic a statement, the typologies recognized in the early Castilian literary production in some ways do conform to this pattern, within which it is possible to accommodate several typologies of friendship. Among them one can distinguish the categories of *amistad por vezindat* (friendship from proximity), which arose by sharing the same natural habitat; secondly, *amistad de natura* (natural friendship), which was the link between individuals belonging to the same race or living

¹⁰¹ *Libro de los Buenos Proverbios*, p. 142, ‘and I suggest that you should have the best and the noblest among the other men as friends and that you should be good to them both in words and deeds so that they can gain advantage from you as you can do of them’.

¹⁰² J. Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974).

in the same country; amity between exponents of the same social and professional status; gender relationships and connections definable as ‘blessed amities’, that is to say bonds generated by destiny and, therefore, independent from human free will.

Amistad por vezindat, if interpreted as the ineluctable result of sharing the same natural environment, would imply the existence of a mechanistic pattern according to which, given specific circumstances, certain relationships evolve automatically.¹⁰³ If such a premise were to be accepted, the rational power of man and the influence played by feelings and emotions in forging social relationships would be undermined completely. Moreover, although the strengthening of a friendly bond can be evidently facilitated by sharing the same social environment, it does not depend strictly on it. Alongside this first category, *amistad de natura* also appears, which is the connection between characters sharing the same biological and ethnic roots. By transposing the model suggested by the allegorical animal tales into a human pattern, the equivalent of *amistad de natura* would be the link between individuals sharing the same conditions, thus belonging to the same social environment. It has to be admitted that, on the one hand, this could facilitate friendly exchanges, but on the other hand it could turn into an extremely restrictive space within which the possibilities of forging any relationship were limited. This condition would also explain the difficulty, and often impossibility of a sovereign establishing friendly relationships, since he was at the top of the social hierarchy and occupied an elevated sphere to which only a selected few were allowed access, yet without ever equalling his status. Also, the vocabulary adopted to define those relationships stresses the ranking system on which it was based: in fact, the more highly positioned figures named their lower companions as ‘friends’, but the contrary never happened and the subordinated subjects were only allowed to use denominations – such as ‘my lord’ – which marked their inferior social positions.

Predominantly in the gnomic texts the relationships between unequal subjects are totally denied and depicted as impossible to realize, but in the *Calila et Dimna* and in the *Historia de la donzella Teodor* some exceptions appear. In the former, the relationship between the king and the bull Sançeba seems to transcend any discrimination caused by their uneven social positions. Indeed their friendship is not denied *a priori* and its failure is rather due to the external intervention and threat presented by the false counsellor Dimna. Similarly, in the *Historia de la donzella Teodor* the protagonist is portrayed as her lord’s best friend, not because she felt obliged

¹⁰³ *Calila e Dimna*, pp. 165-70.

or because she was victim of a natural subjugation dictated both by her gender and social inferiority, but rather because she acted out of pure love, generosity and devotion.

By deepening the analysis of the potential links dictated by nature or favoured by the shared environment, another category is noticeable and deserves some attention: the relationships between people belonging to the same professional group. Common interests, professional solidarity and similarities of habits might constitute the seeds of solid bonds and commercial agreements, which could even develop into personal friendships. Again the *Historia de la donzella Teodor* provides a valuable instance: the merchant ‘de Túnez’ is helped in a difficult moment by ‘un moro que se llamaba Mahoma, que era grandísimo amigo suyo’ who put at the merchant’s disposal all his possessions ‘el mercader, desde los tomó, dio muchas gracias a Dios por ello, por haber hallado tan buen recaudo en aquel su amigo.’¹⁰⁴ The question is whether the two were friends because they both belonged to the same professional category or it was rather a coincidence which supplemented the already existing friendship between them. Since the narration does not give any further details, the question remains open. In all likelihood, however, either some moral or contractual rules existed – similar to those applied already in Ancient Greek societies – aimed at managing loans and borrowings in ambiguous situations in which real amities and mere commercial associations overlapped.¹⁰⁵

No less significant are the relationships between individuals bonded together by common evil thoughts and fraudulent intents. Friendship was by definition built on mutual succour and loyalty, but the respect of those pragmatic and moral rules did not eliminate the possibility of applying them in order to achieve an immoral goal. In the story of the *Calila et Dimna* entitled ‘El hombre que quería robar a su compañero’ the analysis of the adopted terminology clarifies such a concept even further.¹⁰⁶ At this stage a precautionary note is necessary: the extradiegetic third-person narrator is using the thief-character’s perspective to narrate the episodes. The character dubbed as *compañero* is the partner that the protagonist wants to rob, while he used the appellation of *amigo* to address the companion of his ‘que entró con él a lo furto’,¹⁰⁷ stressing the existence of a close relationship strengthened by mutual support and agreement in committing a crime.

¹⁰⁴ *Historia de la donzella Teodor*, p. 60, ‘a Moor named Mohamad was a good friend of his’, ‘the merchant took them and thanked God for having found the help of such a friend’.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Millett, *Lending and Borrowing*.

¹⁰⁶ *Calila e Dimna*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96, ‘the one who entered with him to rob the other’.

With regard to this point also the story of ‘El ladrón y el rayo de luna’ is instructive. Here the protagonists address each other as *compañeros*.¹⁰⁸ Their comradeship was the result of a common desire to obtain material profits from the planned robbery, although their supposed friendship disappeared just when it was most needed. In fact, once their targeted victim discovered their malevolent attempts against his property, he seized one of them and ‘los otros sus compañeros, en que lo vieron así, fuyeron’.¹⁰⁹ The heroic idea of a friend who is ready to die for the other’s sake is here supplanted by the selfish interest to get the most from that association, without taking any personal risks or responsibilities. In all likelihood this is also the reason why the epithet of friend is absent in the thieves’ dialogues and is replaced by *compañero*. It might be deduced that friendship exists when people share the same – either praiseworthy or deplorable – goals, together with the secrets related to them. Nonetheless, as Aristotle had already foreseen, those interested relationships were destined to end every time the original purpose would be achieved or it would expire.

Another interesting aspect to investigate is the connection between friendship and the gender of the individuals involved. It has to be remembered that, in that medieval misogynous atmosphere, women found it difficult to establish relationships different from their familial bonds, particularly so if the friendship involved individuals of the opposite gender. In the corpus under examination in this section, three main typologies of relationships involving women appear: though rare, friendships with men; relations between women; and friendships as a prolongation of marital and familial affection. Before continuing, it should be remembered that the explicit vocabulary referring to friendship appears only with regard to the second listed category, while the others, even though conforming to the canonical pattern regulating friendly relationships, lacked any specific lexical reference.

The non-familial or marital relationships between men and women, regarded as socially unacceptable in that early medieval context, were also defined in the gnostic texts as proper threats for any wise man. In fact, the didactic collections warned the reader not to trust a woman ever, since her company and presence would be deleterious and misleading. In the *Secreto de los secretos* such a message is conveyed by reporting the admonitions, supposedly given by Aristotle to his disciple Alexander: ‘a la mujer nin al moço nunca los tus secretos rreuelaras, porque las mujeres et los moços encubren

¹⁰⁸ *Calila e Dimna*, pp. 109-11, ‘the thief and the moonbeam’.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110, ‘the other companions who saw him in that situation fled’.

lo que non saben'.¹¹⁰ Women and children were excluded from the list of suitable candidates for friendship because whoever claimed that position should be able to keep a secret to the point to risk their own lives for it. The philosopher continues:

Alexandre, non confies en las obras et seruiçios de las mujeres, non te encomiendes o aconpanes con ellas. [...] Alexandre, rreconosçe el fecho de la rreyna de los indios que a ti, so encobrimiento de amistança en fingida, te embio la moça que de la su ninnes fue criada con venino de sierpes, por ende assi que la su naturaleza era tornada en naturaleza de serpente.¹¹¹

Women were rejected since they were considered naturally malevolent and unable to forge any real friendship, since this amicable link was based on virtues such as loyalty and trustworthiness which female figures supposedly lacked in their genetic makeup. They were also held in contempt and their interference into other relationships would cause two potential results: either women were portrayed as evil subjects whose malicious actions destroyed pre-existing friendships (usually between men), or they likely fell victim of false friends who easily took advantage of their ingenuity, due to their lack of wisdom and astuteness. In both cases, the relationships involving women were unlikely to resist over time. In fact, female characters were unreliable partners, possessing either too much or too little sagacity to share interests, attitudes and profits with men. The fables of the *Calila et Dimna* present a wide array of examples displaying those extremes. In the story 'Del galápago et del ximio' – narrated in chapter VII – the pure love which originally linked the two male friends was transformed into an 'interested relationship' once the turtle's wife, extremely jealous of the amity between the two males, pretended to be affected by a terrible cancer which could be cured only with the ape's heart.¹¹² The husband, wrestling with the dilemma of the love he felt for the ape and the *amistad de natura* which linked him to the wife, succumbed in the end to the woman's plot and he tried to obtain his friend's heart; even though in the end the latter saved himself thanks to his own sagacity.

The tale of 'Las garças e del çarapico' represents, instead, the antithesis of the previous example.¹¹³ The female heron 'avía ella un çarapico mucho amigo, que ella

¹¹⁰ *Secreto de los Secretos*, ed. by Philip B. Jones, Scripta Humanistica 117 (Washington: Potomac, 1990), p. 69, 'you should never reveal your secrets to women and children, because they hide what they do not know'.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85, 'Alexander, do not trust women's works and their services, do not rely upon nor join them [...]. Alexander, acknowledge the events about the queen of the Indians who, pretending to be your friend, sent you a maiden that she personally nourished with viper's poison, so that she was turned into a snake'.

¹¹² *Calila e Dimna*, pp. 253-62, 'the turtle and the ape'.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 337-51, 'the herons and the curlew'.

mucho amava, et sin él non veía plazer, et a quien fazía parte en todas sus cosas'.¹¹⁴ However, he selfishly exploited the great love that the female heron felt for him by convincing her to kill her husband first and to commit suicide later. The female protagonist is in this case manipulated and deceived because she lacks any malice and she is, instead, excessively naïve. Moreover, the false friend convinced her that she would be able to find a new husband among his own circle of friends. This is another case in point of the aforementioned idea of inheritance of friendship which here reaches its climax by the assumption that even love can be somehow provoked by the respect that one feels for those who are friends of other friends.¹¹⁵

However, two exceptional cases depicting the possibility of having or being a female friend emerge from the *Historia de la donzella Teodor* and from one of the 'stories within the story' which comprise the *Sendebär* respectively. In the former, as already discussed, the wise Teodor plays the role of the merchant's best friend and she represents a sort of mirage in that particular historical and social setting. In the latter, entitled 'Enxenplo del mercador del sándalo, e del otro mercador', despite the fact that it is a tale extrapolated from a text which is declaredly misogynous in content (as the title itself *Libro de los engaños de las mujeres* declares) the generally negative attitudes towards women usually disappeared whenever they demonstrated wisdom and respectability, above all if derived from their advanced years and experience.¹¹⁶ The protagonist of the aforementioned story is a merchant deceived by the dwellers of the city in which he thought to sell his merchandise, but he was wisely advised by an old woman who revealed to him the hostile trap set up by her fellow citizens with the intent to harm all foreigner sellers.

Despite the positive characteristics that female figures might, though rarely, possess, relationships between women were generally regarded as unachievable or extremely unstable. Any respectable lady was not allowed to establish personal relationships outside her close family circles and for this reason, as a consistent number of literary examples suggest, the only female figure allowed to access an honourable woman's private quarters was the *alcahueta*, the procuress.¹¹⁷ In the case of *Sendebär*

¹¹⁴ *Calila e Dimna*, p. 338, 'she had a curlew as a very close friend, whom she deeply loved, and she had no joy without him and she let him participate in all her things'.

¹¹⁵ See a modern sociological perspective on the subject in Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*.

¹¹⁶ *Sendebär*, ed. by Lacarra, (Madrid: Cátedra, 1996), pp. 148-53, 'example of the merchant of sandal wood and the other merchant'.

¹¹⁷ Probably the best known example emerging from Castilian literature is the character of Celestina, the procuress protagonist of the homonymous fifteenth-century novel attributed to Fernando de Rojas. Her name is still adopted as a metonymy for describing attitudes and behaviours which recall those adopted by the fictional procuress.

the procuress embodied both the roles of a friend and an accomplice, by trying to acquire the women's confidence and full trust whilst carrying out her plots, which she also managed to render attractive by embellishing them with mellifluous and kind words. The stereotyped old procuress usually addressed the naïve lady with the epithet of *amiga* and she behaved accordingly, '[...] amiga, ¿quieres que te diga la verdad? Darte é buen consejo.'¹¹⁸ It is noteworthy that the procuress frequently assumed an ambiguous position since she sided with the man in his amorous intrigue, while simultaneously she behaved amicably towards the lady whom she had been commissioned to win. Evidently enough, she was in fact favouring neither; rather she was incited by her personal interests and therefore she would have served simply the party which promised the most remunerative reward for her.

Nevertheless, a sort of female solidarity among the women with whom a procuress came into contact sometimes appeared. In certain circumstances, most of which were caused by the same procuress' manipulations, the adulterous woman was rescued from the physical tortures and humiliations which her husband or his family could legally inflict on her. It is unclear whether the procuress acted under the influence of her personal and emotional attachment to the other woman or, rather, by an innate sense of natural friendship emerging between individuals of the same gender. With regard to this point the story of 'El carpintero, el barbero y sus mujeres'¹¹⁹ included in the *Calila e Dimna* provides another important case study. One of the two female protagonists let herself be punished on behalf of the other, who was in fact the one who committed adultery. Again, the reasons which generated such an action are not clearly expressed and they could be attributed either to a real friendship existing between the women or, more likely, to a malicious agreement which needed to be preserved to the death.

Only on a few occasions was a woman rescued from the limbo in which she was segregated by prejudices, and that could happen when she was bonded in a marital relation or constrained by blood ties. The characters of the mothers are revealing; they embodied the models of perfect friends thanks to their wisdom, loyalty, good counsel and exemplary behaviour. A significant episode appears in Chapter IV of the *Calila et Dimna*. The protagonist is the lion-king's mother who behaved as every loyal friend should do, by not revealing the identity of the person who told her about the treachery that Dimna was carrying out against her son's trustworthy friend Sançeba. Albeit

¹¹⁸ *Sendebâr*, p. 119, '[...] my friend, do you want me to tell you the truth? I will give you good advice'.

¹¹⁹ *Calila e Dimna*, pp. 139-43, 'the carpenter, the barber and their wives'. This tale also influenced the French *Fabliau de Tresses* and the Italian *Decameron* by Boccaccio.

relatively rare and frequently anomalous, where a positive example of a female friend could exist it was personified by the sovereign's mother, having been able to keep the secret and to respect what she had sworn to the person who trusted her. She also played the role of a wise counsellor, by warning her son against the falseness of his envious vassals who had unjustly accused Sañçeba, the only 'sabio et leal et verdadero' (wise, loyal and true) friend that the sovereign had. One might imagine that the loyalty of the king's mother's was inspired by her maternal love; however, the fact that her actions towards those who did not belong to her close family were equally faithful suggests that her loyalty and friendly attitudes were unchangeable and incontrovertible. It also has to be borne in mind that the mother of this story represents a prototype of female friendship in which a certain equality between the parts is safeguarded; mainly due to her privileged social position (only a few candidates from the highest ranks might claim to be the sovereign's friends and trustees).

It has to be noted that this general overview, which aimed at outlining a brief history of friendship and detecting its major interpretations and transformations over the Iberian Middle Ages, constitutes an essential premise in order to outline a taxonomy of friendship as it emerges from a comparative analysis of the Alfonsine law-collection *Siete Partidas*, the Marian songs *Cantigas de Santa María* and the chronicle *Estoria de España*. However, the exploration of these three masterpieces will follow a line of thought very similar to that adopted up to this point, especially in the discussion of the requirements, characteristics and typologies of friendships which recall those emerging from the aforementioned pre-Alfonsine texts. To conclude, it has to be remembered that the aforementioned pre-Alfonsine works, translated and re-elaborated in the Learned King's scriptorium, left an undeniable footprint in the following production; however, as it will be discussed in the following chapters, some original Alfonsine characteristics also emerged.

Chapter II

Friendship in the Works of Alfonso X of Castile

§ 1. Alfonso X: The King

Having focused in the previous chapter on the classical and medieval interpretations of *amicitia*, this section will now turn to examine the central subject of this study, which is the idea of friendship emerging from the literary production ascribed to Alfonso X of Castile (1252-1284).¹ He was probably the best known king of Medieval Spain, later dubbed ‘the Learned’, for his cultural achievements. He was the eldest son of Ferdinand III of Castile (1217- 1252) – ‘el Santo’ – and Beatriz of Swabia, Emperor Frederick II’s granddaughter. Alfonso X’s genealogical tree and the connections he established during his lifetime contributed to place him at the centre of events both within the Peninsula and on a wider European scale. His fame was partly derived from his noble ancestry, such as his great grandfather Alfonso VIII of Castile (1158-1214) on one side, under whose rule the victory of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) was celebrated (an emblematic achievement in the ‘Reconquest’ campaign); and, on the other side, his great grandmother Eleanor of Aquitaine (1162-1214). He strategically married Violante of Aragón, thus becoming Jaime I’s (1213-1276) son-in-law, and forged a bond with Portugal later, by giving his daughter Beatriz in marriage to Alfonso III (1248- 1279). Alfonso X had inherited his father’s prosperous and unified Christian kingdom in 1252, which he planned to enhance first by leading a series of crusades aimed at seizing the residual Islamic strongholds of the Peninsula and those in Northern Africa (*fecho de*

¹ A more complete insight into Alfonso X’s biography: Evelyn S. Procter, *Alfonso X of Castile, Patron of Literature and Learning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, [1980]); Antonio Ballesteros-Beretta, *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Barcelona: Salvat, 1963); John E. Keller, *Alfonso X, el Sabio* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967); *Alfonso X, el Sabio, vida, obra y época*, ed. by Juan Carlos de Miguel Rodríguez, Angela Muñoz Fernández, Cristina Segura Graiño (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales, 1989); *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X the Learned of Castile and his Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, ed. by Robert I. Burns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1990); Manuel González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio, 1252-1284* (Palencia: Editorial La Olmeda, 1993); Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) and *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa María: A Poetic Biography* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1998); M. González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2004); H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, el Sabio: una biografía* (Madrid: Editorial Polifemo, 2003); Peter Linehan, *Spain, 1157-1300: A Partible Inheritance* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2008), pp. 106-214.

allende).² Secondly, he sought to obtain the title of Holy Roman Emperor, which he claimed by dint of his Germanic origins (*fecho del imperio*).³

The historical accounts concerning Alfonso X's reign inform us that he experienced extremes of both social and political instability and conditions of splendour and fame, the culmination of which was probably his coronation as *Rey de Romanos* in 1257. Alfonso's policy from the same year aimed at increasing the Castilian control and presence over the southern territories by breaking, if necessary, the vassalatic alliances which his father had established with the Muslim rulers of the southern enclaves in order to preserve his newly-acquired territories and to guarantee social order. In 1264 the emir of Granada, Muhammad I, disregarded the vassalatic agreement which had connected him to the Castilian crown since 1246. Alfonso X was taken by surprise by the emir's unexpected volte-face and the attack which the latter helped to carry out against the Christian frontiers and, no less dramatically, the secret organization of a Mudejar revolt which flared up simultaneously in Murcia and in the rest of Andalusia. From 1265 the revolt was suppressed thanks to the support of Alfonso III of Portugal and Jaime I of Aragon, and Castilian authority prevailed, but in the process something was inevitably lost: the feudal links which had entrenched the monarch and the vassal Muslim princes (who swore loyalty in return for administrative rights and a resemblance of independence) were replaced by new agreements based on temporary and retractable contracts. Moreover, the rebellions had left difficult situations to control, which consisted of the Christian repopulation of the southern territories, abandoned by most of the Mudejar inhabitants, and the attempt to guarantee order and stability once the kingdom of Granada was no longer fulfilling the task of mediator.

Those first signs of administrative and political changes are emblematic of Alfonso X's position as an *ante litteram* regent. He endeavoured to forge a new conception of power by trying to impose a notion of authority based on the idea that the sovereigns were 'vicarios de Dios' (God's vicars) and that affairs could be separated into secular and spiritual domains, which would be ruled by the king and the Pope respectively.⁴ According to his political thought, the king should occupy the central and dominant position in a hierarchical system where all the other components had to participate actively, yet without ever undermining his royal supremacy. Those

² In 1243 Alfonso X organized the campaign to seize Murcia; he supported his father's campaign in conquering Seville (1248), and he also took Jerez in 1253 and Niebla in 1262.

³ Carlos Estepa, 'Alfonso X y el "fecho del imperio"', *Revista de Occidente*, 37 (1984), 43-54.

⁴ Although Alfonso X tried to insert Canon Law into his Civil Code, the two spheres were promoted as independent fields; see Gregory Peter Andrachuk, 'Alfonso el Sabio: Courtier and Legislator', *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 9 (1983), 439-449.

principles were no mere abstract theorizations, but materialized in a series of innovative juridical norms which the king established, enhanced or reformulated, and most of which obviated the previous *fueros*. An extensive part of the new legislation pulled the rug from underneath the magnates and the noble class, for whom the ancient *fueros* represented the bulwarks of their privileges and superiority. Predominantly for this reason, the nobles rebelled against the king in 1272, during the *Cortes* of Burgos, since they saw their positions and status severely threatened by the new Alfonsine decrees.⁵ Although this was not the first time that the aristocrats had risen against Alfonso X, the previous upheavals had in reality come to nothing, since the leading motives had been individual or familial specific claims. What changed in 1272 was that the aristocracy joined together in order to defend their class identity, threatened by the new royal impositions.

A step backwards is needed here in order to understand the sequence of events which led up to that point. From 1255 to 1264 a series of political changes had been experienced; the *Fuero Real* in particular had been issued in numerous areas such as Old Castile, Extremadura, Transierra, the kingdoms of Toledo and Andalucia, while the royal treasury had invested heavily in the African campaigns as well as in financing the *fecho del imperio*. Nevertheless, despite the fact that those campaigns were emptying the royal coffers, the nobles had not been directly affected. But things changed after the Mudejar revolt in 1264, when the nobles showed their impotence and loose organization in defending the territories under their control. Moreover, with the *Privilegios General de Extremadura*, in the same year, Alfonso X allowed the councils of that region to become direct vassals of the king and of his heirs, without the necessity to establish first a vassalatic bond with some of the members of the high aristocracy. Obviously, the nobles were losing their predominant positions, threatened by the new law which, in fact, was not withdrawn, and such a tension ineluctably exploded after the *Cortes* summoned in Burgos in 1272. This situation caused the Castilian sovereign numerous hardships which were definitively overcome only when the monarch softened his reforms, obliged by the fact that even the representatives of the Military Orders and others among his previous supporters had assisted the rebels.⁶

⁵ This subject has been highly debated, but it seems likely that the *Fuero Real* and the *Espéculo* were redacted around 1254 and promulgated the following year while the *Siete Partidas* were completed around 1265, although the official emission is believed to have occurred only a century later, under the patronage of Alfonso XI in 1348.

⁶ The justification could be found in the fact that most of those institutions experienced a process of aristocratization and consequently their members joined together in a sort of class solidarity. See Carlos de Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares hispánicas en la Edad Media (siglos XII-XV)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons; Arganda del Rey, Madrid: Latorre Literaria, 2003) and 'La monarquía y las Órdenes Militares

Political difficulties for the sovereign came from other directions as well, since his expansionist dream and desire for control were not limited exclusively to the Iberian territories. Alfonso X claimed, because of his mother's Staufen origins, the title of Holy Roman Emperor which was offered to him in 1256 by the Pisan ambassador Bandino di Guido Lancia, representative of the Ghibelline faction ruling the Republic of Pisa. Once Frederick II, Emperor of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, died in 1250, the throne passed to his son Conrad IV, but with his demise in 1254 the Pope had the opportunity to nominate William II of Holland in order to oppose the Ghibelline factions. On William's death, the Ghibellines of Pisa were able to gain some breathing space by investing Alfonso X of Castile with the title of *Rey de Romanos* and signing an agreement according to which the Iberian sovereign would defend and preserve their city against its enemies, in return for the city's loyalty and support for Alfonso X's claim of the imperial inheritance. However, the situation in the Italian Peninsula was excessively complicated on a number of fronts, not least by the proliferation of competing powers, first among which was the Papacy and its network of support. This was, in all likelihood, the principal reason for which Alfonso X never managed to achieve his goal in reality, as the failure of his last interview with Pope Gregory X in 1275 demonstrated.

The events which characterized his reign, the fact that he had to go back on his reforms in order to preserve order and stability, the frustration of his imperialistic ambitions, the crisis for the succession to the throne and the deposition by his son Sancho IV in 1282, have all led his political management to be considered a failure.⁷ Yet by contrast, in the cultural field he is renowned as a notable patron of the arts and sciences whose cultural authority not only went unchallenged but endured long after his death.

durante el reinado de Alfonso X', *Hispania* (Spain), 178 (1991), 409-465; M. González Jiménez, 'Relaciones de las Órdenes Militares con la corona castellana', *Historia Instituciones Documentos*, 18 (1991), 209-222.

⁷ Cayetano J. Socarras, *Alfonso X of Castile: A Study on Imperialistic Frustration* (Barcelona: Hispam, 1976).

§ 2. An Artist among Artists: Alfonso X and his Scriptorium

Alfonso X was assigned a variety of roles spanning several spheres, from his political duties as ruler and emperor, his religious responsibilities as champion of Christianity, and his intellectual and cultural position of *magister*, supervisor and author of an outstanding literary, scientific, historic and juridical production. To be more precise, the birthplace of the diverse works usually labelled as Alfonsine was his royal scriptorium, a term which indicates simultaneously the physical place in which poets, translators, compilers, copyists and miniaturists worked, as well as, in a figurative sense, their co-participation in the same artistic school.⁸

The Iberian Jewish community was particularly active in this field and most of the translators from Arabic into Latin belonged to its ranks. Translation was a consolidated activity, skilfully practised (although not exclusively) in Toledo since the city was recovered from the Islamic dominion in 1085. The Toledan School retained an unchallenged fame which was increased by the numerous oriental texts within its reach, and by the widespread common practice of translation among its bilingual population.⁹ No less relevant was the fact that from the twelfth century the Toledan School attracted intellectuals and scholars from the rest of Europe, seduced by the fact that Greek philosophical, medical and scientific texts were translated there into Arabic or directly into Latin, guaranteeing in such a way the passage of knowledge from the East to the West. Indeed Toledo, in whose Cathedral library the texts were kept to be consulted and studied, represented a major, though not unique, cultural centre through which most of the oriental production reached the European market. Nonetheless, the presence and influence of Arabic scholars belonging to the *Scuola Poetica Siciliana*, at the court of Frederick II, Emperor of the Two Sicilies (c. 1225-1250), in Palermo should not be forgotten.¹⁰ Frederick II, dubbed *stupor mundi*, was himself familiar with Arabic language and culture (he even spoke, read and wrote Arabic). Under his patronage works of philosophy, medicine, astrology, music and poetry originated from the Arabic world, as well as those from the Andalusian Arabic production itself, were translated

⁸ *El Scriptorium alfonsí: de los Libros de astrología a las 'Cantigas de Santa María'*, ed. by Jesús Montoya Martínez, Ana Domínguez Rodríguez (Madrid: Complutense Editorial, 1999).

⁹ Marie T. D'Averny, 'Translations and Translators', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, with Carol D. Lanham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 421-462.

¹⁰ A. Pagliaro, *Poesia giullaresca e poesia popolare* (Bari: Laterza, 1958), see in particular Chapter 'Riflessi di poesia araba in Sicilia', pp. 233-247; María Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 27-70.

and adopted as didactic instruments to the point that ‘for a time Frederick’s court was a serious challenge to Toledo as the centre of Arabic learning and translation in Europe’.¹¹

It should be stressed that the importance of translation and culture which Toledo had maintained for nearly two centuries was not wholly undermined by the emergence of the Alfonsine scriptorium, and in fact its fame persisted until the fifteenth century. It has to be admitted, however, that when Alfonso X together with his court moved from Toledo to the south of the kingdom in 1253, with the primary objective of embarking on the *Repartimiento de Sevilla* (the partition and grant of lands in the territories of Seville and Andalusia amongst those who had helped Ferdinand III in the ‘Reconquest’ of the south, which now had to be repopulated with Christian dwellers), he founded the *Estudios e Escuelas Generales de Latín e de Árábigo* in Seville in 1254 and in Murcia in 1269,¹² causing Toledo to lose its superior dominant position as illuminator of the immense and partly-unexplored universe of knowledge.

The translations undertaken by the Alfonsine scriptorium differed radically from their Toledan precedents, first of all because they were rendered into the vernacular rather than into Latin. Many scholars and linguists have debated the definition given by Alfonso X of ‘castellano drecho’ as the first embryonic codification of a common peninsular language.¹³ As Gonzalo Menéndez Pidal asserted, Alfonso X was the first to understand that the vernacular could be used as a language in itself and not just as a tool of language transposition.¹⁴

In Toledo, for example, the process of translation was articulated into two phases: an expert in Arabic language translated orally the original version into the vernacular – which represented the code of communication with the other Latin translator and the means to ensure comprehension of the original contents – and only in a second phase was the vernacular version re-translated into Latin and dictated to some *scriba*. What happened in the Alfonsine scriptorium was that the first oral vernacular

¹¹ Menocal, ‘Pride and Prejudice in Medieval Studies: European and Oriental’, *Hispanic Review*, 53 (1985), 61-78 (p. 75).

¹² Juan Torres Fontes, ‘La cultura murciana en el reinado de Alfonso X’, *Murgetana*, 14 (1960), 57-90 and ‘Precedentes universitarios murcianos en el reinado de Alfonso X: un estudio en el siglo XIII’, *Industria y Comercio*, 5 (1966), 11-12; both of them quoted by González Jiménez, *Alfonso X*, p. 424.

¹³ Rafael Lapesa, *Historia de la lengua española*, 9th edn (Madrid: Gredos, 1983), pp. 237-247 (p. 241); Rafael Cano Aguilar, ‘Castellano ¿drecho?’, *Verba* 12 (1985), 287-302; Anthony J. Cárdenas, ‘Alfonso X nunca escribió *Castellano Drecho*’, *Actas de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, X (1989), 151-159; Inés Fernández-Ordóñez, ‘Alfonso X en la historia del español’, in *Historia de la lengua española*, coord. by Rafael Cano (Barcelona: Ariel, 2004), pp. 381-422.

¹⁴ Gonzalo Menéndez Pidal, ‘Cómo trabajaron las escuelas alfonsíes’, *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 4 (1951), 363-380.

versions were also progressively written down to the point that they usurped the dominance of their Latin counterparts.¹⁵

Alfonso X commissioned and wrote all his works in the languages of the Iberian Peninsula – Galician-Portuguese for the lyrics and Castilian for the prose – probably in the attempt to make the texts available to a wider audience. This policy represented, in fact, the point of strength of his political authority. To modern eyes, however, the sovereign managed to impose his political wishes through the diffusion of his magnificent vernacular collections, which were probably aimed at arousing or even generating the awareness of a shared social, cultural and religious life among his subjects.

A further clarification about the complex issue of authorship should be provided here, before embarking on the exploration of the varied production signed with the *sello real* of the Alfonsine court. The King was considered the material author of some of the pieces as well as the architect of their contents and structures, which he personally agreed with the members of his scriptorium as attested by his nephew Juan Manuel:

[...] e avn, segunt dizen los que viuían a la su merced, que fablauan con él los que querían e quando él quería, e ansi auía espacio de estudiar en lo quél quería fazer para sí mismo, e avn para veer e esterminar las cosas de los saberes quel mandaua ordenar a los maestros e a los sabios que traya para esto en su corte.¹⁶

The image of the king-author emerges from several Alfonsine works, as witnessed in the following passage from the *General Estoria* (I: 477b:2-9):

[...] compuso Nuestro Sennor las razones de los mandados, e porque ouo ell auctoridad e el nombre dend por que las mando escriuir, mas que las escriuió Moysen; assi como dixiemos nos muchas uezes: el Rey faze un libro, non porque él escriua con sus manos, más porque compone las razones dél, e las enmienda, et yegua, e interesçá, e muestra la manera de cómo se deben fazer [...] pero dezimos por esta razón: el rey faze el libro. Otrossi quando dezimos el rey faze un palacio o alguna obra, no es dicho que lo el fiziesse

¹⁵ An example is *El libro de los juicios de las estrellas* which was dictated both into Latin (*De Judiciis astrologiae*) and the vernacular.

¹⁶ Juan Manuel, *Crónica abreviada*, in *Obras completas*, ed. by José Manuel Blecua, 2 vols (Madrid: Gredos, [1982]), pp. 575-576. See Prologue pp. 573-577. English trans. mine: ‘and also, as witnessed by those who lived under his rule, all those who wanted could discuss with him whenever he desired, and in the same way, time was dedicated to study what he personally favoured, and also to see and select the subjects of the disciplines which he ordered the masters and the wise men, brought at his court exactly for that reason, to commission for him’.

con sus manos, mas por quel mando fazer e dio las cosas que fueron mester para ello. E qui esto cumple, aquel a nombre que faze la obra, e nos assi ueo que usamos de lo dezir.¹⁷

The Learned King spread his artistic interests across a number of fields. Pictorial representations, miniatures, architecture and even music attracted his attention to the point that they were cultivated alongside the better-known written production. In fact many of his texts are accompanied by visual representations of their lyrical and narrative parts. The *Cantigas de Santa María* are a notable case in point. The sovereign elaborated an organic and coherent visual distribution of images from which numerous explanations and details, sometimes omitted in the main text, could be inferred. The importance of their adoption relied, first of all, on the enhancement of the sphere of reception by rendering the texts accessible even to the unlearned groups; the same motivation which had already encouraged the King to replace Latin with the vernacular. Secondly, the images displayed an infinite series of aspects and peculiarities which the narration itself was unable or inadequate to condense within its lines. Items of clothing, hair-styles and even the prosemic code according to which the figures behave (gestures and positions that they assume among themselves) provided information on individuals or entire ethnic groups and social classes.¹⁸

In the *Cronica General* (manuscript preserved in El Escorial Y-1-2, fol.1v), the *Lapidario* (El Escorial h.I.15 and h.I.16), the two versions of the *Cantigas de Santa María* (Escorial T. I. 1, fol. 5r and Escorial b. I. a, fol.19r), the *General Estoria* (Vaticano, Urb. Lat. 539, fol. 2v), the *Siete Partidas* (British Museum, London, Add. 20 787, fol. 1v) and the *Libro de Ajedrez, Dados y Tablas* (Escorial T. I. 6, folios 1r, 1v, 65v, 72v) the image of the sovereign, in the act of dictating his works to his artist-fellows, occupies a focal position.¹⁹ Their attitudes, the shape and colour of their clothes reveal the hierarchical distribution of the king's collaborators according to their

¹⁷ Alfonso X, *General estoria. Primera parte*, ed. by Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja (Madrid: Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 2001); *General estoria. Segunda parte*, ed. by Antonio G. Solalinde, Lloyd A. Kasten y Víctor R.B. Oelschläger, 2 vols (Madrid: C.S.I.C.Institute Miguel der Cervantes, 1957); *General estoria. Tercera parte*, ed. by Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja y Bautista Horcajada Diezma (Madrid: Gredos, c 1994). English trans. mine: 'the king creates the book, not in that he writes it out with his own hands, but rather that he assembles the arguments of it, and corrects and balances them and sets them right, and shows the way they ought to be presented; thereafter they are written by whoever he designates, but we say for this reason that the king creates a book'. On the idea of king-author see also Jesús Montoya Martínez, 'El concepto de autor en Alfonso X', in *Estudios sobre la literatura y arte: dedicados al profesor Emilio Orozco Díaz*, coord. by Nicolás Marín, Antonio Gallego Morell, Andrés Soria Olmedo (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1979), pp. 455-462.

¹⁸ G. Menéndez Pidal, *La España del siglo XIII: leída en imágenes* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1986).

¹⁹ G. Menéndez Pidal, 'Las escuelas alfonsíes', p. 363-380; *La España leída en imágenes*, pp. 44-50.

ranks and functions.²⁰ Moreover, those miniatures go beyond the representation of the court environment by also portraying scenes representing the lowest social backgrounds.²¹

Equally of interest are the musical performances played at court and partly transcribed in the pages of the *Cantigas*, although they have long been underestimated and remain complicated to reconstruct with precision. It has to be borne in mind that, as with the pictorial and architectural devices, French models had a deep influence on the Castilian style. The European vogue for polyphony, for instance, was apparently well known by the Learned King and its study was imposed as part of the teaching at the University of Salamanca (founded under the reign of Alfonso X's grandfather Alfonso IX, in 1218). However, innovation coexisted with tradition, thus the old Visigothic rituals and performances were not altogether abandoned. The study carried out by Juan José Rey provides an idea of the purpose for which the music was conceived, who the performers were and what role the monarch played in the organization, support and performance of the secular and religious pieces.²²

Apart from the musical annotation reported in the *Cantigas de Santa María*²³ and the definition given in the *General Estoria* in which the ability to sing and play is presented as one of the arts of the Quadrivium,²⁴ passion for music was revealed also in the official statements of the *Siete Partidas* in which it is revered as a potion to alleviate the troubles of life:

De qué alegrías debe el rey usar a las vegadas para tomar conorte en los pesares et en los cuidados: [...] oir cantares et sones de estrumentos, jugar axedrez ó tablas, ó otros juegos semejantes destes.²⁵

²⁰ Another work which Alfonso commissioned to translate and miniate is the *Cánones de Albateni* (Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 8322) cited in G. Menéndez Pidal, 'Las escuelas alfonsies', p. 368.

²¹ Different hypotheses have been formulated about the place in which the manuscripts were illuminated; however I am inclined to support Guerrero Lovillo's theory according to which it happened between Seville, Toledo and Murcia, cities whose peculiarities were evidently reflected in the miniatures and where Alfonso X lived for prolonged periods. José Guerrero Lovillo, *Las cantigas: estudio arqueológico de sus miniaturas* (Madrid: CSIC, 1949), pp. 36-39. Lovillo's hypothesis enhanced the previous idea expressed by Amador de los Ríos according to whom the *CSM* were illuminated in Seville. See the description of the *Códice de los Cantares de Santa María* in *Museo español de antigüedades*, ed. by ed. Juan de Dios de la Rada y Delgado, vol. III (1874), p. 26.

²² Juan José Rey, 'El Trovador don Alfonso X', *Revista de Occidente*, 37 (1984), 166-183.

²³ *La música de las Cantigas de Santa María del Rey Alfonso el Sabio. I, Fásimil del códice j.b.2 de El Escorial*, ed. by Higinio Anglés (Barcelona: Diputación Provincial de Barcelona, Biblioteca Central, 1943, 1958, 1964).

²⁴ *GE* I:VII: XXVI-XXVII, 'et es música ell arte que ensenna todas las maneras delos sones e las quantías delos puntos, assí como dixiemos; e esta arte es carrera para aprender a [a]cordar las voces e fazer sonar los estrumentos', 'music is the art which teaches all kinds of sounds and tones, as it has been said; this is the art through which one can learn to tune voices and to play instruments'.

²⁵ *SP* II:V:XXI, 'there are other pleasures [...] which have been devised in order that a man may take comfort when oppressed with care and affliction. These are listening to songs and musical instruments, and playing chess, draughts, or other similar games'.

Nonetheless, a sense of measure has to be adopted in using it '[...] ca los cantares no fueron fechos sinon por alegría, de manera que reciban dellos placer et pierdan los cuidados'.²⁶ Musical scripts, players, instruments and people in the act of dancing to those rhythms are presented in the miniatures which adorn the texts.²⁷ Court jesters, minstrels, troubadours and *doctores de trovar*,²⁸ players and singers of different ages, gender and origins populated and contributed to the pleasant and recreational atmosphere which Alfonso X promoted as a model for his own court.

Another area which inspired the royal patronage was architecture. Cómez Ramos focused on the significance of the monumental buildings which the sovereign commissioned as reminders of the glorious past of his dynasty, the symbols of his present political ambitions and the premises on which his future imperialistic achievements were predicated.²⁹ The Cathedral of Burgos, probably undertaken already under Ferdinand III and completed by his successor in 1260, and the Cathedral of León, commissioned by Alfonso X, both deserve a mention. The stateliness and majestic structure of the latter in particular, has been acknowledged as an example of Gothic French art, but was enriched with Iberian sculptures and with meticulously decorated stained glass-windows, which portrayed the sovereign Alfonso X holding a globe in his hands, the symbol of Imperial power.

While the Cathedral of León is estimated to be one of the foremost examples of the Alfonsine architectural achievements, it is as well not to ignore those other minor religious constructions which flourished in the south of the Peninsula, mostly to replace Mudejar buildings and mosques. In the south the process of 'architectural conversion' was inaugurated by the first stages of the 'Reconquest' under Ferdinand III, but with Alfonso X it reached its climax in the formulation of a canon of Gothic-Mudejar style which would endure until the following centuries.³⁰ The extraordinary combination of the two artistic paths – Gothic and Mudejar – which reflected the two co-existent cultures is also seen in secular buildings, such as the Royal Palace in Toledo (Palacio de

²⁶ *SP II:V:XXI*, '[...] although each of them has been found to be beneficial, yet men should not make use of them, except at suitable times, and in a way that may be productive of benefit, and not of injury'.

²⁷ G. Menéndez Pidal, *La España leída en imágenes*, pp. 235-247.

²⁸ Distinctions among those figures and categories are explained by Juan José Rey, 'El trovador Alfonso X', pp. 166-171.

²⁹ R. Cómez Ramos, *Las empresas artísticas de Alfonso X el Sabio* (Sevilla: Dituación Provincial, 1979) and 'La monarquía castellana y el arte gótico', in *Alfonso X y su época. El siglo del Rey Sabio*, coord. by M. Rodríguez Llopis (Barcelona: Carroggio, [2001]), pp. 285-315.

³⁰ Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *Ars hispaniae: historia universal del arte hispánico: arte almohade; arte nazari; arte mudéjar* (Madrid: Editorial Plus-Ultra, 1949); Jerrilyn Dodds, 'The Mudejar Tradition in Architecture', in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. by Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 592-598; Jerrilyn D. Dodds, María Rosa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy. Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Galiana), the Real Alcazár in Seville and the castle of Torre Estrella in Medina Sidonia (built by the Order of Santa María de España). The style also influenced many of the fortified walls and towers which were erected across Andalusia after the Mudejar upheaval in 1264 in order to provide a defensive position for the Military Orders, in the preservation of the frontier territories.

Of the numerous contributions to the artistic areas which Alfonso X's interest had engendered, some conclusions can be drawn: art was regarded as morally and didactically oriented during the Middle Ages, but what has to be emphasized about the Alfonsine production is that it was planned as a medium of communication and propaganda, in all likelihood constructed and manipulated in order to reach the largest possible public. However, it should not be denied either that all of these artistic products were equally, or no less, the results of the natural inclination of a learned man who revealed a personal interest in refined aesthetic expression.

§ 3. The Transfer of Knowledge: Translations and Original Works at the Court of Alfonso X

Despite Alfonso X's personal attraction to art and its different outcomes, the idea of 'art for art's sake', which would come to light only six centuries later, was inconceivable for a medieval mind because even the pleasure generated from apparently light reading was aimed at conveying deeper moral and didactic lessons.³¹ For this reason most scholars have clung to the idea that in the Alfonsine scriptorium the labour of translation into the vernacular, which preceded chronologically the phase of original elaboration, was carried out with the specific aim of filtering and introducing the near-eastern knowledge into the Iberian context. Considering the attention devoted to the translations into the vernacular, two distinctions should be pointed out: a first group of translations, including the *Lapidario*, were undertaken during Alfonso X's youth, that is to say from 1250. A second phase, dedicated to the recompilation and co-ordination of broader collections, is thought to have begun in 1269 and continued until the end of the sovereign's reign.

The typologies of texts which the monarch ordered to be translated were numerous and varied. Didactic short stories, usually arranged according to the *mise-en-abîme* technique, such as *Calila e Dimna* (carried out in the same period during which

³¹ George Duby, *Art et Société au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997); Umberto Eco, *Arte e bellezza nell'estetica medievale* (Milano: Bompiani, 1987).

his brother Fadrique supported the translation of the original Sanskrit, and later Arabic versions, of *Sendebār* or *Libro de los engannos et los assayamientos de las mugeres*) were well-received.³² Also, the narrative translation reporting Mohammad's journey in the afterlife, guided and supported by the Archangel Gabriel, is believed to have been carried out in the Learned King's scriptorium, although no original Alfonsine manuscript has been found. The only existing text of the latter is a French version entitled *Livre de leschiele Mahomet*,³³ dated to the second half of the thirteenth century. A debatable question is whether or not the idea of the oneiric-allegorical journey, reserved to individuals endowed with a special sensitivity, entered the western tradition for the first time thanks to this Alfonsine translation or whether it had arrived through other channels, since there are numerous and striking parallelisms, for example, between the Iberian narration and Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The two Eurocentric interpretations of the same oriental myth present evident similarities which would perhaps suggest mutual influence but, it has yet to be proved effectively.³⁴

The stream of oriental knowledge did not flow exclusively through literary translations, but included astronomical and astrological treatises whose introduction into the Castilian court provoked a curiosity and interest which remained unchallenged until the following centuries. The astronomical summa entitled *Tablas Alfonsies* is perhaps the epitome of Alfonsine scientific achievements: probably edited in Toledo in 1272 by Yudah ben Mose ha Cohen and Isaac ben Cid, the compendium was internationally appreciated above all when, thanks to a Latin version produced at the end of the thirteenth century, it crossed the borders of the Iberian Peninsula, reaching a broader audience. The *Tablas* illustrated and explained the astral movements of the planets by using the Ptolemaic calculations, which endowed the scientific work with further reliability to the point that its instructions were adopted as orienting tools for navigation throughout later centuries.³⁵ The *Tablas* represented, as their appellation of 'summa' suggests, an anthological redaction within which other works, translated into Castilian

³² On mise-en-abîme see Chapter 1, p. 41, footnote 94.

³³ To establish a precise date of the work is quite impossible; in fact the *Setenario* (written before 1256) reports the existence of 'un libro a que llaman en aráuigo Amöcherch' ('a book named Amöcherch in Arabic'), but in fact it did not say that the Arabic book had already been translated into the vernacular. E. Procter, *Alfonso X*, p. 17.

³⁴ Enrico Cerulli, *Il Libro della Scala e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnole della Divina Commedia* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1949) and *Nuove ricerche sul Libro della Scala e la conoscenza dell' Islam in occidente* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1972).

³⁵ The translation of *Libro de los caminos y de los reinos* (cited in the *General estoria*) was also created with a similar task of geographical orientation.

previously, were inserted; among others, the *Liber Picatrix* (1256),³⁶ the *Libro de las Cruces* (1259) by a certain Ubaid Allāh, and other compendia such as the Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum*, its commentary by Alī ibn Ridwān (Abenrodianus) and *El Libro de los Juicios de las Estrellas* by Alī Ibn 'Abī-l-Rijāl (Abenragel).³⁷

The *Lapidario* and *Libro de las Formas*, less focused on abstract essences and consequently regarded as more scientific treatises, deal with the peculiarities of natural elements, such as minerals and stones, including advice on the propitious moments to extrapolate and use their properties and the inscriptions and images which should be sculptured on their surfaces in order to obtain the required benefits.³⁸ Another complete Alfonsine compendium is the *Libro del saber de astronomía* – whose original title should have been *Libro del saber de astrología* according to the same Prologue – comprising fifteen chapters of which only the first concerns the celestial settings, the rest supplying technical indications for constructing astronomical tools.³⁹ The work is an organized collation of previously detached and unbound translations undertaken between 1255 and 1259, finalized in 1276. Despite the attempt to edit a miscellanea whose parts converged coherently into one work, success was by no means guaranteed and the work was underestimated by contemporaries to the point that several of its parts were lost and the entire text remained unpublished until the nineteenth century.⁴⁰

Alongside astrology and astronomy, Alfonso X was also drawn to astral magic.⁴¹ Such a combined interest would probably justify the drafting of the *Liber Razielis*, regarded as one of the most complete examples of Judaic Cabalistic literature preserving the original sevenfold division that legend traditionally attributed to Salomon.⁴² The text

³⁶ A few fragments of a subsequent Latin version survived and they are preserved in the Vatican Library. In all likelihood the title originated from the name-sake author.

³⁷ Translated into Latin as *Liber magnus et completus de iudiciis astrologiae*.

³⁸ Several theories have been elaborated about the 'identities' of the two texts, however, the one proposed by Alejandro García Avilés, despite some incongruent details, seems to be one of the most valid. He asserted that the *Libro de las Formas* was the index of an entire work whose only surviving part was the *Lapidario*. The latter was translated for the first time into Castilian by Judá ben Mosca and Garci Pérez in 1250. For more details: Alejandro García Avilés, 'Alfonso X y la tradición de la magia astral', in *El Scriptorium alfonsí*, pp. 83- 103 (pp. 96-97).

³⁹ Prologue: 'este libro es de saber de astrología que mandó de los libros los sabios antiguos, que fablaron en esta sciencia. D. Alfonso, fijo del muy noble rey D. Fernando et de la Reina doña Beatriz'. There are several surviving manuscripts of the *Libro del Saber de Astrología*, each of them fragmentary; Anthony J. Cárdenas, 'The Complete *Libro del Saber de astrología* and Cod. Vat. Lat. 8174', *Manuscripta*, 22 (1981), 14-22. See also Fernando Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la Prosa Medieval Castellana, I, La creación del discurso prosístico: el entramado cortesano* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1998), pp. 597-601.

⁴⁰ Alfonso X, *Libros del saber de astronomía del rey d. Alfonso X de Castilla*, ed. by M. Rico y Sinobas, 5 vols. (Madrid: Tipografía de Eusebio Aguado, 1863-67); *Libros del saber de astronomía del rey Alfonso X* ([Barcelona]: Planeta-Agostini, [2004]).

⁴¹ Alejandro García Avilés, 'Alfonso X y la tradición de la magia astral', pp. 83-103.

⁴² Juan Manuel riposted that Alfonso X committed the translation of 'otra sciencia que han los judíos muy escondida, a que llaman Cábala'; see Juan Manuel, *Libro de la caza*, in *Obras completas*, p. 519; J. Montoya Martínez, *El Scriptorium alfonsí*, p. 91.

provides indications for the performances of ceremonial rituals; in particular, it indicates the procedure to invoke supernatural intervention from the angels who, according to the medieval beliefs, were in a position to command astral movements.

This phase, dominated by the labour of scientific translation and redactions, also witnessed the production of works of recreational value, such as treatises about leisure and games. In point of fact Alfonso X dedicated the last part of his life to the compilation of *El Libro de axedrez, dados e tablas*,⁴³ a book on the game of chess and other recreational activities, saved in El Escorial and finished in 1283. The text is still more remarkable on account of its 152 miniatures, which visually represent the process of fabrication of the book itself, the way in which the games were played and the peoples of different ethnic origins and costumes who amused themselves with those ludic activities.

§ 4. The King Troubadour and His Poetic Labour

The title of ‘troubadour king’ attributed to Alfonso X finds its justification in the vast number of lyrical compositions either believed to have come directly from his pen or ideated and organized by him in as far as the contents, metrical form and style are concerned. The literary projects initiated by his father, Ferdinand III, including the translations into Latin of the *Metaphysics* and the *Ethica Nichomachea* by Aristotle, the composition of the *Fuero Juzgo*, together with the legal code entitled *Setenario*, were continued under the aegis of his heir, who also supported the poetic *escuela gallego-portuguesa*, whose name foreshadows the existence of parallel features with the contemporary Portuguese school at the court of Alfonso III. Galician-Portuguese represented the common code of multicultural interaction and transmission of different poetic tendencies which converged within the Alfonsine scriptorium, bringing together artists and composers of varying geographical origin and social status, including poets from Aragon, Catalonia, León, Portugal, Italy and Provence. As Milagro Lain has asserted, the regional spoken language, adopted in some cases to identify a specific literary genre, was to become the literary *koiné* of the Peninsula, overcoming its originally restrictive geographical boundaries.⁴⁴

Following both literary trends and his own tastes and inclinations, Alfonso X supported a poetic production which developed into two divergent directions: secular

⁴³ Facsimile of *Libro de axedrez, dados e tablas* (Madrid: García [& c.], 1987).

⁴⁴ Milagro Lain, ‘La poesía profana de Alfonso X’, *Revista de Occidente*, 37 (1984), 145-165.

and religious poetry. The secular poems ascribed to him number forty-four in total (of which thirty-five are thought to be his own contribution) and they are subdivided into two main groups: thirty-nine satirical poems, which include thirty-five songs of *escarnio and maldezir*⁴⁵ and four *tenzones* (invectives and debates between the interlocutors); a second group comprises five love songs, of which four are *cantigas de amor* (courtly poems based on the model of the Provençal *canso*) and only one is a *cantiga de amigo* (a song dedicated to the absent lover by a supposed female voice).⁴⁶ It is unlikely that the Learned King was the author of any of the *cantigas de amigo*, but his authorship of at least three of the *cantigas de amor* is highly probable.⁴⁷

It is particularly noticeable that, especially in the *cantigas de escarnio*, characters and events are very often historically identifiable. Particularly noteworthy are the satirical poems admonishing the Christian knights who had failed to obey the King's summons to defend the frontiers with Islam.⁴⁸ Those poems resemble the expression of the medieval *carnevalesque*, a technique based on the portrayal of a grotesque reality through word-games aimed ultimately at subverting any hierarchical rule and at imposing a new fictional order. What is unusual, in this particular context, is that the King himself, as representative of the Institution which that kind of literature sought to subvert, can be seen to condone its production. An explanation may be found, as Dámaso Alonso suggested, in the complex aspects which had been coexisting for centuries in the Peninsular literary and historical processes – the folkloric elements combined with research of higher courtly standards, a synthesis metaphorically equated to *Escila y Caribdis*⁴⁹ – or by the fact that literature was considered a strategic, maieutic and a cathartic vent for human passions which, if not sublimated, could otherwise be channelled into dangerous social unrest.

Leaving the secular lyrical production aside, particular attention should be here devoted to the majestic collection of the *Cantigas de Santa María* (henceforth *CSM*). The object of devotion to whom all the songs are dedicated is the Holy Mother,

⁴⁵ *Cantigas de escarnio* were satirical poems based on allusions and euphemisms aimed at conveying criticisms and attacks against someone or something; *cantigas de maldezir*, instead, were unequivocal and direct invectives against a specific target. See *Cantigas d'escarnho e de mal dizer: dos cancioneros medievais galego-portugueses*, ed. by M. Rodríguez Lapa, 2nd edn (Vigo: Galaxia, 1970); Juan Salvador Paredes Nuñez, 'Las cantigas de escarnio y maldecir de Alfonso X': *problemas de interpretación y crítica textual*, Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, 22 (London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, 2000); K. Scholberg, *Sátira e invectiva en la España medieval* (Madrid: Gredos, 1971), pp. 50-137.

⁴⁶ Paden, 'Principles of Generic Classification', pp. 76-97.

⁴⁷ Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, 'Alfonso X el Sabio, poeta profano e mariano', in *El Scriptorium alfonsí*, pp. 149-158.

⁴⁸ The subject originated an entire 'circle' of poems centred on this subject (*CSM* 2, 6, 9, 16, 21, 24, 26).

⁴⁹ Dámaso Alonso, *Ensayos sobre la poesía española* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1944), pp. 1-27.

portrayed as the mediator between God and her human devotees. The *CSM*, considered by many the expression of Alfonso's personal devotion, are admired as the most exhaustive example of Iberian narrative and lyric production dedicated to the Virgin. All the songs are written in Galician-Portuguese and based on the troubadour style, but the traditional features of courtly love poetry here transcend the mundane by addressing the divinity herself. The Marian collection is estimated to include about 420 canticles, albeit a rather arbitrary number prone to variation according to the different versions.⁵⁰ It is also considered to be a milestone in medieval monophonic production since it was the first before 1300 to appear with accurate musical annotations.⁵¹ The harmonious *unicum* of verses, music and miniatures generates a complete artistic and religious product whose threefold impact – verbal, visual and melodic – rendered the work an appropriate liturgical and didactic instrument both in acts of personal devotion and in collective performances. As Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo put it, the combinations of the three arts made of the collection a sort of aesthetic bible of the thirteenth century, in which all the elements of medieval art appear to be encyclopaedically collected.⁵²

The entire collection respects a regular pattern in which, besides the introduction and the two prologues, every tenth song is a religious hymn in praise of the Virgin (*loor*).⁵³ The miracle tales, the hymns and the numerous miniatures presented in the text (in MS T there are six panels to illustrate each *cantiga*, while every fifth has twelve illuminated panels) paint a striking portrait of Medieval Iberian society. Moreover,

⁵⁰ For a clarifying overview see *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. by Walter Mettman, 3 vols (Madrid: Castalia, 1986-88), I, 7-42; Stephen Parkinson, 'The First Reorganization of the *Cantigas de Santa María*', *Bulletin of the Cantigueiros de Santa María*, 1 (1988), 91-7; Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, 'Primo contributo all'analisi delle varianti redazionali nelle *Cantigas de Santa María*', in *Cobras e Son: Papers on the Text, Music and Manuscripts of the 'Cantigas de Santa María'*, ed. by Stephen Parkinson (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2001), pp. 106-118; Martha E. Schaffer, 'The "Evolution" of the *Cantigas de Santa María*: The Relationships Between MSS T, F and E', in *Cobras e Son*, pp. 186-213.

⁵¹ For an introduction see: Gerardo V. Huseby, 'Musical Analysis and Poetic Structure in the *Cantigas de Santa María*', in *Florilegium Hispanicum: Medieval and Golden Age Studies Presented to Dorothy Clotelle Clarke*, ed. by John S. Geary and others (Madison, WI.: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1983), pp. 81-101; H. Anglés, *La música de las Cantigas*; J. Katz, 'Higinio Anglés and the Melodic Origins of the *Cantigas de Santa María*: A Critical View', in *Alfonso X of Castile, the Learned King (1221-1284): An International Symposium, Harvard University, 17 November 1984*, ed. by Francisco Márquez-Villanueva and Carlos Alberto Vega (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University, 1990), pp. 46-75; Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, 'Claves de retórica musical para la interpretación y transcripción del ritmo de las Cantigas de Santa María', in *Literatura y cristiandad: homenaje al profesor Jesús Montoya*, coord. by Antonio Rafael Rubio Flores, María Luisa Dañobeitia Fernández, Manuel José Alonso García (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2001), pp. 685-718 and 'Las *Cantigas de Santa María*. La música y su interpretación', in *El Scriptorium alfonsí*, pp. 347-359; David Wulstan, 'The Rhythmic Organization of the *Cantigas de Santa María*', in *Cobras e son*, pp. 31-65.

⁵² Richard P. Kinkade, 'Scholastic Philosophy and the Art of the *Cantigas de Santa María*', in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 95-109.

⁵³ The value of the *loors* as a means to homologize the collection through Alfonso X's poetic persona is further explored in Joseph Snow, 'The Central Role of the Troubadour *Persona* of Alfonso X in the *Cantigas de Santa María*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 56 (1979), 305-316.

elements from the French, German, English, Portuguese and Islamic traditions – imported by the artists gathered at the Alfonsine court – are identifiable throughout the entire collection.⁵⁴ The considerable number of examples proceeding from biblical references and the presence of abundant historical, geographical, political and folkloristic elements contributed to enhance the narration with a realistic tone which has been considered by modern critics to be a powerful contribution to modern readers' ability to understand, or at least to imagine, Iberian medieval life.⁵⁵

A degree of scholarly attention has also been addressed to the thorny issues of authorship, dating, subject matters, sources and the diffusion of the *CSM*, questions which in part still remain unresolved. Walter Mettmann, one of the most eminent academics to study the genesis and the authorship of the Alfonsine Marian anthology, proposed three likely conclusions: first, most of the *cantigas* were written by a certain Airas Nunes, collaborator-poet and coordinator of the Alfonsine scriptorium.⁵⁶ Second, other poets, coming from various geographical and literary contexts, contributed to the elaboration or translation of the miracles to the point of overshadowing Nunes' eminent role. Third, the authorship of Alfonso X cannot be ruled out for at least a group of *cantigas*, narrated in the first person, recounting episodes personally experienced by the sovereign, which can be easily highlighted by their style and themes.⁵⁷

However, neither do these ideas exclude the possibility that the King was the material author of other *loors*, nor that he was supported by one or more professional writers. What needs to be borne in mind is that authorship and direct composition of the book did not necessarily coincide; in fact, in many cases the sovereign supervised those

⁵⁴ Among others, the French troubadour influence was significant as well as the German cultural tradition introduced by Isabel of Swabia, Alfonso X's mother. With regard to the latter, it might be of interest to quote *CSM* 74. The *cantiga* is entitled 'Como Santa María guareceu o pintor que o demo quisera matar porque o pintava feo' ('how Holy Mary protected the painter whom the demon wished to slay because he painted him ugly'). According to Keller, the well known proverb 'never paint the devil on the wall', of clear German origin, inspired the miracle. See Keller, *Alfonso X, el Sabio*, pp. 73-74

⁵⁵ Keller and Annette Grant Cash, *Daily Life Depicted in the Cantigas de Santa María* (Lexington, KY.: University Press of Kentucky, 1998).

⁵⁶ Nunes' name was found in the manuscript E, between two columns of *CSM* 223. About the identity of other possible collaborators working in Alfonso X's scriptorium see Antonio Ballesteros, 'Sevilla en el siglo XIII', *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 66 (1915), 50-53. See also Walter Mettmann, 'Algunas observaciones sobre la génesis de la colección de las *Cantigas de Santa María* y sobre el problema del autor', in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 355-366.

⁵⁷ *CSM* 169, 180, 200, 209, 279, 300, 360, 401, 406. Further details in the introduction to the *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. by Walter Mettmann, pp. 17-20; 'Algunas observaciones sobre las *Cantigas de Santa María*', pp. 355-366; Anthony J. Cárdenas, 'A Study of Alfonso's Role in Selected *Cantigas* and the Castilian Prosification of Escorial Codex T.I.1', in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 253-268; Antonio G. Solalinde, 'Intervención de Alfonso X en la redacción de sus obras', *Revista de Filología Española*, 2 (1915), 283-288; J. Snow, 'A Chapter in Alfonso X's Personal Narrative: The Puerto de Santa María Poems in the *Cantigas de Santa María*', *La Corónica*, 8 (1979), 10-21.

who were responsible for the material composition of the texts.⁵⁸ The King is portrayed in precisely this ‘editorial’ position from the outset; the first illumination of the *CSM* depicts him on his throne, dictating the work to a group of *scriba*, surrounded by musicians and cantors who seem in all likelihood about to perform the pieces.⁵⁹ Other complex discussions arise from the attempt to date the collection correctly and to list its sources. Both of them are very complicated matters and only the first point will be addressed here, by proposing the (admittedly rather tentative) dates 1257-1283 as two valid *post* and *ante quem* limits.⁶⁰

A third aspect needs to be examined thoroughly: namely, the purpose and audience of the work. As Keller has demonstrated, the Alfonsine scriptorium was orientated towards the production of works aimed at generating pleasure as well as spreading erudition – *utile et dulce* – to both the courts’ members and the lower classes.⁶¹ The recovery and manipulation of the widely diffused Marian cult, which was rooted in the belief that restoration, pleasure, aid and security were offered by the Holy Mother as a reward for devotion, contributed to the sovereign’s achievements.⁶² Most of the miracles contained in the first 100 songs of the *CSM* were not new to the Iberian people, who had acknowledged other European Marian legends, previously diffused throughout the Peninsula.

With the expansion of the plan of the work – from its original 100 songs to the final 400 or so – which the monarch is believed to have personally devised, the collection assumed a progressively increasing Iberian dimension.⁶³ In fact, in the retrospectively-added 300 *cantigas*, the focus shifts onto the description of the daily life of Iberian subjects and onto the sovereign’s personal dimension and experiences, part of the latter epitomized in the *cantigas de loor*. Significantly, Alfonso X built up his troubadour *persona* through the personal elaboration of Marian hymns and the account of events – such as illnesses which affected him gravely – from which he was rescued

⁵⁸ Roger D. Tinnell, ‘Authorship and Composition: Music and Poetry in *Las Cantigas de Santa María*’, *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 28 (1981), 189-198; David Wulstan, ‘The Compilation of the *Cantigas* of Alfonso el Sabio’, in *Cobras y Son*, pp. 154-185; Montoya Martínez, ‘Algunas precisiones acerca de las *Cantigas de Santa María*’, in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 355-386.

⁵⁹ Martin G. Cunningham, *Alfonso X El Sabio, Cantigas de Loor* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2000), pp. 17-18.

⁶⁰ Montoya Martínez, ‘Algunas precisiones’, pp. 374-378.

⁶¹ Keller, ‘The Threefold Impact of the *Cantigas de Santa María*: Visual, Verbal, and Musical’, in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 7-33.

⁶² Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1985).

⁶³ Snow, ‘Self-Conscious References and the Organic Narrative Pattern of the *Cantigas de Santa María* of Alfonso X’, in *Medieval Renaissance and Folklore Studies in Honour of John Esten Keller*, ed. by Joseph R. Jones (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 1980), pp. 53-66.

thanks to the Virgin's aid.⁶⁴ Each *loor*, in fact, represented the lyrical expression of the sovereign's individual claims for salvation. The 'poet king' used secular versification, metrical and semantic structures of the art of *troubar* to worship the worthiest lover – the Virgin Mary – who was also 'the exemplification of the perfect qualities of womanhood'.⁶⁵ The result is a collection which is revered as the sovereign's spiritual and 'poetic' biography – as O'Callaghan has defined it – as well as a model of Christian and moral devotion for the readers.

Before concluding this section on the Alfonsine poetic creations, a few words should be devoted to the four surviving manuscripts of the *CSM* which generated the successive stages of elaboration and critical editions to which the collection was subjected. The first manuscript to emerge (probably in 1270, but not after 1280) was that codified as To (Toledo MS), which anthologized 128 songs including a selection of *loors* appearing at the end of each decade of miracles.⁶⁶ The other two preserved manuscripts, T or 'Códice Rico' which is kept in El Escorial and F ('Florence Codex') were subsequent elaborations. The first is a richly illuminated codex of 256 folios containing 192 songs of which three have been lost.⁶⁷ The second, regarded as complementary to codex T, is evidently an unfinished redaction since it contains only 104 poems, lacking numeration and space for musical annotations. The apparently most complete codex which embodies the summa between T and the enhanced, but unfinished, project of F, is the manuscript E (Escorial) or 'Códice de los músicos' which presents 361 illuminated folios containing 400 numbered and musically endowed *cantigas*.⁶⁸

The present study is based upon Mettmann's second edition of the *CSM*, together with an English translation by Kulp-Hill.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Snow, 'The Troubadour *Persona* of Alfonso X', pp. 305-316.

⁶⁵ Keller, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, p. 79. More details about the versification at pp. 78-83.

⁶⁶ The name of the MS To derived from the Cathedral of Toledo, place in which the manuscript was originally preserved, although it is currently kept in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid. The manuscript presents an introductory poem ('Pregón'), an index, a series of 100 miracles songs followed by one 'pitiçon' and three further appendixes containing respectively five *Cantigas das Fiestas de Santa Maria* (Songs for the Feast-Days of the Holy Mary), five *Cantigas das Festas de Nostro Sennor* (Songs for the Feast-Days of Our Lord) and sixteen miscellaneous poems.

⁶⁷ *CSM* 40, 150 and 151 have been lost, but the original structure obviously included them; in fact all the songs are numbered from 1 to 195, even if only 192 have been preserved. The folios (48.5 cm x 32.5 cm) consist of the introductory 'Pregón', the song-prologue, a fragment of the index and the *Cantiga de Nostro Sennor*.

⁶⁸ Of the 400 *cantigas*, nine are repeated. A complete index is included, together with the introductory 'Pregón', the *Cantiga-Prólogo*, the 'Pitiçon' and other texts without musical annotations, for a total amount of 414 lyrical pieces.

⁶⁹ Translations and critical editions have been carried out only in the last century: the first official version, with a learned introduction into Castilian, and a glossary of all the terms appearing in the Galician-Portuguese originals, was elaborated by Walter Mettmann between 1959 and 1972. A second reprint in

§ 5. The Creation of History

The chronicles *Estoria de España* and *General Estoria* (henceforward *EE* and *GE* respectively) are also attributed to the Alfonsine scriptorium. As their own titles suggest, their contents are respectively a chronological record of the events which occurred under the rule of the peoples who dominated the Iberian Peninsula from its origin to the reign of Ferdinand III, and an ambitious project of a universal global history, which reflected clearly the medieval model of encyclopaedic and didactic works, also imbued with elements derived from the Christian tradition. Both works remained unfinished, probably owing to their over-ambitious scope or, in the specific case of the *EE* – as critics have long believed – because it was interrupted once the broader enterprise of the *GE* was begun, since the latter would have included also the narration of the Iberian events. However, this is only one of the hypotheses about the relationship existing between the two works; another possibility is that both the projects were carried out simultaneously.⁷⁰ In fact, there are sufficient similarities between the two works to suggest that the compilers were familiar with the same sources.⁷¹

Moreover, far from being original compilations, the two Alfonsine histories are compendia, that is to say vernacular redactions which resulted from the conflation of translations and glossaries which had appeared in pre-existing Latin chronicles, anthologies and *summae*, and which had been accurately selected and reorganized in order to suit thirteenth-century royal exigencies. What Alfonso X promoted and achieved through these historic encyclopaedias and the reasons for which he undertook

two volumes followed in 1981, by Edición Xerais, which preceded a second and more accurate edition containing the result of Mettmann's ongoing research in the late 1980s. In the *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettmann, 3 vols (Madrid: Castalia, 1986-1989) the glossary – which originally included all the terms, proper names and verb lists – includes only the words which differ from modern Portuguese. The introduction is enriched with additional critical notes and some corrections have been made by referring to MS E (Escorial J.b.2.) as a guideline for emendations. For an English translation: *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. by Kathleen Kulp-Hill, with an introduction by Connie L. Scarborough (Tempe AZ.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000).

⁷⁰ Inés Fernández Ordñez has demonstrated that the elaboration or emendation of some parts of the *EE* were still in progress during the last years of Alfonso X's reign; consequently 1275 (the dating established by previous critics) cannot be accepted as the time of interruption of the work: see *Versión crítica de la 'Estoria de España': estudio y edición desde Pelayo hasta Ordoño II*, ed. by Inés Fernández Ordñez (Madrid: Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, 1993), pp. 22-25.

⁷¹ The two compilations probably relied on the same translations and historical materials, such as the compendia by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, Lucas de Tuy, Sigebert Gembloux, Saint Jerome, Hugh of Pisa, Pompeyo Trogo, Justinus, Orosius, Lucan, Pliny, Ovid and Paul the Deacon. Some of those texts were recalled from the monasteries where they had been preserved; for example, as Solalinde reported, in 1270 the Learned King asked the prior of Santa María de Nájera and the Colegiata de Albelda to lend him some of their books, among which the *Pharsalia* by Lucan and the *Heroides* by Ovid. See Fernández Ordñez, 'El taller historiográfico alfonsí. La *Estoria de España* y la *General estoria* en el marco de las obras promovidas por Alfonso el Sabio', in *El Scriptorium alfonsí*, pp. 105-126.

them, are subject to debate. First of all, by suggesting a potential connection between the glorious legendary and heroic past and his own deeds, Alfonso X sought to legitimize his ruling position and justify his claim for the Imperial crown. Secondly, the sovereign fulfilled the task of making the compendia accessible and understandable to a wider public by inserting well-known historical facts into a narrative pattern in which most of the episodes are self-contained and consequently intelligible, even in isolation, and without possessing a wide academic knowledge.⁷²

Again, the adoption of the vernacular was fundamental in order to endow the narrated events with a realistic dimension and to allow the ‘reducción de lo heróico a dimensiones perfectamente verosímiles’.⁷³ Those accounts thus became the first history written in the language of Castile.⁷⁴ Equally interesting is the approach adopted by Leonardo Funes, according to whom the importance of the *EE* relies on the fact that it has been considered a fundamental tool for the recovery and future transmission of knowledge; a mission which in the thirteenth century was also supported by the developed paper industry which contributed to the innovations in writing and overtook the – hitherto dominant – oral tradition.⁷⁵

In all likelihood the elaboration of the two histories was carried out by the royal team of compilers, under the supervision of the bibliophile King Alfonso X who, as attested in the prologue of the *GE*:

después que ove fecho ayuntar muchos escritos, e muchas estorias de los fechos antiguos, escogí dellos los más verdaderos e los mejores que sope, e fiz ende fazer este libro.⁷⁶

There is admittedly a problem posed by the attempt, pursued by the modern critical approach, to verify the reliability and objectivity of the sources. Nonetheless, according to medieval perception, even epic and legendary tales were regarded as witnesses of some historical truths; consequently none of them was eliminated or omitted, although in some cases obvious contradictions appeared. The challenge for the Alfonsine team was to achieve an optimal combination in which all the available sources would

⁷² Charles F. Fraker, *The Scope of History: Studies in the Historiography of Alfonso el Sabio* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 1-43.

⁷³ Ignacio Soldevila-Durante, ‘Un ejemplo de perspectivismo en la prosa historiográfica alfonsí’, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 9 (1983), 477-485 (p. 481).

⁷⁴ *Primera crónica general*, ed. by R. Menéndez Pidal (Madrid: Gredos, 1977), appendix pp. 885-887.

⁷⁵ Leonardo Funes, *El modelo historiográfico alfonsí*, Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, 6 (London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, 1997), pp. 13-19.

⁷⁶ *GE*, prologue, p. 3b, ‘after he had recalled many books and histories about the past events, he chose among them those which he thought were the best and the most valuable, and he commissioned the writing of the book’.

converge into a coherent and reliable version. In cases of differences in the multiple narrations of the same topic, the version preferred by the compilers was given as the main text, while the other variants were added as secondary references. Conversely, while the consulted versions were not totally dissimilar, a final redaction, combining all the juxtaposed elements in the most fluent discourse possible, was provided.⁷⁷ It is particularly noticeable that the reliability of the sources and the reconstruction of the historical truth were themes which had already affected the court, as the *EE* suggests:

mas los escritos son muchos et cuentanlo de muchas guisas, por que la uerdad de la estoris a las uezes es dubdosa, e por ende el que lee meta mientes como de las meiores escripturas tome lo que deue prouar et leer.⁷⁸

Furthermore, it must be highlighted that the abundance of sources related to biblical, ancient and pre-Roman history is not comparable with the scattered and approximated information concerning contemporary medieval events.⁷⁹ Such a discrepancy is increased by the fact that the various sections were likely to have been redacted by different groups of collaborators, who used dissimilar systems and parameters, even working in separate locations; consequently, they were usually unaware of the other teams' progress on the same project.

At this point, attention will be drawn specifically to the *EE*. All of the recorded events and their related dates are adapted to a clear chronological framework, marked in years of a king's or an emperor's reign. Thus, the narration of this Alfonsine 'history' was built around the figures of the most eminent and influent *sennores* (lords) who ruled Iberia. In fact, the traditional and fragmentary annalistic scanning of events was abandoned in favour of what Fernández-Ordóñez has defined an 'estoria unida', that is to say a coherent succession of autonomous narrative units linked together by one central character's deeds and experiences.⁸⁰ Moreover, the period of time in which those sovereigns ruled constituted the paradigm on which the Afonsine chronicles (regarded as didactic models for both princes and subjects) were built.

⁷⁷ Fernández Ordóñez, 'La historiografía alfonsí y post-alfonsí en sus textos – nuevo panorama', *Cahiers de Linguistique Hispanique Médiévale*, 18-19 (1993-1994), 101-132.

⁷⁸ *EE* 571, 'but the written records are many and they narrate things differently, because the historic truth is sometimes uncertain; for this reason the person who reads it has to be careful in believing what he reads and it is proved even in the best writings'.

⁷⁹ As far as the *EE* is concerned, such a disparity would partly justify the different extension and characteristics of the two parts in which the work is clearly divided.

⁸⁰ Despite such a thematic distribution of the events, some repetitions might appear. In fact, the same account might be mentioned first, and concisely, in the chronological narration of the events, but it might be analysed more in depth in a separate part regarding that specific subject. See Inés Fernández-Ordóñez, 'El taller historiográfico alfonsí', pp. 105-126.

Heroic legendary lords, such as Hercules and Alexander, became exempla of lordship and moral behaviour. A similar transfiguration was also applied to epic characters, who were deprived of their fictional characteristics and transformed into historical prototypes, whose human virtues were designed as guidelines for later generations. The adoption of such a formula allowed Alfonso X to reinforce the conception of history typical of his time (*theosis*), depicting himself both as the vicar of God and the legitimate heir of the Holy Roman emperors.⁸¹ In fact, probably in the attempt to communicate and disseminate such an idea, the monarch wanted Roman history to be included in his historical compendia, although many of those events were not strictly related to the fate of the Peninsula. Therefore, their presence in the Alfonsine history, defined as the common Iberian patrimony, would demonstrate that the Learned King was the scion of an imperial dynasty.⁸²

The *EE* depicts the evolution of the Iberian lineage, from its Herculean origins, followed by the influence of the Northern ‘almujuces’ (so defined by the Arabic chronicles), the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Germanic tribes and finally the Goths, whose noble roots were believed to have also left their footprints in the royal dynasty from which Alfonso X descended. Needless to say, international events occupied a very limited space in the chronicle, when compared with the attention dedicated to the Iberian events. It must also be noted that the Arabs were not catalogued among the ruling groups which determined the development of the peninsular history, since they were presented from a Christian perspective as the ‘invaders’ who undermined the noble power of the Visigoths.

A brief overview of the historical panorama in which Alfonso X operated needs to be provided here, in order to clarify the issue. It is essential to remember that, after the Arabic invasion and during the first stages of the ‘Reconquest’, the newly born kingdom of León claimed its power in the name of its Visigothic origin, by promoting an inheritance which would have allowed the Leonese king to re-take Toledo together with all other usurped territories. The recollection of those events inevitably poses another important controversy: unlike the kingdom of León, Castile had in fact neither the longstanding nor stable independent history with which Alfonso X was trying to

⁸¹ This was part of the ‘philosophical anthropology’ promoted by John Scottus Eriugena, according to which a privileged individual could be chosen to be the earthly representation of the divine will. James F. Burke, ‘Alfonso X and the Structuring of Spanish History’, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 9 (1985), 464-476.

⁸² Charles Fraker, ‘Alfonso X, the Empire and the *Primera crónica*’, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 55 (1978), 95-102.

furnish it.⁸³ In fact, Castile became a kingdom only in 1037, but it experienced periodic dynastic instability, while the final unification with the neighbouring kingdom of León was achieved only in 1230, under Ferdinand III.

The historical chronicles of Castile were supplemented by epic poetic accounts. As Menéndez Pidal asserted, the paraphrases and insertion of those songs into the Alfonsine historical accounts contributed to save the poetic history of Castile from oblivion.⁸⁴ In fact, the pages of the *EE* report, partly or entirely, the fictional prose of *La condesa traidora*, the *Romance de los siete infantes de Lara*, the song of the *Infante García*, the *Poema de Fernán Gonzalez*, the achievements of Bernardo del Carpio and Mainete, and a large and detailed section dedicated to the legendary figure of the self-styled Prince of Valencia Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, named *El Cid*.⁸⁵ The latter appeared in the anonymous Latin chronicle *Historia Roderici*, the Arabic *History of Valencia* by Ben Alcama and the epic masterpiece *Poema de mio Cid*; however, it cannot be asserted with full certainty how much and to what extent these sources were actually used in the *EE*.⁸⁶ What is certain is that epic sources played a fundamental role in enlarging the access to history. In the words of Menéndez Pidal:

no iba, pues, la *Crónica de España* dirigida a un público restringido de latinistas, sino a los caballeros, a los burgueses, a los mismos que escuchaban a los juglares, por lo cual se hacía conveniente incluir, más por extenso que antes, la materia de aquellos cantares que el público estaba habituado a oír [...].⁸⁷

One issue under debate is whether the Alfonsine enterprise was an historical recreation of fiction or rather a fictionalization of history. However, what is noticeable is that all the events and characters which appear in the historical narration belonged to a classical cultural background, but were also enriched and imbued with supplementary

⁸³ Fraker, *The Scope of History*, pp. 38-43.

⁸⁴ See Appendix 'Estudio sobre la *PCG*', pp. 851-92. It has to be remembered that Menéndez Pidal undertook the study of the *EE* in order to use it as a source for his literary research on the Iberian epic and its written preservation. In fact, the historiographical value of the *EE* was evaluated only in a second phase.

⁸⁵ Appendix of *PCG* by R. Menéndez Pidal; Fraker, *The Scope of History*, p. 42.

⁸⁶ *Le Cid: personnage historique et littéraire: anthologie de textes arabes, espagnols, français et latins avec traductions*, ed. by Mikel de Epalza, Suzanne Guellouz (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1983); *El Mio Cid del taller alfonsí: versión en prosa en la Primera Crónica General y en la Crónica de veinte reyes*, ed. by Nancy Joe Dyer (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 1995); F. Javier Peña Pérez, *El Cid Campeador: historia, leyenda y mito* (Burgos: Editorial Dossoles, 2000); Gonzalo Santonja, *El Cid: historia, literatura y leyenda* ([n.p.]: Sociedad Estatal España Nuevo Milenio, 2001); *El Cid: de la materia épica a las crónicas caballerescas: actas del congreso internacional 'IX Centenario de la Muerte del Cid', celebrado en la Univ. de Alcalá de Henares los días 19 y 20 de noviembre de 1999*, ed. by Carlos Alvar, Fernando Gómez Redondo y Georges Martin (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, 2002); Thomas R. Hart, *Studies on the Cantar de mio Cid*, Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, 54 (London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, 2006).

⁸⁷ R. Menéndez Pidal, *PCG*, p. 877.

medieval values.⁸⁸ In fact, according to medieval thought, history was the synthesis of what common opinion held as traditional, true and firmly rooted in the past; therefore, the problematic question – as Funes has suggested – was that:

[...] dos de los objetivos más importantes del modelo, la representación eficaz y exhaustiva de la experiencia humana del pasado y la refuncionalización didáctico-ejemplar del relato en una dimensión de máxima relevancia histórica, terminaron colisionando y provocando la parálisis definitiva de la escritura historiográfica alfonsí.⁸⁹

If the Castilian legendary past was entrusted to epic, medieval chronicles were not neglected either. The *Chronicon Mundi* by Lucas de Tuy (d. 1249), *De Rebus Hispaniae*, the *Historia Arabum* and the *Historia Vandalorum, Alanorum et Silinguorum* by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (d. 1247), were estimated to be by far the most reliable accounts of the Peninsular events up to that time. In the royal scriptorium those Latin chronicles were first translated into the vernacular and, in a second stage, perfected through a number of details which other poetic and epic codices provided.

The *EE* was probably the most renowned of the Alfonsine works, as is proved by the fact that it held its audience's attention for the following two centuries. In all likelihood the first two official versions were those named respectively *Versión primitiva* or *regia* (1270-1274)⁹⁰ and *Versión Crítica* (1282-84), the latter undertaken in Seville. Both of them seemed to proceed from the same original archetype rather than – as some critics have posited – one from the other. Moreover, the second version appeared as Alfonso X's project to enlarge and update history by including contemporary events and by exploring the relationships between the sovereign and the noble classes from an innovative perspective. Such a process of 'structural refurbishment' shortened, and in some cases eliminated, some poetic passages presented in the first version.

From the combination of these first two editions, complemented by further elements derived from different sources, several other versions flourished within or outside the Alfonsine scriptorium. As Inés Fernández Ordoñez has summarized 'se crearon tantos tipos de *Crónica general de España* como combinaciones textuales eran

⁸⁸ Fernando Gómez Redondo, 'La función del personaje en la *Estoria de España* alfonsí', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 14 (1984), 187-210.

⁸⁹ Funes, *El modelo Alfonsí*, p. 75.

⁹⁰ This first version goes as far as the reign of the Leonese King Vermudo III.

posibles'.⁹¹ The *Versión Retóricamente Amplificada*, probably written at the time of Sancho IV, the *Crónica General* by Juan Manuel, *Crónica de Veinte Reyes* (whose original title was 'de Once Reyes'), *Crónica de Castilla*, *Crónica General Vulgata*, *Crónica General de 1344* are some of the re-elaborations of the entire work or copies of some selected sections.⁹² Such a florilegium of variants would explain the confusion among critics in identifying a unique and authentic first version. Such confusion did not prevent scholars, such as Ramón Menéndez Pidal, from speculating about the existence of a *borrador compilatorio* on which the post-alfonsine compilers based their recreations. Nonetheless, after a series of partial and unreliable versions such as *Las quatro partes enteras de la Crónica de España* by Florián de Ocampo (1541),⁹³ the first critical edition of the *EE* was undertaken by Menéndez Pidal who published it in 1906 and renamed it as *Primera Crónica General*.⁹⁴ The latter, enriched by the critical study added by Diego Catalán in 1977 is the version adopted for this study which has also taken into account the revisions made by Inés Fernández Ordóñez in her critical version of the *EE*, carried out after the discovery of the MS Ss, found in Salamanca in 1983.

§ 6. Legislative Production

Together with the literary and historical works, Alfonso X promoted an innovative legislative system, supporting, among others, the creation of a general and all-comprehensive code of laws, entitled *Siete Partidas* (henceforth *SP*). In order to explain its origin and peculiarities, the background from which it derives has to be taken into account. Since the fifth century, when the Visigoths settled in the Peninsula, the *Lex Gothica* had been the regulator of private and public life. In the seventh century its norms were translated into Latin and adopted again during the 'Reconquest', as echoed

⁹¹ Fernández-Ordóñez, 'El taller historiográfico alfonsí', p. 124; 'La historiografía alfonsí y post-alfonsí', pp. 103-12.

⁹² Mariano de la Campa, 'La versión primitiva de la *Estoria de España* de Alfonso X: edición crítica', in *Actas del XIII Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, coord. by Florencio Sevilla Arroyo, Carlos Alvar Ezquerro (Madrid: Alianza, 1998), pp. 59-72; Inés Fernández-Ordóñez, 'Variación en el modelo historiográfico alfonsí en el siglo XIII. Las versiones de las *Estoria de España*', in *La historia alfonsí: el modelo y sus destinos*, pp. 41-74.

⁹³ It was based on a non-authentic version, as demonstrated by the wide range of mistakes which also characterized other editions and which were likely due to recompilations and expansions of the originals. See Mariano de la Campa Gutiérrez, 'Crítica textual y crónicas generales de España: ejemplificación de un método', *Actas del XIV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, New York 16-21 Julio 2001*, ed. by Isaias Lerner, Robert Nival, Alejandro Alonso, (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 2004), pp. 45-53. See also Juan Bautista Crespo Arce, 'La complejidad textual de la historiografía alfonsí', in *Actas del XIV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, pp. 55-66.

⁹⁴ At least where parts I, II and the beginning of part III are concerned.

in the local *fueros*.⁹⁵ Finally, they had been reorganized in the Castilian written corpus, entitled *Fuero Juzgo*, undertaken by Ferdinand III. Justinian's *Corpus Iuris Civilis* had inspired the edition of the *Fuero Juzgo*, which finished up being less advanced than its precursor since it resembled more an anthology of moral rules rather than a collection of secular laws. The influence of both the Roman and the Canon laws was not limited to the Fernandine legislative production only.⁹⁶ In fact, from the thirteenth century those regal collections became part of the Iberian academic portfolio (adopted, for example, at the University of Salamanca) and they were taught by masters of jurisprudence, who had been educated at the most famous European universities, who also acquired privileged roles in the Iberian courts.⁹⁷

Alfonso X, following the example of his father, operated within such a context, promoting the juridical unification of his dominions by editing a series of legal compendia aimed at securing his legislative monopoly. They equally consolidated his role as master of that renovated legal system which was supposed to revisit the peculiar fields of influence of the municipal *fueros*. As Aquilino Iglesia asserted, wholly or partially, Alfonso X fulfilled his projects by the accomplishment of the *Fuero Real*, the *Espéculo* and the *Siete Partidas*.⁹⁸

The *Fuero Real* is regarded as Alfonso X's first attempt to impose his *summa potestas*,⁹⁹ to regulate his relationships with the cities and the nobles and to reorganize revenues by keeping the colonial tributes for the crown and depriving the nobles of their traditional sources of income. The code was given to the cities of Castile and Extremadura in order to supplant the pre-existing municipal *fueros*. The *Fuero Real*

⁹⁵ According to Van Kleffens, during the 'Reconquest', there was not a unique law, but rather 'the laws' applied to the different geographic areas: Castile, Aragon, Cataluña, Navarre, Balearic Islands, Basque Country and Valencia. Later, the authority of the *Fuero Juzgo* was reduced by the local laws such as the *fueros municipales* (issued by the king in order to administrate those townships liberated by the Moors' oppression), *fueros* containing concessions to specific social groups (noble particularly) and *fueros generales*. E. N. Van Kleffens, *Hispanic Law Until the End of Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968).

⁹⁶ Masters of law, after the Gregorian reform, tried to reorganize and homogenize the previous ecclesiastical laws. The climax of this process was the publication of the *Decretum* (Concordance of Discordant Canons) by Gratian in 1140. See also A. Iglesia Ferreirós, 'La labor legislativa de Alfonso X el Sabio', in *España y Europa. Un pasado jurídico común*, ed. by Antonio Pérez Martín (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1986), pp. 275-599; G. Martínez Díez, 'Los comienzos de la recepción del derecho romano en España y el Fuero Real', in *Diritto comune e diritti locali nella storia dell'Europa, atti del Convegno di Varenna (12-15 giugno 1979)* (Milan: Giuffrè 1980), pp. 253-62.

⁹⁷ A. Iglesia Ferreirós, 'Historia del Derecho', in *La Enseñanza del derecho en España*, pp. 122-134.

⁹⁸ José Manuel Pérez-Prendes, 'Las Leyes de Alfonso el Sabio', *Revista de Occidente*, 37 (1984), 67-84.

⁹⁹ According to Isidore of Seville's theory the king had been endowed with supreme power by God to guide his people towards the right and the good.

remained in force until 1348 when, under the reign of Alfonso XI, the *SP* were promulgated, overshadowing its predominance.¹⁰⁰

A distinction needs to be made between the *Fuero Real* and another legal code produced in the Alfonsine scriptorium: the *Espéculo*. According to O'Callaghan, both were conceived in an assembly of nobles, jurists and ecclesiastical members assembled in Palencia in 1255.¹⁰¹ The difference between the two consists of the fact that the *Espéculo* was intended only to apply to the royal court and it represented a source of reference to which municipal tribunals – which adopted the *Fuero Real* instead – could appeal for further clarification. The *Espéculo*, known with this name only from the fourteenth century, formerly the *Libro de las leyes* or *Libro del Fuero*, failed in Alfonso X's purpose to be used as a manual for regulation of universal value – or at least as a substitute of the particular *fueros* – since it was seen to harm the privileges, autonomy and economic profits of the cities and the nobles.¹⁰² The most salient points re-established by the *Espéculo* were the appropriation of the city tax by the Royal Chamber, the uncontested authority of the king in the election of judges and *alcaldes* and his incontestable power in nominating a deputy to manage the juridical affairs on his behalf. Both codes, the more pragmatic *Fuero Real* and the norms for the royal court provided by the *Espéculo*, fulfilled the massive legislative reform which, especially after the explosion of the noble revolt against the king in 1272, was relegated to the management of the Court trials only.

A succession of challenging studies and theories about the origins, meanings and sources of the Alfonsine legal compilations is still in progress: García Gallo, Iglesia Ferreirós and Craddock are some of the most eminent voices who have approached this subject.¹⁰³ According to García Gallo, for instance, the *Espéculo* existed since 1255

¹⁰⁰ This title was acquired only in the fourteenth century when Alfonso XI baptized it with such a name before issuing it in the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* (1348). The way in which the title has been modified in time before its official promulgation has been widely discussed. García Gallo, for instance, insisted on the theory according to which the original name of the work was *Libro de las leyes* while other reliable sources, such as Lopez's and the Academy's prologues to the editions of the work used *Septenario*. Also Craddock agreed with this denomination thinking that Alfonso X had named it *Setenario* while the codex that we know nowadays with such a name is in fact the revision of the first *Partida* only. J. Craddock, 'La cronología de las obras legislativas de Alfonso X el Sabio', *AHDE*, 51 (1981), 365-418

¹⁰¹ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X, the Cortes, and Government in Medieval Spain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 3-12. This is the theory supported also by José Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal, 'La obra legislativa de Alfonso X el Sabio. Historia de una polémica', in *El Scriptorium alfonsí*, pp. 62-80. The *Fuero Real*, issued in 1255, at the beginning of the king's mandate, was given to Castile and then to Extremaduras in order to impose the legislative monopoly claimed by the sovereign.

¹⁰² Alfonso García Gallo, *Manual de Historia del Derecho Español* (Madrid: Impr. A.G.E.S.A., 1959), pp. 731-43.

¹⁰³ A. García-Gallo, 'El Libro de las leyes de Alfonso al Sabio. Del *Espéculo* a las *Partidas*', *AHDE*, 21-22 (1951-1952), 345-528; 'Nuevas observaciones sobre la obra legislativa de Alfonso X', *AHDE*, 46 (1976), 609-670; 'La obra Legislativa de Alfonso X. Hechos e hipótesis', *AHDE*, 54 (1984), 97-161; A.

with the function of law of the court and it was later issued as a local *fuero* to other cities.¹⁰⁴ The incipit of the code itself reveals the King's motivations for this project:

E por ende nos don Alfonso [...] entendiendo e veyendo los males que nascen e se levantan en las tierras y en los nuestros regnos por los muchos fueros que eran en las villas e en las tierras, departidas en muchas maneras, que los unos se julgaban por fueros de libros minguidos e non complidos, e los otros se julgaban por fazañas desaguisadas e sin Derecho [...].¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the theory proposed by García Gallo in 1952 outlined five stages in the legal Alfonsine production which demonstrated how the three main codes (*Fuero Real*, *Espéculo* and *Siete Partidas*) developed one from another in a sort of evolutionary chain begun under Alfonso X and extended after his death.¹⁰⁶

Incontestably, all these studies have helped to deepen modern understanding about the Iberian juridical, administrative and political systems; however, many of their conclusions appear to be antithetical.¹⁰⁷ The *Espéculo*, for example, is currently a source

Iglesia Ferreirós, 'Alfonso X el Sabio y su obra legislativa: algunas reflexiones', *AHDE*, 50 (1980), 445-465; 'Alfonso X, su labor legislativa y los historiadores', *Historia Instituciones Documentos*, 9 (1982), 9-112; '*Fuero Real y Espéculo*', *AHDE*, 52 (1982), 111-191; 'Cuestiones alfonsinas', *AHDE*, 55 (1985), 95-149; 'La labor legislativa de Alfonso X el Sabio', pp. 275-599; J. R. Craddock, 'La cronología de las obras legislativas de Alfonso X el Sabio', *AHDE*, 51 (1981), 365-418; 'El *Setenario*: última e inconclusa refundición alfonsina de la primera *Partida*', *AHDE*, 56 (1986), 441-46. For an overview of the earlier studies on the same subject see also José Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal, 'Historia de una polémica', pp. 17-81.

¹⁰⁴ Professor García Gallo dealt with Alfonso's legal production and supported two different theories by publishing two studies: *Libro de las leyes* in 1952 and 'Nuevas observaciones', pp. 609-670. Thanks to his interest in this matter, further investigations have been carried out about the Alfonsine interpretation and use of the law.

¹⁰⁵ Alfonso X, *El Espéculo*, ed. by Gonzalo Martínez Díez (Avila: Fundación Sánchez Albornoz, 1985), pp. 100-101. English trans. mine: 'We, King Alfonso, realizing and observing the bad results which were born and rose up all over our lands and dominions, due to the numerous and different *fueros* which were used in the boroughs and territories, separately regulated, since some of them were judged according to the depleted law codes, while others were judged on the base of illegal feats and without any juridical direction [...].'

¹⁰⁶ In García Gallos's assumption the *Libro del Fuero* or *Espéculo*, probably finished in 1260, was the first issued code not aimed at replacing the municipal *fueros*, but rather at unifying the legislative system. The following step was represented by the second redaction of the code, concluded in 1265 and characterized by the introduction of some regulations inspired by Canon Law. A new title – *Libro del Fuero de las Leyes* – was created and the work seemed to be limited to develop a didactic discourse without any direct juridical effects, probably owing to the awareness that this edition would not have gained any official recognition. The third phase was a philosophical revision of the work which adopted a new seven-fold structure, an updated title – *Libros de las leyes* or *Partidas* – which was probably completed by the jurists operating at Ferdinand IV's court, Alfonso X's heir. The fourth stage occurred in 1325 when new laws were incorporated into a new code by the royal jurists. Finally, the fifth and last revision was probably finished around 1340 and its main innovation laid on the prologue which attests the dating between 1256 and 1263. This theory was twisted in García Gallos's subsequent analysis of 1976 in which he stated that the *Espéculo* was the imposed law against which the noble reaction exploded. He went on by stating that it remained the law of the court and it was used as a model for the outline of two successive more complete pieces: the *Fuero de las leyes* or *Fuero Real*, characterized by a pragmatic purpose, and the *Partidas*.

¹⁰⁷ The fact that the originals are unknown and the copies on which scholars have been working are copies from the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries complicated the situation even further. As if the imprecision of the manuscripts was not enough, the first critical and philologically revised editions of the

of unsolved problems posed by its interruption at the fifth book and its problematic dating.¹⁰⁸ Iglesia took up the first point and found the cause of the abrupt suspension of the work to be the sudden change of Alfonso's politics after the Pisan delegates' proposal to become Emperor in 1256. The King realized the imminent need to renovate and homogenize the legal practices by adopting the Roman Canon law, considered more stable and widespread than the simplistic and localized Castilian and Leonese *fueros*.¹⁰⁹ However, the production of the *Espéculo* was interrupted – according to Iglesia – in 1254 because of the difficulty which Alfonso X had to face in imposing the law of León (*Fuero Juzgo*) on Castile.

The combination of the aforementioned factors and the new political contingencies explain the similarity of dating of these three law-codes. In fact, the *SP* were also begun in 1256 as a compendium of philosophical norms designed to fit the new universal and imperialistic policy undertaken by the sovereign. But the yearning for supreme power had always been present in the monarch's aspirations; in fact the *Fuero Real* and the *Espéculo*, both issued before the Pisan embassy, presented the statement declaring that the king, as well as the emperor, were the only two figures allowed to create laws. Such an experimental juridical system weakened from 1272 and it collapsed completely in 1274 when, during the *Cortes de Zamora*, the King was forced by circumstances to withdraw and to allow the *alcaldes* to judge the trials according to the ancient local *fueros*. At that stage, the undisputed *potestas contendendi legis* and the absolute legal supremacy which Alfonso X had promoted in his codes were definitively lost.¹¹⁰

legal codes appeared much later: the *Espéculo* in 1985 and the *Fuero Real* in 1988, both by Gonzalo Martínez Díez.

¹⁰⁸ The code consists of five books, but there are textual references alluding to other two volumes – namely Book six and seven – which should have been included in the original plan of the work, before it was suspended and later modified after the development of the aforementioned events.

¹⁰⁹ The *Espéculo*, for example, was Ferdinand III's project, aimed at collecting the best and the most respected laws of Castile and León.

¹¹⁰ The *potestas contendendi legis* was the power to create, interpret and publish laws, which only in a second stage were discussed in the *Cortes*, before their official distribution to the cities.

§ 7. The *Siete Partidas*

The *Setenario* – initiated by Ferdinand III – was a legal treatise destined, through the influence it exercised on the subsequent legal production, to change the *status quo* and to pave the way to a renewed juridical system. The sovereign conceived the book as a guide for the moral and civic education of princes and kings. Left incomplete, the work was continued by Alfonso X who enlarged his father's original project, stretching it into the sevenfold collection, from which the title *Siete Partidas* derives. The latter had the merit of having gathered together all the legislative patrimony and the acquired knowledge up to the thirteenth century. Considering this, David Rojinsky has stated that the *SP* embody the 'socio-political encyclopaedia of pre-modern Iberia' and that it represents a considerable source for experts and academics of different disciplines, and predominantly for historians and linguists.¹¹¹ It was an innovative didactic work regulating various subjects and aimed at educating all its readers to respect the law. The latter, both moral and pragmatic, was addressed to all the citizens without ethnic and class distinctions, including the sovereign who, albeit creator and interpreter of the law, was not exempted from observing it. Additionally, the adoption of the vernacular language was aimed at joining the peninsular inhabitants together in a unique super-regional identity which should corroborate the idea of a kingdom which had already been presented, metaphorically, as a human body whose head was the king:

Et naturalmente dixieron los sabios que el rey es cabeza del regno; ca asi como de la cabeza nacen los sentidos por que se mandan todos los miembros del cuerpo, bien asi por el mandamiento que nace del rey, que es señor et cabeza de todos los del regno, se deben mandar, et guiar et haber en acuerdo con él para obedeserle, et amparar, et guardar et endereszar el regno onde él es alma et cabeza, et ellos los miembros.¹¹²

Such a didactic purpose, according to Keller, was the motivation behind Alfonso X's choice not to promulgate the code but to use it as a manual of legal training. Whether such an intention was effective is not easy to demonstrate. Even though several textual

¹¹¹ David Rojinsky, 'The Rule of Law and the Written Word in Alfonsine Castile: Demystifying a Consecrated Vernacular', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 80 (2003), 287-305. In particular he focused on the value of the vernacular as a symbol of a regenerated peninsular identity.

¹¹² *SP* II:I:V, 'and, naturally, the wise men declared that the king is the head of the kingdom, for, as from the head originate the feelings by which all the members of the body are controlled; so also by the commands which originate from the king, who is the lord and the head of all the people of his kingdom, they should be directed and guided, and act in harmony with him, to obey him, to support, and protect, and aggrandize the kingdom, of which he is the soul and head, and they are the members'.

references seem to support the idea that Alfonso X wanted the *SP* to be issued, at least at court (as O’Callaghan has asserted), strong doubts exist about whether the king considered the code to be a merely academic manual.¹¹³ In fact each section appears perfectly balanced by presenting both abstract doctrinal speculation and practical norms regarding the procedures for the trials.

Interestingly, the *SP* is rich with intertextual quotations recalling other Alfonsine works, as well as a wide range of texts by different authors, from various contexts and times. References to ‘los sabios antiguos que fizieron las leyes’, for instance, appear frequently and they allude to both Roman law and ancient philosophical speculations, both regarded as reserves of wisdom and inspiration. According to Keller, the sources used included the Gothic, ecclesiastical (Gratian’s *Decretum* and Pope Gregory IX’s *Decretales*) and Roman laws as well as the previous Iberian legal norms (*Fuero Juzgo*, *Fuero Real*, *Fuero de España* and *Setenario*) and, no less relevant, literary and classic sources, from the Bible, the Psalms and Proverbs, to works by Aristotle, Boethius, Cicero and Seneca, up to more contemporary secular works, such as the *Disciplina Clericalis* by Petrus Alphonsi, the *Bocados de Oro*, *Poridad de las Poridades*, among others.¹¹⁴

Despite the diverse sources, the *SP* emerge as an exhaustive *unicum*: with its seven books divided into 182 titles and subdivided in 2696 laws which regulate all aspects affecting thirteenth-century medieval life. Each title presents a summary of the topic it concerns and, subsequently, each law analyses the subject in more depth. Mention also should be made of its symbolic sevenfold division. The number seven calls to mind the liberal arts, the Sacraments, the ages of man, the joys and sorrows of the Virgin and the Holy Gift of the Spirit, elements related to both the religious and secular life of man. Curiously also the name of the royal commissioner – Alfonso – is made of seven letters, each of them appearing as the first letter of the opening word at the beginning of each book.

What follows is a brief panoramic view of the contents for each *Partida*: the first book deals with the general definition of law and the Canon law; the second regards emperors, kings, lords, government and administration; the third is about property; the fourth regulates marriage, family relations and friendship; the fifth is about maritime and commercial law; the sixth regards succession, guardianship of orphans and minors;

¹¹³ O’Callaghan, *Alfonso X, the Cortes*, pp. 3-12.

¹¹⁴ Keller, *Alfonso X, El Sabio*, p. 120-123. With regard to *SP IV* the influence of the *Summa Perutilis* by Gofredus of Trano, *Summa Iuris* by Monaldo, *Summa de Matrimonio* by Peñafort are some of the most undeniable sources. For further details: Marilyn Stone, *Marriage and Friendship in Medieval Spain*.

and the seventh discusses criminal law and establishes the rules to control Muslims, Jews and heretics.

At this stage, the authorship of the legal corpus should be discussed. Francisco Martínez Marina and Antonio Solalinde have affirmed that it could reasonably be attributed to a company of royal jurists arrived from the most prestigious European universities to offer their knowledge in return for a series of material and social privileges.¹¹⁵ It is widely accepted that the Bolognese Jacobo de las Leyes, Maestre Roldán, Fernando Martínez de Zamora and Juan Alfonso were some of the most eminent collaborators, although none of them is cited in the corpus of the *SP* directly.¹¹⁶ Regarding dating, while it has been proved that the drafting of the *SP* was begun on 26 June 1256 (after the Pisan embassy in March 1256), the date of its conclusion is still vague and it varies between 1261 and 1265. Some scholars have indicated 1254-1261 and 1256-1263 as the periods of composition, lengths which recall again the symbolic adoption of the number seven. However, the most reliable date of conclusion seems to be 28 August 1265, as attested in its first prologue.

Revisions and editions of the code still pose endless academic discussions since for centuries the *SP* lacked a proper critical edition. In fact, the existing codes were regarded as manipulations created by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century compilers.¹¹⁷ The inadequacy of the surviving sources and the lack of originals also represented a problem for Alfonso XI, who tried to collect all the circulating variants in order to produce a definitive version which would be safeguarded from changes and interpolations. At this point some clarification is needed: until 1325 all the legal decisions made by the king, who had the absolute *potestas contendendi legis* were named *ordenamientos*, *mandamientos* or by other synonyms, but the word *ley* had never appeared. If such a linguistic interpretation is accepted, it should be correct to talk about ‘publication’ of the *SP* rather than promulgation, at least up to that date.¹¹⁸ This theory of a late official diffusion of the code has been widely accepted by scholars and it overrode the previous

¹¹⁵ Antonio Solalinde, ‘Intervención de Alfonso X en la redacción de sus obras’, pp. 283-288; Francisco Martínez Marina, *Ensayo histórico-crítico sobre la legislación y principales cuerpos legales de los reinos de León y Castilla especialmente sobre el código de las Siete Partidas de D. Alfonso el Sabio*, 2nd edn (Madrid: [n. pub.], 1834; Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes; Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional, 2005).

¹¹⁶ In the eighteenth century the Jesuit Andrés Marcos Burriel advanced the hypothesis that Alfonso X was the unique composer of the legal code, but this theory was rejected very soon.

¹¹⁷ García y García carried out a study of all the codes containing parts of the *SP* or their translations; he also recovered about 115 manuscripts in Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese and Galician preserved in libraries all around the world.

¹¹⁸ From 1274, after the *Cortes de Zamora*, the *SP* were used only for the legal management of the court trails since the nobles had claimed the maintenance of the old *pleitos foreros*. Sánchez- Arcilla Bernal, ‘Historia de una polémica’, pp. 17-82.

idea according to which the *SP* were published by Alfonso X but their distribution was forbidden under the reign of Sancho IV, since the rightful application of its norms would have put Sancho – who dethroned his father – in a difficult position.

Finally, while acknowledging the several editions and reprints of the *SP*, the edition adopted for this study is that licensed under the supervision of the Real Academia de la Historia in 1807, declared to be the official version by the Real Orden in 1818.¹¹⁹

§ 8. A Legal and Moral Treatise: Friendship in Book IV of the *Siete Partidas*

The study of the typologies and characteristics of friendship present in the Alfonsine works begins with the analysis of Book IV of the *SP*, in which the entire Title XXVII is explicitly dedicated to this subject and developed through a simultaneously philosophical and pragmatic approach. Its prologue states that:

Amistad es cosa que ayunta los corazones de los homes para amarse mucho; ca segunt dixieron los sabios antiguo, et es verdad, amor pasa todos los debdos.¹²⁰

Considering the book's structure, the place of this title is significant since it follows a previous section regarding mutual bonds between vassals and lords, established by reason of natural connections, grants, services and gratitude. Equally revealing is that the title is symbolically fragmented into seven parts, each of whose focus moved from a general philosophical dissertation on friendship to a more detailed analysis of its peculiar aspects. In particular, the discourse on friendship centres on two main areas: how to choose a friend and how to behave as a good friend.

¹¹⁹ The three main editions are respectively that by Alonso Díaz de Montalvo, published in Seville in 1491 and reprinted until 1528; a second edition by Gregorio López (Salamanca, 1555) was reprinted fifteen times, until 1855. It received the official sanction from the *real cédula* and it was taken as principal source of reference for the legislative production undertaken in Latin America and Philippines. Read further in the introduction to *The Siete Partidas*, ed. by Robert I. Burns, trans. by Samuel Parsons Scott, 5 vols (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000). The third edition of the *SP*, licensed with the supervision of the Real Academia de la Historia in 1807, has been adopted as the main reference for this study. Additionally, the revision made by Juan Antonio Arias Bonet, who published a version of the *Primera Partida*, which probably came out from the Alfonsine scriptorium in 1290, preserved in the British Library (BL Add.20787) also needs to be mentioned.

¹²⁰ *SP* IV: XXVII, 'friendship is something which induces persons to love one another greatly, for, as the wise men of the ancients declared, true love is the most important of all obligations'. This is the opening sentence of the prologue of title XXVII.

It is worth underlining that in the opening summary of *SP I*, in which the contents of each book are listed, the theme of *amistad* deserves scarce attention, despite the space dedicated to it in Book IV. Whether this title on friendship was added after the composition of the first book or rather it was deliberately ignored because the topic was judged irrelevant is unknown. What is undeniable is that friendship, as it is presented in Book IV, resembles much more of a moral and doctrinal dissertation rather than a list of pragmatic norms aimed at regulating social exchanges. Consequently, it might be inferred that the lack of any mention of friendship in the introductory section of the *SP* was probably due to its prominent philosophical character. Nonetheless, the *topos* of friendship, already present in the oral and literary tradition, as Marsan has stated, represented the maximum aspiration for which human perfection could yearn, and a bond which in some cases could even be stronger than love and blood relationships.¹²¹

The contents of the laws included in Title XXVII will be summarized in the following paragraphs and they will be taken as parameters to discover parallels, similarities and contradictions existing between the legal norms, the historical events which recalled those rules and, no less significantly, their literary adaptation.

§ 8.1 Law I ‘*Qué cosa es amistad*’

In this first law the focus is on ‘[...] los otros debdos que han los homes entre sí solamente por amistad’.¹²² The essay starts by recovering the Latin origins of the term *amicitia* and the definitions provided by the most eminent classical authorities, such as Aristotle, among others. Whereas love can be a univocal feeling because ‘puede venire de la una parte tan solamente’,¹²³ *amicitia* has to be based on mutual benevolence and respect. This first law presents a complete glossary of lexical definitions, which aimed at avoiding any conceptual misunderstanding. In particular, the connotations of the terms *bienquerencia* and *concordia* are explained. The former is the benevolence that a person can feel for another individual, whose excellent qualities and fame are well-known, regardless of whether or not they have ever met. This suggests a parallel with the idea of ‘friendship in absence’ according to which the bond of intimacy and affection can exist before and beyond any direct contact.¹²⁴ An example of this is

¹²¹ Rameline Marsan, *Itinéraire espagnol du conte médiéval* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974), pp. 468-504.

¹²² *SP IV:XXVII*: preamble, ‘the mutual obligation existing between men, by reason of friendship’.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, ‘love can proceed from one side only’.

¹²⁴ E. G Cassidy, ‘Classical and Christian Perspectives on the Limits to Friendship’, pp. 45-67.

epistolary communication, which usually linked individuals far distanced in space, whose acquaintance was delegated to the power of their words exclusively.

This first law contains another lexical and conceptual clarification: the definition of concord as a virtue similar to friendship, in which the seeds of any peaceful coexistence should be planted. Concord may precede the flourishing of true friendship, but such consequentality is not necessary; contrarily ‘[...] los que han amistad en uno por fuerza conviene que hayan entre sí concordia’.¹²⁵ To conclude, as Aristotle had speculated already, a society ruled by *concordia* would easily survive without any external imposed regulation ‘[...] porque la amistad les farie complir et guardar aquello mesmo que quiere et manda la justicia’.¹²⁶

§ 8.2 Law II ‘A qué tiene pro la amistad’: Wealth and Age Parameters

This section begins with another quotation from Aristotle:

Provecho grande et bien viene á los homes de la amistad, de guisa que segunt dixo Aristotiles ningunt home que haya bontad en si non quiere vevir en este mundo sin amigos, maguer fuese abandonado de todos los otros bienes que en él son; [...].¹²⁷

Amicitia is fundamental for any man, regardless of his social and economic position. Wealth becomes an inexhaustible source of welfare only when it is shared with friends as well as preserved and increased by their help. While friendship is fundamental in order to enjoy one’s own wealth, the relationship is strengthened even more when the individuals involved are neither rich nor powerful. In fact, for those who experience a disgraceful or precarious situation, friends represent their material supporters and the source of encouragement in order to cope with daily difficulties, since they need ‘ayuda de amigos que los acorran en su pobreza et los estuerzan de los peligros que les acaescieren’.¹²⁸

The prototypes of friendship were numerous and all of them were based on a common feeling of concord. Cases in point are the relationships between children and

¹²⁵ *SP* IV:XXVII:I, ‘those who are actuated by common friendship must necessarily have concord among them’.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* IV:XXVII:I, ‘because friendship would cause them to do and observe what justice orders and directs’. Reference to Aristotle, *Politics*, III:IX.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* IV:XXVII:II, ‘friendship gives men great benefits and good; so that, as Aristotle stated, no man who has any kindness in his nature desires to live in his world without friendship’.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* IV:XXVII:II, ‘aid of friends, who may aid them in their poverty, and inspire them with courage in dangers which may come upon them’.

their adult friend-protectors as well as the bonds among youths and those between the elderly. Therefore, according to such a categorization, other figures might be added to the canonical list of friends: the *guardadores*, namely infants' tutors and godfathers;¹²⁹ companions, sharing love and experiences on the base of their same ages and attitudes; and friends who provide assistance and aid to those who find themselves already in the twilight of life, unable to satisfy their own needs.

§ 8.3 Law III 'Cómo se debe home aprovechar del consejo del amigo, et qual debe seer escogido para esto': Proofs of Friendship

The most notable feature to emerge from the analysis of this third law is the coincidence and sometimes equivalence between the figures of friend and counsellor. Individuals endowed with loyalty, wisdom and any other virtues characterizing *los buenos omnes* are excellent candidates to occupy a central role both in the social and private life of a person. Friends and counsellors, although called by two different names, often coincide, but in some circumstances the boundaries separating them are clearly traced. The *consejeros* held a privileged position for the wise advice they provided, although their role was strictly dependent on the position (above all when they belonged to the king's court, since the sovereign was considered the person who most needed good advice in order to act and rule wisely). By quoting Cicero's definition, the Alfonsine law emphasises that 'ninguna cosa es tan noble como haber home amigo á quien podiere decir seguramiente su voluntad como á sí mesmo',¹³⁰ but to make it possible it is indispensable to test the candidates before trusting them completely.

The *topos* of the proof of friendship had been a recurrent theme in the Castilian literary production since the twelfth century, of which one of the most famous and re-adapted example is the story, of oriental origin, about the *medio amigo* (half of a friend).¹³¹ The tale, which in all likelihood appeared for the first time in the *Disciplina*

¹²⁹ This kind of relationship recalls the dialogue between the old grandfather and his *amigo pequeño*, the child Zifar, in the eponymous poem. The old man addresses the child with the appellative of 'amigo' during a private conversation in which he was revealing him a secret about life and social statuses. In the patriarch's declaration an anachronistic subverting rule is given, according to which the power of virtue could be, in some cases, more powerful than the predestination given by lineage. *Libro del Cavallero Zifar*, ed. by Joaquín González Muela (Madrid: Castalia, 1982), pp. 76-79.

¹³⁰ SP IV:XXVII:III, 'friend is a man to whom one could speak his mind as to himself'. The idea of a friend in whom one can confide and to whom one can open his heart is expressed by Cicero in his *De Amicitia*.

¹³¹ K. R. Scholberg, 'A Half-Friend and a Friend and a Half', *Bulletín of Hispanic Studies*, 35 (1958), 187-98; Gaetano Lalomia, 'I complessi percorsi del racconto del "medio amigo"', pp. 79-95; M^a. J. Lacarra, "'El medio amigo" (AT 893): la singularidad de las versiones hispánicas medievales a la luz de la tradición oral', in *Tipología de las formas breves románicas* (III), ed. by J. M. Cacho Bleca and M^a.

clericalis by Petrus Alphonsi, recurred also in other works, probably derived from the same Arabic archetype.¹³² The plot is the following: a father, on the point of dying, asked his son how many friends he had got. The son believed he had got hundreds, but his father – who had personally managed to find only ‘half’ a friend in his entire life – warned him not to trust individuals as friends before testing them. In order to prove his point, the father suggested that the young should visit all his supposed friends, pretending to have murdered a man and asking for their aid. The young followed the instructions, but, as his father had foreseen, none of them helped him. By contrast, they refused to get involved into such a compromising situation. After that, the father sent his son to the person he thought to be his only ‘half of a friend’ who, in fact, helped the young man. Textual references prove that the Alfonsine production was indebted with the aforementioned story by Petrus Alphonsi.

One of the cases showing such influence also appears in the *Estoria de España*, precisely in the story recounting of the emperor Nero calling for his friends’ aid:

A la media noche desperto, et enuio mandaderos por todas las casas de sus amigos, que los despertassen et les dixiessen que les rogaua que uiniessen fasta el. Et ni uinieron los amigos, ni tornaron los mandaderos. E quando el uio aquesto, leuantosse, et tomosse con muy pocos, et fue a todas las casas de sus amigos; et nol quiso abrir ninguno; et con grand cueyta tornosse pora su casa, et no fallo alli ninguno de todas sus guardas, ca fuxieran todos; ca assi cuemo el no se fiaua en ninguno, otrosi ninguno se fiaua en el [...] Entonce dixo: ‘ni e yo amigo, ni enemigo’.¹³³

J. Lacarra (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza; Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2003), pp. 267-292. The story also appears in the *Disciplina Clericalis*, *El Libro del Caballero Zifar*, *El Conde Lucanor* and some references appear also in the *CSM* as will be discussed later.

¹³² Petrus Alphonsus, *Disciplina Clericalis*, ed. and trans. by M. J. Lacarra (Zaragoza: Guara, 1980). It also appears in *Barlaam et Josafat*, *Calila et Dimna* (in particular, see the tale ‘De la paloma collarada et del mur et del galápago et del gamo et del cuervo’, *Calila e Dimna*, pp. 202-223), *Libro de los Buenos Proverbios* (in which the value of the proofs of friendship is highlighted through the statements attributed to the most eminent ancient philosophers; for example ‘los ojos del torpe en cato es del mundo, y este bien ha en la mala andança que prueba onbre a sus amigos’ attributed to Plato, p. 91; ‘pues non conviene al privado que sea seguo ny al que nones privado que sedesfiuze della, y la connoçençia es por prueba’ attributed to Diogenis, p. 140). See also some original Castilian works, such as the *Castigos y documentos de Sancho IV*, *El Libro del Cavallero Zifar* and *El Conde Lucanor*.

¹³³ *EE* 178, ‘he woke up at midnight, and he sent messengers to all his friends’ houses, to wake them up telling them that he needed them. But neither did his friends come, nor did his messengers return. And when he realized it, he got up and with a few men he went to his friends’ houses; but nobody opened his door to him. So, with great disappointment he went back to his place, but he did not find any of his guards, since all of them had left; because, as he did not trust anybody, in the same way, nobody trusted him [...]. Therefore he said: “I have neither friends, nor enemies.”’

Sidestepping the historical and political considerations suggested by this episode, it is worth noticing that not even the emperor's heightened status could guarantee the trustworthiness of his relationships, especially if friends had not been tested before.¹³⁴

Any true friend should demonstrate loyalty, honesty and generosity, and in order to verify the existence of those qualities the most valuable proof was time. In fact, it was only by a long term acquaintance that a man could really be sure of the other's goodwill. Moreover, no relationship lasted, except for friendships between those who were good. Ergo, any broken links would testify indirectly the presence of falseness and hypocrisy, at least by one of the parties. For this reason the law sounds like a moral admonition:

que ha meester que ante que home tome amistad con otro, que puñe primeramente en conoscerlo si es bueno [...], et la amistad non puede durar sinon entre aquellos que han bontad en sí.¹³⁵

Everyone should select trustworthy people with which to surround themselves and should avoid false individuals who could not be regarded either as companions, *consejeros*, secret trustees and, even less, as friends.

§ 8.4 Law IV 'Quantás maneras son de amistad': Recovery of, and Additions to, Aristotle's Definitions of Friendship

Up to this point Aristotle has been quoted as the voice who stirred up most discussions on friendship. His three-fold classification – friendship by nature, interest and pleasure – is summarily recalled also in this fourth law. The first category under examination is natural friendship; the bond connecting members of the same family, including parental and marital connections. All of them were described as similar to the relationships existing in the animal world 'porque cada uno dellos ha naturalmente amistad con su compañero et con los fijos que nascent dellos'.¹³⁶ The epithet of *compañero* was used in order to address individuals who acted according to the rules of loyalty and benevolence, but it referred also to all those who claimed to belong to a kinship or a

¹³⁴ In his specific case, however, the cause of his solitude and abandon is attributed to the lack of mutual love which should have been exchanged with his people. Such a connotation is not present in the twelfth-century tale to which it has been compared.

¹³⁵ *SP* IV:XXVII:III, 'it is necessary before one man establishes friendship with another to endeavour to become acquainted with him and ascertain if he is good first. [...] Friendship cannot last except between those who, of themselves, are kind'.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* IV:XXVII:IV, 'because each one of them has naturally friendship for his companion, and for the offspring born to the latter'.

family group, which usually included servants and close friends. Beyond the sense of solidarity, the feeling of belonging to the same country also contributed to generating bonds classified as natural friendships, since they were connections between countrymen who, once abroad, felt the necessity to act sociably and to afford mutual assistance as if they were friends of long standing.

The process of adaptation of the Aristotelian categories to the thirteenth-century reality regulated by Alfonsine law engendered a second typology which is *amistad pura* (pure friendship), considered by far an unrivalled link essentially rooted in goodwill and deprived of any pressure generated by natural or biological duties. A third category is *amistad de interés* (interested friendship), based on contingent situations, therefore destined to fail as soon as one of the parties obtains sufficient benefits. Reaching such a stage the relationship inevitably failed because of the absence of any gleam of true love:

luego quel haya ol desfallesca la pro ó el placer que espera haber del amigo, desátase por ende la amistad que era entrellos, porque no habie raiz de bontad.¹³⁷

The same Aristotelian idea had already, and recurrently, appeared in the Iberian literary patrimony of pre-Alfonsine and oriental origins, as the following maxim (*sentencia*) from the *Flores de Filosofía*, for instance, demonstrates: ‘qujen te ama por rrazon de alguna perderas su amor quando lo oujeres acabado’.¹³⁸

In the final part of this fourth law, an additional typology is added to the standard Aristotelian ones: the pact of mutual respect and honour that the *fijosdalgos* – nobly born people – agreed among them in order to preserve their rights and privileges and face together upheavals and disputes wherever they arose. These kinds of bonds were not new, since the previous customary law had already stated that a temporary truce of nine days had to be respected by the noble contenders after a duel and before entering a new agreement with the other party. Both the *Fuero Viejo de Castilla* and the *Fuero Real*, for example, issued norms regulating mutual peace. These extremely formal and ‘emotionless’ typologies of relationships appear again also in *SP VII* (Title II) where the notion of a *confradía de caballeros* – anachronistically definable as a guild of knights and nobles united in the name of a common military identity – is given. More precisely, in Book VII, which legislates on crimes and punishments, Title XI is

¹³⁷ *SP IV:XXVII:IV*, ‘as soon as he receives or fails to obtain, the benefit or pleasure which he expects to secure from his friend, the friendship between them is dissolved because it has no foundation in benevolence’.

¹³⁸ *Flores de Filosofía*, Chapter XXXIX, ‘you will lose the friendship of those who love you for some interest once they will achieve what they wanted’.

aimed at regulating disputes and truces, while the following title focuses on the establishment and maintenance of peaceful agreements. In the same *SP VII* it is also stated that in the case of nobles summoned before the king, but unable to go and defend themselves, a member of their family, a close relative or one of their friends could act on their behalf.

However, to conclude the analysis of *SP IV:XXVII:IV*, it has to be highlighted that, besides illustrating the qualities required to virtuous and trustworthy candidates, the law also included within its classification those who provided aid in dangerous or injurious situations, who appointed someone as a knight or celebrated their marriage and, last but not least, those who rescued another from captivity and death. In fact, all of them legally deserved the appellation of friends.

§ 8.5 Law V ‘Cómo debe seer guardada la amistad entre los amigos’: Loyalty, Good Faith and Equality

In order to preserve friendship and to make it endure, the parties involved should establish and observe three fundamental rules. First of all, loyalty and good faith, characteristics which could not be set aside and which had to be mutually present in any friendly exchanges since, as Cicero had already stated:

[...] el firmamiento et el cimientto de la amistad es la buena fe que home ha á su amigo; ca ningunt amor non puede seer firme en que fe non ha, porque loca cosa serie et sin razon de demander lealtad el un amigo al otro, si él non la hobiese en sí [...].¹³⁹

The second warning is about the infamous comments which could injure a friend and destroy the relationship since ‘[...] qui deshonra á su amigo de palabra, desata la amistad que habie con él’.¹⁴⁰ The law also specifies that *buena palabra* is the ability to keep a secret that a friend reveals to another and whose discovery would discredit and corrupt the relationship between them.

Finally, the third rule, evidently influenced by Augustinian ideas, advertises the equality of friendship ‘[...] en la amistad non ha un grado mas alto que otro, ca siempre

¹³⁹ *SP IV:XXVII:V*, ‘the good faith which a man keeps with his friends is the support and foundation of friendship, and no love can be firm in which faith does not exist, for it would be outrageous and unreasonable for one friend to ask loyalty of another when he has none himself’.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, ‘whoever dishonours his friend in speech destroys the friendship which he has for him’.

debe ser igual entre los amigos [...]'.¹⁴¹ Interpreted from a Christian perspective, *amicitia* could be considered the instrument to make the unequal equal by means of the purest love for Christ which the parts share. But, as the insight into the pre-Christian philosophical thoughts has demonstrated, the implications which the different kinds of friendship could bring with them were in fact wider and more complicated.

§ 8.6 Law VI 'Cómo el home debe amar á su amigo': Philosophic Diatribes and Exemplary Behaviour

A unique and incontestable definition of *amicitia* has always been extremely difficult to formulate. Cicero stated that it was a kind of trade made up of mutual and equivalent exchanges, but other thinkers argued that man should 'amar á su amigo quanto él se ama'.¹⁴² After many centuries, as reported in the Alfonsine legal code, the question still remained open and the different philosophical disquisitions about the way of loving and the amount of love offered to the other party were questions still debated.¹⁴³ Taking into account the excellence, and at the same time rarity, of such a noble commitment, the compilers of the law also asserted that 'et porque en este tiempo se fallan pocos los que asi quieran amar, por ende son pocos los amigos que hayan en sí complida amistad'.¹⁴⁴ What the Alfonsine law also states with no contradiction is that, except for criminal and unfair actions, which are never justified even if a friend asks another to commit them, one should be ready to give everything for a friend's sake: 'pero con todo eso bien debe home poner su persona ó su haber á peligro de muerte ó de perdimiento por amparanza de su amigo et de lo suyo quando meester le fuere'.¹⁴⁵

A few examples from ancient history were recalled in the Alfonsine law-books as noteworthy prototypes of friendship, probably in order to demystify the pessimistic vision regarding thirteenth-century attitudes. A case in point, recounted in this law, is the story of Orestes and Pylades. They behaved as real friends, ready to offer their own lives to rescue the other by death. During the trial, in which Orestes was going to be accused and punished, Pylades intervened by declaring to be Orestes in order to save his companion. But Orestes did not accept his friend's sacrifice and revealed that he himself

¹⁴¹ *SP IV:XXVII:V*, 'in friendship there is no rank higher than another, for equality should always exist between friends'.

¹⁴² *Ibid. IV:XXVII:VI*, 'man should love his friend as much as he ought to love himself'.

¹⁴³ Stone, *Marriage and Friendship*, pp. 115-130.

¹⁴⁴ *SP IV:XXVII:VI*, 'since in this time there are only a few who would love in such a way, thus there are not many persons between whom perfect friendship exists'.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 'still a man should expose his person and property to the risk of death or loss in order to protect a friend and his property, whenever it may become necessary'.

was the one who deserved the punishment. The didactic message of the story is addressed to both the readers and the sovereign. The latter, like the fictional king of the story, should learn from the loyalty of the two friends and make an effort to behave exemplarily and to become a good friend of his subjects.

§ 8.7 Law VII ‘Por cuáles rezones se desata el amistad’: The End of Friendship

The discussion on friendship develops progressively from the illustration of the conditions in which it flourishes, towards in which terms and which kind of characters it involves, to the elucidation of the causes leading to its failure and destruction. It is not far off the mark to assert that, in the Alfonsine law, friendship seems to experience a sort of anthropomorphosis, being subjected to the traditionally human phases of birth, growth and death. However, none of those ‘phases’ was unfamiliar to the medieval readers. Particularly, the theme of broken and destroyed friendship, which is specifically treated in this law, had appeared also in other sections of the *SP* (for instance in Book VI, which deals with inheritance, a matter often described as the cause of the dissolution of friendships).

Traditionally the failure of friendship was ascribed to diverse causes, such as the interference of a third *falso y mesturero* (false and deceiver) who undermined the relationship, the betrayal of one of the parties, a friend’s death, the dissolution of any original common interests and even the sudden changes of one of the companion’s economic status. Some of those agents re-appear in this seventh law, but here the focus is drawn to the causes undermining natural friendship which, as it is categorically stated, should not be dissolved on account of illness, poverty, or misfortune: ‘mas por enfermedad, nin por pobreza nin por malandancia que acaesca al amigo non se debe desatar la amistad que era entrellos [...]’.¹⁴⁶

While friendship generated by interests might be broken once the common aim was achieved, natural friendship could disintegrate only in the presence of unforgivable mistakes, evil deeds or in cases of betrayal of the country or the king, who should be loved as a lord and a friend and whose person and possessions should be respected unflinchingly:

¹⁴⁶ *SP* IV:XXVII:VII, ‘but friendship existing between friends should not be dissolved on account of illness, poverty, or misfortune [...]’.

[...] et la otra que han por naturaleza los que son de una tierra, desatase quando alguno dellos es manifestamente enemigo della ó del señor que la ha de gobernar et de mantener en justicia; ca pues que él por su yerro es enemigo de la tierra, non ha por que seer ninguno su amigo por razon de la naturaleza que habie con él.¹⁴⁷

The dissolution of that ‘national’ bond was considered as lamentable as any offence against the law of nature since, as *SP IV:XXIV:II* states, the relationships between subjects and lords were as natural as the bonds between parents and progeny. For this reason, the definition of ‘civic and natural’ friendship was enhanced to include also the relationships linking citizens, whose acts of disloyalty towards their lord were inevitably considered to be betrayals against their own city-fellows. Such a statement recalls Aristotle’s political theory according to which friendship was the bond between wise citizens who behaved righteously for their city’s sake, leading by their mutual love and respect.¹⁴⁸

§ 9. An Interdisciplinary Alfonsine Perspective on Friendship

One should bear in mind that law was simultaneously a collection of norms and an instrument aimed at providing solutions, that is to say it should work as an input and a model of correct behaviour, but it was also the result of a necessity: the need to solve or at least to marginalize illegal actions which had already occurred. By following such a premise it would be acceptable to define the *SP* both as a faithful mirror of the political and social behaviour which the thirteenth-century Castilian citizens likely adopted, and as a model which they had been taught to respect. The legislative production had been for ages the doctrinal area within which lawyers had discussed and reshaped the classical *lex amicitia*, despite the fact that friendship was allowed to exist outside the legislative context only. In fact, the legislators among them were not allowed to experience friendly relationships because it was believed that any personal connections could undermine their professional objectivity.¹⁴⁹

For the purpose of this study special attention has been devoted to *SP IV*, and particularly to Title XXVII, which is explicitly dedicated to friendship. However, the

¹⁴⁷ *SP IV:XXVII:VII*, ‘the second kind of friendship which exists by nature between natives of the same country, is destroyed when any of them becomes the open enemy of his country, or of the lord whose duty it is to govern it and maintain justice within its limits; for since he is the enemy of the country, no one has any reason to be his friend because of the natural relationship in common with him’.

¹⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, III:IX.

¹⁴⁹ Peter Goodrich, ‘Laws of Friendship’, *Law and Literature*, 15 (2003), 23-52.

information provided, which should reflect the social situation of that time, cannot be trusted blindly because the ideas presented in the code were partly moralized and filtered through the religious and philosophical currents to which the Learned King was subjected. Finally, throughout the comparative analysis of the three collections explored in this study the different typologies of friendship interpreted and promoted by the Alfonsine perspective will be presented. Moreover, a thematic approach will be adopted in order to support such a journey through literature, law and history.

Chapter III

Spiritual Friendship: A Link Between the Secular and the Spiritual Worlds

§ 1. Definition and Interpretation

From the thematic approach adopted in this study in order to analyse the different typologies of friendship as they emerge from the Alfonsine production, some undeniable coincidences between certain specific relationships and the works in which they appear have been uncovered. With regard to ‘spiritual friendship’ in particular, an undeniable prevalence of related examples can be observed in the Marian collection of the *CSM*. Before embarking on this area of study, however, a definition of ‘spiritual friendship’ needs to be offered. The significance ascribed to such a formula runs from its first recorded Latin use – *spiritualis amicitia* – found in the Venerable Bede (ca. 672-735), until its adoption in the later medieval context.¹ ‘Spiritual’, according to standard semantic definitions, refers to any element related to the non-physical human sphere concerned with profound thoughts, moods or feelings, and it is also the adjective *per antonomasia* defining the connection between man and God. Moreover, the adjective ‘spiritual’ also alluded to religious friendship, a macro-category which included the companionship of church members, affinities among people of equal faith and beliefs, contacts with supernatural and divine essences and, last but not least, any pure and uncorrupted bond devoid of any sexual or carnal implication.² All of these points merit further discussion and this is what the following pages are devoted to: focusing on the taxonomy of spiritual amity and on the peculiarities of each related bond.

¹ Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience 350-1250* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988), p. 94.

² Carlos Heusch, ‘La philosophie de l’amour dans l’Espagne du XVe siècle’, *Atalaya*, 4 (1993), 233-239. The concept of religious friendship will be examined in more depth in Chapter IV.

§ 2. Spiritual Friendship in European Perception: Two Examples

The concept of spiritual friendship can be found in numerous European works. In particular, Biblical references to spiritual connections were recalled in order to legitimize the ancient and pagan ideas of friendship and to make them acceptable to the majority and approved by the Church. Similarly, the Scholastic doctrines and Thomas Aquinas's revisions of the Aristotelian definition of *amicitia* influenced the spiritualized perception of existing social networks. However, owing to the specific compass of this study, whose focus is thirteenth-century Iberia, it is evident that the following two European examples are no more than mere suggestions for further reflections.

It is worth quoting as a point of departure *De Spirituali Amicitia* (c. 1160) by Aelred of Rievaulx, a dialogue-structured treatise, in which the protagonist discusses friendship with another monk he deeply loves as a friend.³ Following the classifications created by Aristotle and restated by Aquinas, Aelred divided friendship into three main categories: carnal, worldly and spiritual, respectively tied to physical instincts, temporal advantage and mutual love. In his theory, equality represents the fulcrum and the condition *sine qua non* of friendship. The awareness that such parity is the essential and natural prerequisite for any form of amity also evokes concepts and models presented both in classical references and in the Holy Texts. Aelred's theory was based on the idea that true friendship, rather than distracting, was a means to reach God. In his *De Spirituali amicitia* the cleric's personal experience of amity with another young monk is recounted: their friendship and their love and devotion for Christ allowed them to pass from the original unequal status they held within the ecclesiastical community to a new condition of equality in virtues. Aelred, from his ecclesiastical perspective, also drew a sharp linguistic distinction between monastic charity and *amicitia spiritualis*: the two relationships implied respectively the shared love among the brothers of a religious community and the intimate confidence in sharing secrets and confessions experienced by a restricted group or by two individuals only (the last assertion recalls Aristotle's and Cicero's ideas of the indispensability of intimacy in order to build any durable bond of friendship). In the dialogue with the monk, who was also his friend and disciple, Aelred

³ Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Spirituali Amicitia* is included in his *Opera Omnia*, in *Corpus Christianorum Continuation Mediaevalis*, ed. by A. Hoste and C. H. Talbot, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), II, PL 195. For an English translation see *Aelred of Rievaulx's Spiritual Friendship: A New Translation*, trans. by Mark F. William (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994). Recent studies have focused on the several implications of that kind of 'spiritual friendship', highlighting the possibility of a homosexual relationship between the two clerics. See McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, pp. 297-338; C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 110-114.

argued that Christ alone might embody the third part which was allowed to join and ennoble their relationship: ‘ecce ego et tu, et spero quod tertius inter nos Christus sit’.⁴ Aelred’s situation, however, was quite unusual and for this reason ideal: first, because both the clergymen were emblems of human and religious virtues; second, because he had some privileges due to his hierarchical position – such as private quarters where he could receive his friend and have with him confidential conversations – which were not extended to all ecclesiastical figures. Obviously those advantages supported the process of acquaintance and intimacy between the parties.

Another significant point is the indispensable presence of a friend in the life of man as a source of joy, relief and remedy against the sorrows of existence; an idea which had already been observed by the Church Fathers (St. Augustine, in his *Confessions*, for instance).⁵ Aelred moved from such a perspective and broadened his view by defining the concept of Christian friendship as something different from any other secular bond. In order to demonstrate this, he positioned friendship and *agapê* on two separate levels, since they were characterized respectively by love towards selected individuals and unconditioned benevolence for any man as God’s creature.⁶ The definition given by St. John Cassian about this subject can be borrowed here: in his conception fraternal charity or *agapê* opposes *diathesis* which is, instead, virtuous affection limited to an exclusive and selected company.⁷ Such a dichotomy between the evangelical and the ‘oligarchic’ vision would also be questioned in the studies of friendship that continued during the following centuries. However, the apparent contradiction was overcome by the idea that the relationships which deserved to be qualified as spiritual were any which contributed to the elevation of men’s souls to God. Another aspect that needs to be mentioned is the duration of the relationship. After the personal experience of his friend’s death Aelred asserted, by echoing Cicero’s ideas, that friendship opens the curtains of eternity since the defunct person’s memory continues to live in his friend’s soul.

The idea of a possible friendship continuing beyond the everlasting life, out of the mere worldly experience, would find similarly fertile ground in the Italian peninsula and a significant spokesman in the ‘divine’ poet, Dante Alighieri. In his literary

⁴ Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Spirituali Amicitia*, p. 29, ‘here we are, you and I, and I hope a third, Christ, is in our midst’.

⁵ Saint Augustine, *Confessionum libri I-XIII*, ed. by M. Skutella, H. Juergens and W. Schaub, 2nd edn (Stuttgartiae and Lipsiae: B. G. Teubneri, 1981, repr. 1996). See also Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, ed. by Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁶ Gene Outka (Gene Herold), *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

⁷ John Cassian, *Conférences*, ed. by E. Pichery (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1955), pp. 221-247.

production we can observe the evolution of the concept which rises from the *fin amour* of his early lyrics to a mystical feeling promoted in his *Vita Nuova*.⁸ Those two extremely detached positions found their balance in a moderate perception of *amicitia* developed in the *Convivio*.⁹ Dante agreed with Aristotle about the indispensability of friendship in order to live a happy and perfect life – ‘poi che noi non potemo perfetta vita avere senza amici’ (*Convivio* 4.25.1)¹⁰ – but he also refused the previous separation of the concepts of love and friendship since he argued that no earthly object, even the inanimated ones, could be considered unworthy of love because all of them are permeated by God’s goodwill, which is similarly the root of true friendship. The typologies which appear in *Convivio* 3.11.8 are also noticeably Aristotelian:

[N]ella 'ntenzione d'Aristotile nell'ottavo dell'Etica, quelli si dice amico la cui amistà non è celata alla persona amata e a cui la persona amata è anche amica, sì che la benivolenza sia da ogni parte: e questo conviene essere, o per utilidade o per diletto, o per onestade.¹¹

Additionally, in Dante’s widely-known masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*, the experience of friendship has a parabolic course; in fact it is denied in Hell and transformed into charitable love in Paradise, reaching its peak in Purgatory. The explanation of the absence of amity bonds between the damned in Hell lies in the assumption that all lost people acquired that status because they had been expelled from the blissful circle of God’s friends and they were, therefore, not allowed to feel mutual benevolence either. For example, the words pronounced by Francesca, the young lady condemned to the circle of the lustful in the *Inferno* because of her passionate love, reveal such a condition clearly: ‘se fosse amico il re de l’universo, | noi pregheremmo lui de la tua pace, | poi c’hai pietà del nostro mal perverso’ (*Inferno* 5.91-93).¹² By proceeding further into Dante’s literary and spiritual journey the panorama changes: the inhabitants of Purgatory could feel mutual love and amity also towards the human pilgrim, whereas in the upper celestial spheres the blessed souls were allowed to live the perfect harmony of ‘friendship with God’.

⁸ Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, intr. by Giorgio Petrocchi, notes and comments by Marcello Ciccuto (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1984).

⁹ J. Mazzaro, ‘From Fin Amour to Friendship: Dante’s Transformation’, in *The Olde Daunce*, pp.121-37.

¹⁰ Dante, *Convivio*, ed. by France Brambilla Ageno (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1995), p. 421, ‘because we cannot have a perfect life without friends’.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 219, ‘according to Aristotle’s definition in the eighth book of the Ethics, one is called a friend whose friendship is not hidden from the person loved, and to whom the person loved is also a friend, so that good will is present on both sides; and this must spring from utility, pleasure, or worthiness’.

¹² Dante, *Divina Commedia*, ed. by Giorgio Petrocchi (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1994), p. 88, ‘if the King of the universe were our friend we would pray that He might give you peace since you show pity for our grievous plight’.

The sense of community which joined together *beati* and ‘passengers’ – those who acted as guides or intermediaries as Virgil did with Dante – appears also in Chapter 489 of the Alfonsine *EE*. The passage recounts how the prophet Mohammad lied to his people by making them believe that he had the honour to enter in contact with God. By fearing that his people could convert to Christianity and consequently help the Romans, he created a series of laws to preserve their bodies and souls. Such a justificatory statement prefaces the subsequent narration carried out by Mohammad’s voice which describes in full details how he was accompanied in Heaven by the archangel Gabriel and how he was welcomed by the other souls dwelling the celestial spheres ‘como a omne que tenien por su hermano et su amigo’.¹³ His guide and intermediary was Moses, who intercedes for Mohammad and his followers in order to reduce their penance. For such a role, embodied by the patriarch, he deserved the appellation ‘mi buen amigo’ (my good friend). This is not the right place to question the meaning of the Christian transfiguration of the Muslim character and his being inserted in that theological context, but here one should acknowledge the existence of strong similarities in dealing with the topic of friendship, companionship and guidance in the journey towards and through the everlasting life, appearing in literary and historical works proceeding from different geographical and cultural areas.

Turning back to Dante, some attention needs to be devoted to the lady worshipped by the poet, Beatrice, who embodies the bridge between human and divine love. As she is the personification of wisdom and respect of God’s laws, she plays the role of Dante’s best friend as well as his guide in the journey to self-knowledge aimed also at his final union with the group of *beati*. Beatrice, therefore, is far from being a simple object of sensual desire, nor is she tied in a chain of pleasure and utility. The celestial, although human, character is depicted as the antagonist of the metaphysical woman – Philosophy – whom Dante deeply loves to the point of defining himself ‘amico di questa donna’.¹⁴ The latter is considered perfect, but unfortunately she is only an imaginative abstraction. From these considerations, which contribute to our knowledge of the status held by women in the medieval era, it seems that female protagonists of pure and uncorrupted friendship only existed in the idealized world of poetry. Dante’s account is not an isolated example focusing on this subject and stressing

¹³ *EE* 489, ‘like a man that they consider as their brother and friend’.

¹⁴ Dante, *Convivio*, 4.1.13-24, ‘a friend of this woman’.

the fact that poetry alone, being considered an aesthetic utopia extremely removed from reality, was allowed to overcome social pressure, stereotypes and gender boundaries.¹⁵

At this point the biographical note about the link between Dante and the Florentine Guido Cavalcanti cannot be omitted, since it contains clues about the poet's ideas and attitudes related to his daily experience of friendship.¹⁶ Guido was Dante's friend and companion in sharing literary and political environments, though they were tied in a form of elective affinity which expired under unclear circumstances.¹⁷ Guido was defined in the *Vita Nuova* 'quelli cui io chiamo primo de li miei amici',¹⁸ a person with whom the poet shared feelings and emotions and who also represented the source and inspiration of his poetic vocation. Despite the undoubted great value friendship assumed in Dante's life and poetic visions, the terminology used in his production is vague and an alternative phraseology tends to replace terms such as 'amico' or 'amistà'. One might believe that this was due to his thinking of pure friendship as a matter of private colloquia, far from the frivolous and disturbing lights of a public and formal environment. Ostensibly it was a matter of emotional and 'spiritual' affinities.

§ 3. The Miracle Stories: Saints and Marian Devotion in Medieval Europe

As the examples presented in the previous section have demonstrated, spiritual friendship was a matter of authentic affinities, but it also represented a link between the supernatural and the human dimensions, which were believed to be connected. In fact, wondrous events and miracles were regarded as proofs of the existence of such a bridge between the two spheres. The world and the creation, for instance, were estimated to be the two most evident examples of those miracles; however, with regard to this point, one has to bear in mind the sharp difference between the pagan and the Christian conceptions. In fact, according to the former, miracles were marvels of nature, while in

¹⁵ See also nun's poems in Gabriela Signori, 'Muriel and the Others...or Poems as Pledges of Friendship,' in *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, pp. 199-205.

¹⁶ Guido Cavalcanti, together with Dante and Cino da Pistoia, was one of the poets belonging to the Stilnovo poetic school founded by Guido Guinizelli in Tuscany (1280-1310 c). The movement was based on a new idealized perception of love, celebrated as a sort of divinity, which would have ennobled and rescued men. The Guelph Cavalcanti, in particular, is remembered as Dante's friend although his being atheist condemned Dante to stay in the Inferno, where he dwells according to Dante's poetic description.

¹⁷ Dante was one of the priors of the Republic of Florence who signed the official expulsion of the representatives of the two political factions, the Black and the White. His friend Guido Cavalcanti belonged to the latter. In fact he was banished and he died during his exile.

¹⁸ Dante, *Vita Nuova*, 3.14, p. 96, 'the one I call my best friend'.

the Christian perspective all inexplicable phenomena were nothing but signs of Divine Providence. This was also Augustine of Hippo's (354-430) vision according to which there was no need of a rational explanation for the acts of God but one: they were not events against nature, but simply *contra natura cursum*, that is to say against the habitual and standard images of things to which people were used.¹⁹ Centuries later the same conception was also reasserted in the Alfonsine *SP*: 'milagro tanto quiere decir como obra de Dios maravillosa que es sobre la natura usada de cada dia; e por ende acaesce pocas veces'.²⁰ To some extent the development and performance of those incredible deeds found many points in common with some magic rituals, familiar above all to the northern societies. This assumption would plausibly explain why the guardians of Christianity made an effort to distinguish clearly between the two practices by presenting any form of magic as an action of the devil, in opposition with the *mirabilia* allowed by God and shown through the deeds of his intermediaries. Leaving aside the biblical records of visions, ordeals and other proofs of divine intervention in the human sphere, the following discussion will focus on the miracles worked by the holy characters, who were considered mediators between the secular and the supernatural worlds.

Whether or not the prodigious stories attributed to Saints contained any grain of historical truth, in the medieval mind they were considered as reliable, principally because they were perceived as signs of God's power. While the didactic message conveyed by the preached or recorded narrations was dominant, their plausibility in terms of logic and rationality was not questioned. However, a diverging slant was experienced from the twelfth-century, when the official process of canonization for the candidates to sainthood became a matter of papal administration. Thus, the accounts of the supposed miracles had to be sworn on the Bible, in front of the Holy Pontiff and even the witnesses had to demonstrate their trustworthiness. The records in themselves tended to differ from the unofficial drafts written down by the guardian monks of the shrines because, being the products of the papal chancellery, they were now endowed with standard formulae and the oral vernacular narrations of the witnesses tended to lose their original vigour and spontaneity, having been compulsorily translated into Latin.

¹⁹About the medieval conception and definition of miracles see St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, *Opera 3.1*, trans. by I. Zycha (Vienna: Tempsky, 1894); *De Utilitate Credendi*, *Opera 6.1*, trans. by I. Zycha (Vienna: Tempsky, 1891); *De Trinitate*, trans. by S. McKenna (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963); *De Civitate Dei*, trans. by R. W. Dyson (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²⁰*SP* I:IV:CXXIV, 'a miracle, that is to say a marvellous work of God, surpasses what is done by Nature every day, and for this reason it does not often occur'.

An interesting study by Finucane reports, for instance, that the official treatises about miracles worked on children presented medical notes about the physical conditions of those who claimed to have received some supernatural favours.²¹ Those potential scientific demonstrations were elaborated in order to prove that they were ‘real’ miracles rather than the results of some devotees’ vision, misunderstanding or lack of scientific knowledge.

Despite those official accounts, most of the miracle collections which came down to us have been saved in the registers of the shrines’ chapels and churches, where hosts of pilgrims came to thank the Saints for a miracle already granted or to pray in order to receive one. The discussion about the different kinds of miracles – asking for protection, healing, revenge and cures – the nature, class and origin of the subjects rewarded with the holy favours and the value attributed to those events would be hard to present exhaustively in this brief introduction. A much more promising analysis is given by Benedicta Ward in her *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215* in which she has studied the medieval perception of the most famous miracle stories and their reception.²² She has also distinguished between miracles performed by the appointed Saints (such as the English Saint Thomas of Canterbury, to whom more than seven hundred miracles have been attributed) and others ascribed to figures whose sainthood did not need to be proven, namely Christ and the Virgin.

Moreover, it should be observed that the wondrous actions performed by the protector or dedicator of a shrine were tools of attraction for crowds of believers who hastened there in search for protection and supernatural support. This happened for instance with St William in Norwich, St Godric in Finchale, St Cuthbert in Durham, St James in Compostela and Reading (the healing miracles worked at the latter shrine – where it was told that the saint’s hand was preserved – rendered him known in that area as the *divinus medicus* rather than with his Spanish appellation of *matamoros*), St Benedict in Monte Cassino and Fleury or St Faith in Conques and Rouergue.²³ Contrarily, Jerusalem and Rome, well-known destinations of pilgrimages, did not need any of those forms of promotion: they were the sacred places already quoted in the Holy Scriptures and the pilgrims who went there aimed, by their physical journey, to purify themselves and to fulfil the final and most important route to everlasting salvation.

²¹ Ronald C. Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

²² Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215*, rev. edn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987).

²³ Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, pp. 33-109.

Moreover, in those places there were no material relics to venerate, neither for Christ – who resurrected – nor for the Virgin.

The miracle collections dedicated to, and inspired by, the Virgin Mary are an emblem of the aforementioned medieval devotional panorama. As has been already stated her holiness did not need to be proved, nor were her wondrous actions restricted geographically, even though it was a common practice to associate a topographical title to her name (for example, Our Lady of Soissons, of Rocamadour and of Chartres among others). However, it would be incorrect to talk about them as shrines since they did not guard any relics. The case of Ephesus confirms this: the city attracted crowds of believers simply because it was thought to be one of the places where the Virgin dwelled after Christ's crucifixion.

To explain this, a brief history of the cult of the Holy Mary is needed.²⁴ Of oriental origin, the cult was widely spread across Europe by the eighth century, when Byzantine fugitives, threatened by the Iconoclastic movement which flared up in Constantinople, exported Mary's visual representations to the West. Not only were her images preserved, but also accepted and honoured by the papacy. In time, the attitudes towards the Virgin changed, passing from a reverential respect for her as mother of the Redeemer in the ninth century and a sense of reliance and trust in the tenth century, to a new monastic approach in the twelfth century – whose celebrated exponent was Saint Bernard – in which the service to the Blessed Lady was completely transformed into a purely emotive and affective relationship with the holy figure, already humanized in most of her aspects.

It has to be remembered that since the Council of Ephesus in 431 Mary was addressed as *Theotokos* (literary 'God's bearer'), but from the twelfth-century she acquired the title of Queen of Heaven, the merciful *mediatrix* between God and mankind to whom people of all classes and conditions addressed, in order to receive protection and favours.²⁵ It has to be specified that, in a period of heretic turmoil, there was a particular need to preserve orthodoxy, which explains why the Church allowed Marian devotion, but not the adoration of her figure.²⁶ It was in the thirteenth-century,

²⁴ R. N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 136-191.

²⁵ Jean Leclercq, François Vandenbroucke, Louis Bouyer, *Histoire de la spiritualité chrétienne. La spiritualité du Moyen Age*, vol. 2 (Paris: Aubier, 1961), pp. 307-311; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 129-136 and *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 68-73, 160-173.

²⁶ David A. Flory, *Marian Representations in the Miracle Tales of Thirteenth-Century Spain and France* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), pp. 1-15.

however, that the phenomenon of Marianism reached its zenith and it predominated over the other religious cults, thanks also to an increase in devotional writings.²⁷ It is reasonable to talk about a literary genre whose characteristics, in terms of contents and forms, have generated several literary and philosophical discussions.²⁸ The manifold collections of poems, songs and miracles of which the Virgin is both the protagonist and the virtual addressee, which flourished both in Latin and in the vernacular across Europe, prove this assumption. Excellent examples are the 58 poetic *Miracles de Nostre Dame* by Gautier de Coincy, the 314 *Sermones Vulgares* by the Cardinal Jacques de Vitry,²⁹ the anonymous collection *Liber miraculorum sanctae Mariae Rupe-Amatoris* describing the wonders of the Virgin of Rocamadour, the *Miracles de Nostre-Dame de Chartres* by Jean le Marchant, the Italian *Laudes de Virgine Maria* by Bonvesin de la Riva and several others.³⁰

The Marian cult also reached the Iberian Peninsula and achieved one of its most memorable climaxes during the reign of Alfonso X of Castile, fervent devotee and ‘champion of Christianity’.

§ 4. Iberian Devotion Reflected in Miracle Stories

The present analysis will go beyond the general European overview presented above, by focusing on specific Iberian miracle stories (which also recurred in the Alfonsine narrations) which narrate wonders performed by Saints – before or after their deaths – and by the Holy Mother. Considering the first category, two key figures of the medieval peninsular devotion will be taken into account: Saint James (Santiago) and Saint Isidore, whose images and fame became central in both contemporary and future artistic, historical and folkloric production.

²⁷ Elizabeth Johnson, ‘Marian Devotion in the Western Church’, in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. by Jill Raitt (London: SCM Press; New York: Crossroad, 1988), pp. 392-414.

²⁸ Flory, *Marian Representations*, pp. 15-23; Jesus Montoya Martínez, *Las colecciones de milagros de la virgen en la Edad Media: (el milagro literario)* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1981), pp. 44-55.

²⁹ In this collection the Lady appears more like an idea rather than a vision; in fact she is the protagonist of eight stories in which her intervention in the secular matters is used principally to strengthen the moral orthodoxy and reinforce the Church’s image and rights.

³⁰ For example, the *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin* by Johannes Herold and the Latin *Miracula Beate Marie Virginis* proceeding from the manuscript MS Thott 129 found in Copenhagen from which several editions and anthologies derived. It is also held to be a possible archetype of the vernacular collection *Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora* by Gonzalo de Berceo. For more on the European Marian miracle collections see Montoya Martínez, *Las colecciones de milagros*, pp. 55-74.

The cult of Saint James is without doubt the more renowned of the two.³¹ The pilgrim route to Compostela has not simply remained a path charted on a medieval map, but it is still a journey which people from all over the globe, led by faith, tradition or pure curiosity, continue to experience. In the medieval religious panorama the Saints' shrines represented a sort of magnetic pole for the supplicants who went there to receive healing and protection. In particular, the route to Compostela was undertaken in order to achieve redemption, and in this sense it was comparable with Jerusalem and Rome. Ward has argued that the growing number of pilgrims to Compostela was the obvious consequence of the fact that it was one of the easiest places to reach.³² Given that at that time travelling was problematic, those who were seriously injured and sick were seldom able to reach further than the local shrines at best. Nonetheless, even Compostela, above all if one considers the difficulty of the walk as a whole from the Pyrenean borders, was impossible to reach for some of them.

Our knowledge of Saint James' marvels proceeds from the original Latin text – *Liber Sancti Jacobi* – which was probably a later version of other medieval copies of which the most complete is the *Codex Calixtinus*, which still resides in the Cathedral library at Compostela.³³ The twenty-two Jacobean miracle stories assembled in Book II of the original five-volume Latin version recount the wonders worked by the Saint probably between 830 and 1135.³⁴ It is remarkable that, except for only seven devotees belonging to different social categories, Saint James' help was exclusively given to soldiers and knights. Moreover it is striking that none of the gifted suppliants was a woman. The narration of his miracles is also dominated by a sense of realism created by the presence of recognizable geographical spaces, characters and other details which also witness the cultural, religious and ethnic differences characterizing medieval Spain. In that context, Saint James's military support and enterprises, carried under the Christian flag, allowed him to earn the title of *Santiago Matamoros*. His earliest known

³¹ *The Miracles of Saint James: Translations from the Liber Sancti Jacobi*, English trans. by Thomas F. Coffey, Linda Kay Davidson & Maryjane Dunn (New York: Italica Press, 1996).

³² Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 125.

³³ *Liber Sancti Jacobi: Codex Calixtinus*, ed. by Juan J. Moralejo and María José García Blanco, trans. by Abelardo Moralejo, Casimiro Torres and Julio Feo (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, Consellería de Cultura, Comunicación Social e Turismo, 2004).

³⁴ *The Miracles of Saint James*, pp. XLIX-LI. As for dating also authorship remains a nebulous issue: the Pope Calixtus is given credit for 18 of the miracles, however it is believed that before that most of the stories had been already saved in a written form and signed with the name of some *auctoritas*. The entire work is divided into five sections; each of them focuses on a different topic: Book I contains musical and liturgical materials to celebrate the Saint's feast day; Book II, the miracles performed by the Saint after his death; Book III, the transport of St. James's body from the Holy Land – place of his martyrdom – to Galicia; Book IV, the military account of Charlemagne's and Roland's deeds; Book V is the unique twelfth-century example of a pilgrim's guide containing advice and warnings about routes, food and lodgings.

apparition in the guise of ‘knight of Christ’ is recorded in Chapter 88 of the *Historia Silense* (c.1115), where the *miles Christi* supported Ferdinand I of León and Castile (1037-1065) in the siege of Coimbra in 1064, a fundamental step in the process of driving the Muslims out of Portugal.³⁵ Particularly revealing in order to establish the origin of such a mythical image of Saint James is also Chapter 89 of the same work, in which a miraculous apparition worked by the Saint is told: the setting here is Compostela and ‘the good knight’, riding his snow-white horse, revealed to an incredulous pilgrim that he would support King Fernando I’s material sword by fighting side by side with him bravely.

Saint James is presented in a similar role also in the Alfonsine *EE* 629, precisely in the narration of the battle of Clavijo (844) where it is told how the holy figure supported King Ramiro I and his Christian knights against the Muslims.³⁶ The uncertainty about the development of those military events has generated numerous scholarly debates about the origin of the legend itself. Among the different positions, it is significant to remember Fletcher’s opinion, who stressed that ‘however interesting the light it may cast on what men of the twelfth-century wished to believe, tells us nothing at all of the ninth’.³⁷ Centuries later the myth of Saint James as a Christian warrior overcame the peninsular borders and it was exported to the Americas, where it turned into *Santiago mataindios*, an adaptation forged in order to legitimize the new conquest and subjugation of the indigenous people carried out with the swords and the cross simultaneously.

Despite his undisputed authority, the patriarch Saint James was not the only one invested with the honourable title of defender of Christianity. Another eminent figure of the peninsular medieval devotion, belonging to the Leonese tradition, was Saint Isidore, who is depicted alongside Saint James:

³⁵ *Historia Silense*, ed. by Justo Pérez de Urbel and Atilano González Ruiz-Zorrilla (Madrid: CSIC, 1959), pp. 190-193. For an English translation S. Barton & R.Fletcher, *The World of El Cid, Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 50-52.

³⁶ *EE* 629, ‘De como Sant Yague parescio en suenio a este rey don Ramiro et dell esfuerço quel dixo, et de como el rey don Ramiro uencio a l[o]s moros’. The sources of this specific chapter are Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada and Lucas de Tuy, but the Alfonsine narration is enhanced with more details and the chronology is changed. Richard Fletcher observed that this event is not historically well-grounded since, according to him, the battle happened in 859. He stressed his point by proving that the diploma claimed as the official document through which Ramiro I allowed the Church of Compostela to have some annual tributes from the believers was in fact a reproduction made in the twelfth century. See also Thomas D. Kendrick, *St. James in Spain* (London: Methuen, 1960), pp. 19-23.

³⁷ Richard A. Fletcher, *Saint James's Catapult: The Life and Times of Diego Gelmirez of Santiago de Compostela* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 67.

caballeros del muy alto Rey, Santiago e Isidro! los cuales, juuntamente en una concordia y compañía, procuraron siempre defender de los malos acontecimientos la tierra y gente que a su patrocinio está encomendado [...] la hacen triunfante y vencedora de los enemigos de la fe.³⁸

Isidore's pious and divinely inspired actions were recounted for the first time by Lucas de Tuy in his *Milagros de San Isidro* which is widely considered to have been written in 1223.³⁹ The narration of his miracles is presented as a coherent *unicum* in which all of them are linked by a chain of causes and effects. Within such a wondrous framework, Isidore played the role of mediator between the supplicants and the Holy figures by appealing to the Virgin Mary in order to obtain, through her intercession, God's favours.

Nonetheless, despite the Saints' position in devotees' esteem during the Middle Ages, their value was undermined by the superiority of God and the Virgin Mary. It is interesting that the Peninsula experienced the official passage from Arianism to Christianity only in 589, when the Visigothic King Reccared converted himself and his people to the new religion. With such an historical background it would be reasonable to see in the earliest belief the figure of the Virgin Mary an association with the goddess of the earth, and thus with the symbol of fertility. Inevitably, the footprint of those pagan ideas persisted in time. In fact, even Alfonso X of Castile in the thirteenth century tried to justify those ideas in his *Setenario*, whose Law 43 stated 'de cómo los que aoran la tierra, a Santa María querían aorar ssi bien lo entendiesen'.⁴⁰ The Alfonsine legal statement was an attempt to explain the metaphor according to which Mary was compared with the prosperous land in which the Holy Spirit had cultivated Christ.

With the passing of the centuries the cult of Mary became progressively more politicized since it was associated with the Christian victories over the Muslim enemies. The Holy Lady became the symbol of the 'Reconquest', as reported by the chronicles of the late ninth century and their connected legends. It was believed, for example, that in 722 King Pelagius had received the Virgin's aid in battle and, once he achieved the crown of Asturias, he rewarded her with great honours so that from that moment on she

³⁸ Lucas de Tuy, *Milagros de San Isidro*, ed. by Antonio Viñayo González, trans. by Juan de Robles (León: Universidad, Real Colegiata de León, Cátedra de San Isidoro, 1992), pp. 55-56. English trans. mine 'James and Isidore, the highest King's knights, joined together in agreement and companionship, always have managed to protect the land and the people who are devoted to them [...] and they make them winners over the enemies of the true faith'.

³⁹ On the chronology of the different editions see the Introduction of Lucas de Tuy, *Milagros de San Isidro*, pp. IX-XI.

⁴⁰ Alfonso X, *Setenario*, ed. by Kenneth H. Vanderford (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1984), pp. 73-76. English trans. mine 'how those who worshipped the earth, really meant to worship Saint Mary, if they understood it well'.

acquired the title of protector of the Asturian territories. Moreover, the need to secure the frontier territories in the South was partially fulfilled by their recognition as Marian lands. But the question in point is how that process was in fact undertaken. First of all, by converting the previous Muslim devotional places into churches baptized with the Virgin's name, of which the cathedral of Toledo is an excellent example. Its religious prominence was rooted in earlier times when, as attested in several works, the Lady appeared there in front of Saint Ildefonsus (probably in 662) to donate to him a marvellous alb as a sign of her grace and gratitude for his actions and his writing.⁴¹ Similarly, Ferdinand III turned the mosque of Córdoba into a Christian cathedral and Jaime I of Aragon did the same with the churches in the newly conquered territories of Majorca, Murcia, Valencia and Alcira. Myths and legends also contributed to legitimize the conversion of Islamic sites into Marian shrines. According to most of the Marian miracles, in fact, the defeat of the enemies and the simultaneous discovery of some holy pictures or statues which had been hidden during the siege, served to reinforce the idea of the Christian right over those territories. A well known legend is that of the image of the Virgin discovered in Arcos, south of Seville, when the city was retaken by the Christian armies. The *CSM* also contained a group of miracles recording the marvellous deeds of Santa María del Puerto which happened in Jerez, Seville and in other areas nearby. At that time those locations represented some of the most dangerous and unstable districts of the Peninsula since they were the nearest harbour which the Arabs could have used for a possible counteroffensive. For this reason one is led to think that the fact that the miracles occurred in those places was not accidental: such narrations were perhaps strategically aimed at promoting Marian power and protection and, not less relevantly, at motivating the Christian armies to pursue their advance.

In fact, striking pictures of valorous Christian rulers and knights carrying the banner of the Holy Lady during the military siege of their native lands frequently recur in the medieval Iberian production. The examples to quote would be manifold: from the reverential act performed by El Cid, who converted the Islamic mosque of Valencia into St. Mary's Cathedral in 1098, to the protection received by Alfonso VIII during the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. The narration of the events concerning Las Navas de Tolosa also suggests that Mary represented a political idea: as the sovereigns of Castile, Navarre, Aragon and Portugal joined their swords in her name, so too could

⁴¹ *EE* 510-511; *CSM* 2 and Berceo, *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, I; A. Martínez de Toledo, *San Ildefonso de Toledo a través de la pluma del Arcipreste de Talavera: estudio y edición crítica de la Vida de San Ildefonso y de la traducción del tratado 'De perpetua virginitate sanctae Mariae contra tres infideles'*, trans. by José Madoz, 2 vols (Madrid: C.S.I.C., Instituto Francisco Suárez, 1943); Juan Francisco Rivera Recio, *San Ildefonso de Toledo: biografía, epos y posteridad* (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1985).

their kingdoms have been united under the banner of a shared Marian devotion. Such an ambitious political and spiritual unification was attempted by both King Ferdinand III and his successor Alfonso X. The latter contributed to the diffusion of the Marian cult both literarily and ideologically through his *CSM*. The collection, as Maricel Presilla has argued, was one of the most powerful instruments used by the Learned King in order to gain a large popular and symbolic consensus.⁴²

Besides the Alfonsine production, which will be analysed in more depth in the following sections, the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* by Gonzalo de Berceo (c.1197-c.1264), a masterpiece of contemporary hymnology dedicated to the Virgin, cannot be underestimated. It was the first collection of Marian miracles composed in Castilian rather than in Latin and this probably favoured its diffusion among unlearned people. Berceo adopted the metrical pattern of the *cuaderna vía*, perhaps assuming that his poems would have been used in preaching and sermons.⁴³ In all likelihood the collection, with its introduction and twenty-five miracles, achieved great success, probably due to the perception of its didactic stories as true facts rather than as fabulous narrations. What made those exempla trustworthy and reliable for the audience, either readers or listeners, was the depiction of real and synchronic settings, the quotation of figures in power ('en el tiempo del rey de la buena ventura/ Don Ferrando por nomne, sennor de Estremadura,/ nieto del rey Alfonso [...]'),⁴⁴ names of specific regions and itineraries ('movieronse ladrones de parte de Leon/ De essa bispalia, de essa region/ Vinieron a Castiella por su grand confusion [...]')⁴⁵ and allusions to well known common stories and popular legends. Equally revealing is the reference to legal administration and the way in which clerical judgements were regulated by Canon law. According to Marta Ana Diz, the common acceptance of the veracity of those stories facilitates Berceo's goal to use the miraculous events as evidence of divine power and its intervention on human life.⁴⁶ Moreover, fictional representations have always attracted the audience by the depiction of mysterious and supernatural events; contrarily, Berceo's portrait of the Christian supernatural emanates an equivalent magnetic force but without rendering the audience incredulous or distrustful. The use of

⁴² Maricel Presilla, 'The Image of the Death and Political Ideology in the *Cantigas de Santa María*', in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 403-457, at pp. 424-25.

⁴³ Stanzas composed of monorhymed quatrains (assonant in AAAA) of alexandrine verses.

⁴⁴ Berceo, *Milagros*, XXV, 'in the time of the king of good fortune, | Don Fernando by name, Lord of Extremadura, | grandson of King Alfonso [...]', p. 123.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 'thieves left from around Leon, | from the bishopric of that region. | They came to Castile in great confusion [...]'.

⁴⁶ Ana M. Diz, 'Historias de certidumbre: Los "Milagros" de Berceo (Harriet Goldberg)', *Hispanic Review*, 64 (1996), 391-93.

all these realistic devices was also adopted in the Alfonsine *CSM*, in fact, in both the collection's incredible deeds and apparitions were enriched by realistic and authentic details which probably increased their appeal to a contemporary audience.

The believers who claimed a miracle were sometimes driven by antithetical reasons, requiring everlasting salvation on one side, and the satisfaction of some material needs on the other side. As a consequence of these various requests, the representation of the Holy figures could not be univocal: at times they were described as the virtuous and detached spirits acting as bridges between the two worlds, and at others it was believed that they were able to intervene in daily life, for instance providing succour or fighting side by side with the Christian knights in order to protect and defend Christendom. The conclusion which might be inferred is that those relationships, frequently named alliances or friendships, were in fact connections whose spiritual, religious and military aspects often overlapped.



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⁴⁷ Alfonso X, *CSM* 181, panels illustrating the miracle which occurred in Marrakech, when Umar al-Murtada and his army won their adversaries by carrying the banner of the Virgin Mary.

Spiritual Friendship in the Production of Alfonso X of Castile

§ 5. Typologies of Spiritual Friendship

In this section the idea and representation of spiritual friendship emerging from the three selected Alfonsine works will be examined in more depth. As already mentioned, special attention will be devoted to the *CSM*, since it presents the most numerous and significant examples which will also help to disclose whether there was a fixed hierarchy regulating those connections and which characters were linked to which. Beyond the moral and theological motivations for the creation of those links, other possible explanations can be inferred if one reflects on the political and social conditions of medieval Iberia. In fact, since ethnic, linguistic and social boundaries were not rigidly checked, Christian believers, yearning for protection, tried to safeguard and legitimize their position in society by forging their identities as ‘amigos de Dios’ and antagonists of the infidels. In order to do so they resorted to the standardized sacramental rituals which ‘facen ayuntar amor de home con Dios’.⁴⁸ The law also confirmed that:

todo cristiano debe saber et creer ciertamente que esta es la creencia de Dios uerdadera que ayunta al home con Dios por amor. Et el que lo asi creyere es verdadero cristiano, et el que non creyere non puede ser salvo nin amigo de Dios.⁴⁹

It was commonly believed that humankind could enter in contact with God thanks to the support given by sacred or human intermediaries who behaved as ministers and performers of the conventional rituals. At this point it is fundamental to clarify who those intermediaries were and to what extent they might be defined as ‘friends’. The diagram below (figure 1) shows a clear segmentation which goes from the lowest level, occupied by individuals of different social statuses, to an intermediate position where the king and the Pope – vicars of God each in his own sphere – dwell. At the top the Virgin stands out from the others, subordinated to the Divine Father only. Apparently such a pattern entrenched its constituents rigidly, but in fact an inescapable scheme of intermediation did not exist and there was the possibility to move from one

⁴⁸ *SP*, I:IV:VI, ‘connected God’s and human love’.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* I:III:I, ‘every Christian should know and truly believe that this is the genuine Creed of God which unites man and God by means of love. And he who does so believe, is a true Christian, and he who does not so believe, cannot be saved, nor is he a friend of God’.

level to the other of the hierarchy. For example, it was not indispensable for the highest located figures to go through all those ‘steps’ of intermediation. In this regard, the king’s status is emblematic: he is represented simultaneously as one of the Virgin’s and the Saints’ closest friends, but he is also connected to the Father directly since he was His vassal and envoy.

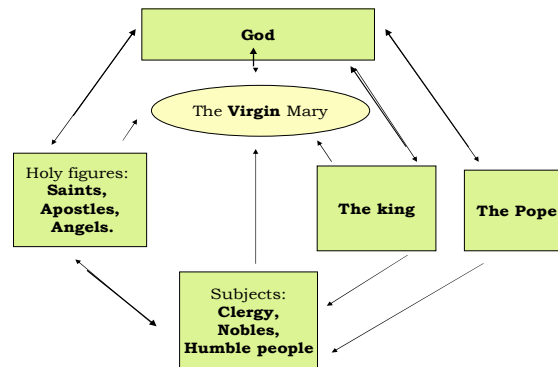


Figure 1

§ 6. God and Mankind: ‘Christianos de Dios Amigos’

The definition of spiritual friendship, among its various polysemous implications, included the connections between God, the Virgin, the Saints, the Apostles and the angels, either among them or with their subordinated fellows. St Thomas Aquinas elaborated the definition of *amicitia Christiana* in his *Summa theologiae* by stating that ‘*caritas non est simplex amor, sed habet rationem amicitiae [...]*’.⁵⁰ Such a connection between man and God implied, besides pure love, certain mutuality since ‘*praeterea amicitia non est sine reamatione, ut dicitur in Ethic*’.⁵¹ This kind of fellowship was strengthened by certain familiar dialogue between man and God, a process of communicative acquaintance which was begun in life (by grace) and would be fulfilled in the everlasting glory. Clearly this statement represents the rejection of the previous

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. by Fathers of the English Dominican province (London: Burns, Oates & Washburn, 1920-1924), Q. XXV, art. 2, p. 310, ‘charity is not merely love, [...] but friendship’

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Q. XXIII, art. 1, p. 262, ‘there is no friendship without return of love, as stated in the Ethics’.

philosophical theories of human unidirectional love according to which man could shower his affection on worthless or inadequate subjects without being rewarded equally.⁵²

It is noteworthy that the Alfonsine production abounds with examples conforming to these parameters of spiritual friendship. From the outset of Book I of the *SP*, both the abstract love for God and the far more pragmatic relationships involving the Church and its representatives are presented. In the very first title of Book I it is stated that '[...] demostró Dios á los que eran sus amigos muchas de sus poridades por fecho et por semejanza'.⁵³ In this passage, God is described as the stereotyped image of the perfect friend, endowed with all of the characteristics which a counterpart should have in order to merit such an appellation. In fact, He is loyal, careful, respectful, driven by the other's good and protection, ready to die for a friend's sake, as He did through Christ, whose crucifixion was a manifestation of His love towards mankind. According to the aforementioned rule of mutuality, man should behave in a faithful and charitable manner towards God as well. However, a careful analysis of both the Alfonsine works and the Saint's miracles shows a compelling paradox: since the ideals of friendship are so rare to fulfil, few were allowed to enter in contact with God directly, but – and here was the impasse – their privileged status was a gift received from Divine Grace which endowed them with uncorrupted souls.

It is also significant to note that the title 'Christianos de Dios amigos' was recurrently used to address all the professed Christian believers performing their faith and to create a sign of identification for those who made alliances in the name of God or in defence of His people. It is worth mentioning the religious wars and the title of 'God's friends' assumed by warriors in order to legitimize their roles and missions. In that context God was often portrayed as a feudal lord, whose subordinates were regarded as vassals and servants rather than as real friends.⁵⁴ Despite His divine and eminent position, however, the relationships in which He took part could not escape the *sine qua non* conditions of mutuality, love and respect. As the *EE* remarks, 'el Nuestro Sennor, que guardo siempre los sus amigos' protected those who paid His benevolence back with their pure love.⁵⁵ Again in the *EE* one can read, for example, that the aid received by the emperor Honorius, unable to make an important decision was due to the

⁵² The complete discussion about charity and friendship is carried out in the *Summae Theologiae* QQ.XXIII – XLIV, pp. 262-553.

⁵³ *SP*, prologue, English trans. mine: 'God revealed many of His secrets directly or metaphorically to His friends'.

⁵⁴ O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas*, pp. 16-17.

⁵⁵ *EE* 348, 'Our Lord, who always looked after his friends'.

fact that ‘pero por que era buen cristiano, ayudol el Nuestro Sennor Dios, et guardolo de todo peligro et de todo mal’.⁵⁶ He received this Divine aid because he was an exemplary Christian who deserved, consequently, the title of God’s honourable friend.

The same feudal model also emerges from the *SP*, whose title IV of Book I remarks that God ‘demuestra grant amorio de amigo et mayormente de señor á vasallos’⁵⁷ towards His believers. In most of those cases, directly or indirectly, the gift of Divine advice occurred through the intermediation of God’s ministers. Chapter 698 of *EE* is a clear example: the count of Castile, Fernán González, together with his army, visited a friend of his – Pelayo – because he needed holy support in order to face the attack led by the Moor Almanzor. For the Count, the request represented a sort of ritual he wanted to repeat, since he had already succeeded once in defeating the Muslim warrior, after the counsel received from the same friar. But this time something new occurred because a higher holy mediator intervened on behalf of the Almighty Lord: Saint Peter, who appeared in Fernán González’s dream and declared that he himself had been sent by God ‘porque tu eres su uassallo’.⁵⁸ On the one hand this assertion proves that Christians, regarded as God’s heirs via the confirmation they received by sacraments, were aware of the Father’s plans for them and consequently ‘que ya no les dirie siervos mas amigos’,⁵⁹ that is to say that they were regarded as friends rather than slaves. On the other hand, such a relationship between unequal parties resembled in many aspects a bond of vassalage.

The abundance of lexical devices depicting Christian believers as God’s friends or ‘compaña de cristianos’ suggests the idea of the claim for spiritual amity as an essential element to strengthen the sense of a common religious background which could also have led to the building of a solid social identity.⁶⁰ However, it would be extremely simplistic and reductive to approach the subject from a Christian perspective exclusively, underestimating in this way the threefold context of the medieval Iberian Peninsula, and that Muslims and Jews held strategic positions from demographic, social

⁵⁶ *EE* 364, ‘since he was a good Christian believer, Our Lord God preserved him from any perils and evils’.

⁵⁷ *SP* I:IV:L, English trans. mine: ‘he demonstrates a friendly affection which resembles more the benevolence of a lord to his vassal’. God is pictured in one of the commonest courtly images in which the temporal sovereign enjoys a rich banquet together with his vassals and friends.

⁵⁸ *EE* 698, ‘because you are His vassal’.

⁵⁹ *SP* I:IV:L, ‘they would be defined friends rather than slaves’.

⁶⁰ In the outline of the Roman history presented in the *EE* it is stressed how the religious identity could create strong military motivations as shown by the presence of a ‘grand compaña de cristianos’ among Aurelio’s cavalry in *EE* 218.

and economic points of view.⁶¹ Further discussion on those inter-religious implications, however, will be carried out more analytically in Chapter 6 and 7. At this point, one might wonder whether or not declaring themselves Christians was a mechanical guarantee which allowed those who professed it to achieve a blessed companionship with God by avoiding any further mediation. In fact, it was believed that God revealed his power through the Saints' mediation who, similarly, received their holy gifts through the Virgin's intercession. However, only two figures of the human race were directly touched by Divine grace and became themselves 'vicars' of God: the king and the Pope. Moments of crisis were not infrequent between these two powers, erupting whenever their spheres of influence overlapped. In order to avoid this, Alfonso X tried to keep them rigidly separate, as it might be seen in the definition of emperor given in the *SP* in which it is stated that the secular rulers had to pay obedience to the Pope in spiritual matters only:

Ca el señor á quien Dios tal honra da es rey et emperador, et á él pertenesce segunt derecho et el ortogamiento quel ficieron las gentes antiguamente de gobernar et de mantener el imperio en justicia, et por eso es llamado emperador, que quier tanto decir como mandador, porque al su mandamiento deben obedescer todos los del imperio: et él no es tenuto de obedescer á ninguno, fueras ende al papa en las cosas espirituales.⁶²

Contrarily:

⁶¹ Several studies have been carried out on the image of Jews and Muslims as presented in medieval Iberian texts. With regard to the Alfonsine production see: Albert I. Bagby Jr, 'The Figure of the Jew in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X', in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 235-46; 'The Moslem in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X, El Sabio' in *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 20 (1973), 173-207; 'Alfonso X, el sabio compara moros y judíos', *Romanische Forschungen*, 82 (1970), 578-583; D. Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews: An Edition of and Commentary on Siete Partidas 7.24 'De los Judios'* (Los Angeles; London: Berkeley, 1986); 'Christian Attitudes Towards the Jewish Sabbath in the Light of Medieval Spanish Legal Texts', *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Conference*, 4 (1979), 51-62; 'Jewish-Christian Social Relations in Alfonsine Spain: A Commentary on *Siete Partidas*, Book VII, Title XXIV, Law 8', in *Florilegium Hispanicum*, pp. 61-70; 'Tolerance and Intolerance: Alfonso X's Attitudes Towards the Synagogue as Reflected in the *Siete Partidas*', *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 31 (1984), 31-39; D. Romano, 'Los Judíos y Alfonso X', *Revista de Occidente*, 43 (1984), 203-217 (pp. 204-205); Burns, 'Jews and Moors in the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X the Learned: A Background Perspective', in *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence, Studies in Honour of Angus MacKay*, ed. by Roger Collins and Anthony Goodman (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 46-62.

⁶² *SP* II:I:I, 'for the lord on whom God confers such an honour is both king and emperor, and to him belongs, according to law, the power granted by the people in former times to govern and maintain the empire with justice. For this reason he his styled emperor, which means commander, because all persons of the empire obey his commands, and he is not bound to obey any one except the Pope, and that only in spiritual matters'.

Vicarios de Dios son los reyes cada uno en su regno puestos sobre las gentes para mantenerlas en justicia et en verdad quanto en lo temporal, bien asi como el emperador en su imperio.⁶³

By declaring himself a vicar of God and an instrument of His Holy will, Alfonso X preserved and protected his supreme status from any possible accusation of misgovernment or inability to rule. The belief that the king made laws for divine inspiration and with divine support, in order to guide his people and to achieve both earthly justice and the salvation of souls, as is expressly stated in the *SP* I:I seemingly put Alfonso in an untouchable position. Misfortunes suffered by people or difficult situations experienced by communities could not have been attributed to the sovereign's faults or to the lack of a proper legal policy, without converting such affirmations into open and blasphemous attacks against God's power, shown through the deeds of his earthly intermediary who was the king.

A similar idea of royal mediation was common also in earlier centuries and cultures, as the study by Kantorowicz on medieval political theology proved.⁶⁴ His analysis explained the process of *christomimētēs* to which the emperors were usually subjected, since they were considered the personifications and the earthly equivalents of Christ.⁶⁵ The propositions of this study are interesting in order to establish further parallels with the ideas of kingship forged within the medieval Iberian framework.⁶⁶ However, in the specific case of Alfonso X, who claimed the title of Holy Roman Emperor because of his mother's Staufen origins, the troubled political situations and the delay astutely manoeuvred by the Pope rendered his political project an impracticable dream which he never managed to achieve.

⁶³ Ibid. II:I:V, 'kings, each one in his kingdom, are the vicars of God, appointed over people to maintain them in justice and in truth in temporal matters, just as an emperor does in his empire'.

⁶⁴ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957; repr. 1981).

⁶⁵ *Monumenta Germana Historica, Libelli de Lite*, III, 676, 5 ff, 'Et utique magna et sancta imperatoris potestas, que cooperatrix est gratie Dei in pascendis ovibus eius veritatis geminibus et cui a Deo omnes regere concessum est, cui totius mundi pontifices ad concilium convocare, cui de sacramentis catholice fidei et celestibus negotiis tractare et ipsi pontificibus, ut inde tractent imperare per cooperantem sibi eandem gratiam collatum est. Propter quod usque ad celum a domino Iesu Christo erectus esse dicitur. Ad celum, inquam, non utique istud corporeum quod videmus, sed incorporeum quod non videmus, id est invisibilem Deum. Usque ad Deum quippe erectus est, quia ei in potestate ita coniunctus est, ut nulla potestas Deo sit propinquior, imperatore sublimior, sed omnis sit alia inferior'. In Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 61-78, at p. 63, 'Therefore the emperor, by the Lord Jesus Christ, is said to be elevated even unto heaven. Even unto heaven, I say, not unto the corporeal sky which is seen, but unto the incorporeal heaven which is unseen; that is, unto the invisible God. Truly, unto God he has been elevated, since so much so is he conjoined to Him in power that no other power is more nigh unto God or more sublime than that of the emperor; yea, al other power is inferior to his'.

⁶⁶ See my forthcoming article 'The King as Subject, Master and Model of Authority: The Case of Alfonso X of Castile' which will be published in the collected proceedings from the international conference '*Every Inch a King*': *Conference on Kingship in the Near East and Medieval Europe*, held in Cambridge (UK), 22-24 September 2008, edited by Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville.

§ 7. The Holy Lady: Mother, Friend, Lover, Advisor and Intermediary

In the imaginary descent down the hierarchical ladder schematized before, the next step is occupied by the Virgin Mary. Her position towards her believers, belonging to both the highest and the lowest spheres of the physical and metaphysical worlds, is characterized by plentiful and different aspects. In the *CSM*, for instance, the fact that she embodied the closest relationships man could establish in his life is highlighted in verses such as: ‘tal foi el meter entre nos e ssi e deu por avogada, que madr’, amiga ll’è, creed’a mi, e filla e criada’.⁶⁷ Besides being Christ’s mother, the Virgin was also endowed with numerous virtues and values which made her the icon of a perfect friend, an uncorrupted lover, a wise counsellor and a successful intermediary between God and humankind. All these roles are frequently combined under the unique definition of ‘amiga’. This appellation incorporates a wide range of semantic subtleties including mutual help, advice and affection as well as marital, sensual and parental connections. In the following sections attention will be devoted to the relationships established between the Virgin and the holy figures (Saints, angels and Apostles); with God, defined simultaneously as her Son, Father and Creator; with her believers (knights, churchmen and humble people) and, among them, with the highest of her devotees: the king.

§ 7. 1 Connections Between the Virgin, the Celestial and Sacred Figures

The Virgin Mary was frequently portrayed as ‘amiga e amada | de mui santa compannia’.⁶⁸ These titles in particular followed the literary device according to which qualifying appellations were attributed to each letter composing the Virgin’s name (in this specific case, ‘amiga’ and ‘amada’ are the qualities ascribed to the letter ‘a’ of Mary’s name). The Virgin was defined as ‘amiga companneyra’⁶⁹ of individuals who had the privilege to enter in contact with her, without reaching ever an absolute state of equality. As Queen of the Heaven, the Virgin Mary was surrounded and accompanied in her apparitions by a celestial court whose members were Saints, Apostles and angels.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *CSM* 30, lines 16-19, ‘He placed Her between us and Himself and gave Her as Advocate, for, believe my words, to Him She is Mother, Friend, Daughter, and Handmaiden’.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 70, lines 12-13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 70, 213 and 231 among others.

⁷⁰ A company of angels and Saints escorting the Virgin are portrayed in *CSM* 28, 132, 419, 420, 421, 422 and others.

EE 510 evokes exactly such an image by describing the Virgin's apparition during her feast day in December. On that occasion she appeared with 'la benedicta compaña de los apóstolos et de los otros sanctos martires que en la corte del cielo son'⁷¹ in order to reward the archbishop Ildefonsus for his strong defence of her Holy virginity against the heretical attacks received from Esidro and Pelagius. The Virgin donated a precious chasuble to her faithful believer and friend, a gift that nobody else was allowed to wear without encountering divine punishment. In fact, this was what happened to Sisebuto who ignored that warning 'pero dize en los miraglos de sancta Maria que Siagrio auia nombre, et que se le apretó tanto en el cuerpo aquella vestidura quel mató'.⁷² The same miracle is also recorded in Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, where it is enriched with further realistic details about Toledo and about the treatise on perpetual virginity entitled *Libellus de Virginitate Santa Mariae contra tres infidels, more synonymorum conscriptus a beatus Ildefonso, Toletanae sedis episcopo* written by Ildefonsus.⁷³ In a similar way to the Alfonsine chronicle, in Berceo's account the Virgin appears to Saint Ildefonsus, during the Mass he was celebrating in honour of her, to donate to him the magnificent alb. As in the account of the *EE*, Sisebuto's death proved how the Glorious Lady rewarded her friends and punished those who served her badly. This was the result for having inflamed the Virgin's anger which was clearly a human – too human – feeling. In Berceo's account Ildefonsus is defined as the Holy Lady's 'amigo leal' and their love seems to be mutual. Not to be underestimated is the fact that the title 'amigo' was chosen by the third authorial person (Berceo in this case) to define the Saint, but it was also the appellation used by the Virgin directly. By addressing him in that way, in fact, she allowed him to bridge the dividing gap existing between the two of them. The Virgin embodied the stereotypical courtly lady, deeply pleased by any acts of praise and devotion dedicated to her. In particular, her gratitude to Ildefonso was due to the fact that he had written a book to please her.

Starting from this example, renewed attention will be devoted to the Saints' elevation to the position of the Holy Lady's friends, which they achieved thanks to their holy lives and the unconditional affection with which they showered the Blessed

⁷¹ *EE* 510, 'De como sancta María dio la uestidura a sant Alffonso'; 'the blessed company of the apostles and holy martyrs who dwell in the celestial court'.

⁷² *Ibid.* 510, 'it is said in the miracles of the Holy Mary that he was named Siagrio and that the chasuble squeezed his neck so tightly to suffocate him'.

⁷³ Berceo, *Milagros*, I, pp. 16-22. Differently from the miracle described in *EE*, here the information provided is very detailed and historically based. For instance it is stated that the institutionalization of the Marian day – Annunciation- the 18th December and the changing of the date from the previous celebration in March was ideated by Ildefonsus, but it was officially approved by the X Council of Toledo in 656.

woman. Before analysing this subject, however, it is important to remember that the Saints themselves were privileged figures because they lived in *amicitia Dei*, a condition described by Reginald Hyatte as follows: ‘God shows His friendship in this world through rewards and aid, beyond the grace granted to all, for those who merit extra gifts because of their proven love or their potential for responding to divine love’.⁷⁴ The holy characters, endowed with miraculous skills and sometimes extraordinary abilities, held the positions of *primi inter pares* since not only had they achieved Divine grace, but they had also received sacred gifts, signs of God’s reward for their exemplary behaviour and faith.

It is important to highlight that the Holy Lady and the Saints would be positioned, although in subordinated locations, under the same category of intermediaries. Whereas the Saints’ intercessions constitute the means for common people’s pleas to reach the Virgin, the Lady represents the final mediator before God. Due to the existence of such a hierarchy, the holy figures inevitably have to worship Mary and stimulate the rest of the Christian community to do the same. This is what happens in *CSM* 368 in which a woman, affected by a heavy illness, was advised in her dream by Saint Domingo de Silos to go on a pilgrimage to the Virgin, since the plea for her divine aid was the principal, and probably only, way for the supplicant to be rescued. Equally revealing is *CSM* 278 in which a believer remarked upon the superiority of Mary’s power over the Saints. The miracle is about the advice given by a woman to her blind companion during their pilgrimage to Compostela. She suggested that he should change his route and walk to the Virgin of Villasirga (now Villalcázar de Sirga, in the province of Palencia) because only for the Virgin’s sake and thanks to her mediation could he gain a miraculous recovery.

If we leave aside the devotional message, we might question whether the verses of *CSM* 278 contained another and more pragmatic value: the attempt to deflect part of the pilgrims towards Villasirga on their route to Compostela. This would have generated prestige for his kingdom, but it would have also brought inevitable economic and financial benefits supplied by the pilgrimage and all its connected activities. Even if the existence of numerous pilgrimages in honour of Saints was widely spread, Marianism in the thirteenth-century acquired renewed prestige while the other cults lost ground and adherents. Many of these revered Saints were themselves devotees of the Virgin. They had acquired their celestial positions through her intercession before God and they had

⁷⁴ Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 55.

frequently spent their lives preaching and worshipping the Holy Lady, contributing in this way to spread the acknowledgment of her power among the believers.

After this brief parenthesis, the focus should turn once again to the portraits of the Saints given in the Alfonsine production, whose positions towards the Virgin vary according to the works taken into account. Their representations sometimes even contradict the previous statement about the Virgin's uncontested superiority in common beliefs. It is significant that on a few occasions, in both the *SP* and the *EE*, the Virgin's role is undermined by the Saints' positions, since they held the uncontested titles of God's friends and unique intermediaries between the Heavens and Christendom. An interesting passage from Book I of the *SP*, for instance, informs us about the Saints' roles in both the celestial and human cosmos:

onde pues que Dios los honra en este mundo asi, mostrando que los tiene por amigos et haciendo mucho et maravillosos miraglos por ellos [...] derecho es que los homes lo honren et mayormiente los cristianos.⁷⁵

With regard to this point one might question whether or not the undermining of the Virgin in the *SP* derived, or it was influenced by, the earlier Visigothic legal code, even if it was filtered and reshaped through the new Alfonsine perspective. In fact, the Visigothic *Fuero Juzgo* was deeply permeated with misogynous elements which might have influenced the subsequent legal enactments and which might justify such an orientation. However, there is not much evidence to prove it. Similarly, in the *EE* the figure of the Virgin neither shines nor predominates, as she does in the *CSM*; in fact, she is simply invoked through standardized formulae.

At this point, another category to examine is that of the angels, who occupied a privileged position in this supernatural system of relationships. They are defined as a uniform and indistinct mass lacking individual identity, with the exception of Gabriel. The archangel gained a definite position by acting as God's messenger and, in such a role, he fulfilled the original gap separating Christ's mother – still unaware of her future – and God. Gabriel was the initial intermediary which the Virgin herself would become once she consciously recognized her role and mission in supporting human redemption. Gabriel's actions and attitudes demonstrated to be an incomparable and *non plus ultra* model of friendship:

⁷⁵ *SP* I:XXIII, 'wherefore, since God honours them in this world by showing that He considers them His friends, and by performing many and marvellous miracles through them [...]; it is just that all men and especially Christians, should honour them'.

E nunca non podía | ja mayor amizade
 mostrar [...]
 Quen viu nunc' amizade | que esta semellase'. (Lines 10-15)⁷⁶

To conclude this overview of the possible connections between sacred figures, the position of the Apostles cannot be forgotten either, since they constituted the first model of Christian community based on concord among its members and, consequently, the ideal context in which the purest love for God could flourish. Their association may be described, using St Augustine's definition, as a form of *societas amicalis* (similar to monastic corporations), whose members were linked by their love for God and Christian charity. The figures of the Apostles appear in both the *SP* and the *CSM*, but in the legal code they are presented as the highest positioned members in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, regarded for their knowledge of the Holy Word no longer as 'siervos, mas amigos' of God.⁷⁷ By accepting the theory of the 'transitive rule' of friendship – according to which any relationship generated by pure love could be inherited and transmitted from father to sons and vice versa – the Apostles, as God's friends, were legitimized to become also Christ's friends and, following the same transactional passage, friends of Christ's Mother. This theory, however, does not exclude the assumption that they managed to reach such an elevated position mainly because of their genuine beliefs and performances as good Christians. Additionally, their merits also justified their becoming exemplary models for the rest of the religious community.

§ 7.2 Mary to God: Daughter, Mother and Friend

In numerous medieval literary and iconographical representations the Virgin embodied the overlapping roles of mother, daughter, counsellor and friend. A number of theological discussions have arisen around these categorizations; however, in the context of this study attention will be drawn specifically to the figure of the Virgin as subject and object of friendship. To quote only a few of the manifold examples, one could mention *CSM* 360, where the Virgin is named 'de Deus filla | e criad e amiga' (God's daughter, servant and friend) and *CSM* 399 where she is defined 'de Deus Madre | falar e amiga' (God's Mother, company and friend). Most of the invocations and prayers that the believers devoted to Mary were on behalf of the supreme Lord who was

⁷⁶ *CSM* 210, 'And never could he show us greater friendship [...] whoever saw greater friendship than to convey such a decree'.

⁷⁷ *SP* I:V:I. The same kind of reference is also in *CSM* 187.

defined simultaneously as her father, son and friend. In this case, since friendship was listed together with the familiar bonds of childhood and motherhood, one can assume that the perfect amity occupied one of the highest levels among the other social relationships in the Alfonsine perception, as they also did in classical and religious thought. In fact, this idea recalls the Aristotelian thought of parental connections considered as forms of *affectus naturalis*, the same natural love which included pure friendship. In the aforementioned case the *affectus naturalis* experienced by the Virgin was inevitable, in whichever way God's position towards her would be interpreted, since He deserved to be the object of love and respect, both as her creator, father and original master of love. Thus, the affection Mary felt for God resembled the definition of *spiritualis* in all its aspects, since it involved her most intimate and true essence, it lacked any secular implications, it was mutual and, last but not least, it was an immaterial chain connecting her originally earthly essence with the supernatural world.

However, whereas family ties were, according to different interpretations, genetically or divinely created, the title of friend could be achieved only by proving virtues, loyalty and honesty. This vision also contrasted the evangelical idea of bestowing love indiscriminately to any human beings as God's creatures who were, for this reason, subjects of Christian love (*agapé*). The specific case of the Virgin Mary shows at least two personal values which made her eligible as God's companion: her innate virtues and her loyal and trustful behaviour. All these positive characteristics allowed her to enter the osmotic process of inheritance of friendship discussed above. In fact, she mediated between the Saints and God as well as between the human believers and the celestial court.

The Holy Lady's noble and appreciable qualities as woman and wife received renewed emphasis once they were compared with those of her biblical antagonist: Eve. Unlike Mary, who was recognized as God's and mankind's perfect friend, Eve deserved a derogatory description due to her sinful and treacherous behaviour. It is not unreasonable to state that the Virgin represented Eve's purified alter ego who might even redeem the value of the human female figure. With regard to this point it is significant to quote the lines from *CSM* 320 'O ben que perdeu Eva | a nossa madr'antiga | cobrou Santa Maria | u foi de Deus amiga'.⁷⁸ It is stressed how both women were God's offspring, generated from His act of love, although only one of them had adopted her free will properly in order to keep that link and to consolidate her

⁷⁸ *CSM* 320, lines 14-17, 'the good which Eve, our ancient mother, lost, Holy Mary recovered when She befriended God'.

role as one of the Almighty's friends. The message conveyed by this biblical episode has a double meaning; on the one hand the focus is on Eve, the first woman created by God in order to be the complementary part of man, who in fact became his worst enemy. On the other hand the reproach is addressed to Adam, representative of everyman, who trusted his wife as a loyal friend and whose blind reliance caused his damnation.⁷⁹ The metaphor and the didactic warning are quite clear: man should prove who his real friends are and only afterwards should he trust them completely. The risk he takes in not respecting this test (which also includes a deep acknowledgment acquired over time) turns into the end of friendship or, even worse, irreparably damages his own life.⁸⁰

An interesting comparison may be drawn between the aforementioned Alfonsine example and another work proceeding from a different tradition, the epistolary exchange between Peter Abelard (1079-1142) and Héloïse (c.1100-1163), which takes into account the biblical narration of Adam and Eve in order to build a new symbolic model. The couple offended God with their sinful acts of lust (copulating within a Church) and they suffered separation, after Abelard's castration, by being withdrawn to two different monasteries. They escaped eternal damnation once their erotic passion metamorphosed into spiritualized Christian love. Héloïse, original characterization of temptation, was transformed into a positive figure, assuming the role of intermediary and spiritual guide to her lover. The story contains numerous symbols referring to the fall of mankind caused by Eve's sin and the redemption achieved through the Virgin's amorous intercession. The salvation for Abelard came through Héloïse's support, who helped him to overcome his sinful nature, embarking on a journey of purification which began in life, but whose completion would be fulfilled in Heaven by sharing the experience of a chaste and perfect spiritual love.

A similar comparison comes to mind in reading *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, the story of a humble and virtuous recluse who managed to preserve her moral and physical chastity and to guide the Abbot of St Albans, Geoffrey, to salvation through her intercession before God.⁸¹ The figure of Christina cannot but evoke, just as Héloïse has done, the role of mediator which the Virgin Mary exemplarily played. All in all, besides representing the humanized versions of the Glorious Lady as a friend, intermediary and subject of *mutual* love shared with Christ, Héloïse and Christina were

⁷⁹ See the theory of friendship as the prerequisite and original feeling from which also marriage originated in *SP IV*.

⁸⁰ Heusch, *La philosophie de l'amour*, pp. 189-194.

⁸¹ *The Life of Christina of Markyate, a Twelfth Century Recluse*, ed. and trans. by C. H. Talbot (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). See also Jaeger, *Ennobling Love*, pp. 174-183.

linked by other common features. Both of them were positioned in the middle of the pyramidal structure connecting God and mankind and, as *amicae Dei*, they represented the only figures allowed to help their male counterparts and to save them from their sinful conditions. Admittedly much remains to be said about the possible categorizations generated by the intersections between friendship and gender; for this reason a thorough analysis on this subject will be undertaken in Chapter 7.

§ 7.3 The Lady and Believers

In this context, the lexicon of friendship should also be considered. There is evidence to illustrate this in *CSM* 259, whose protagonists are two minstrels linked by a manifest affection which is, however, never alluded to as a ‘friendship’ in the entire poem. Contrarily, the description of their relationship is limited to ‘de dos joglares que fez ben querer’ and ‘foron-s’ ambos dali en grand’amor’.⁸² A radical change was experienced once the Virgin entered their relationship and addressed them as ‘amigos’. Not only did that title ennoble their personae and their connection, but it also made the appellation of friendship impossible to be used (almost in the same sentence) in referring to the two men’s emotional, but entirely worldly, relationship.

Nevertheless, beyond mere titles and ritual formulae, most of the Marian devotees showed their faith and reverence by liturgical performances, among which one of the most practised was pilgrimage.⁸³ As suggested by a number of positive accounts of those ritualized manifestations of faith, those phenomena were widely spread and accepted by the majority at different social levels. The believers’ proof of amity towards the Virgin often appeared to be shaped on the model of an opportunistic love, aimed at achieving personal benefits and advantages, such as recovery from mortal illnesses, rescue from imprisonment and dangerous situations, protection for relatives and loved ones, and the most important of all these requests was the claim for eternal salvation. Admittedly this point prompts other questions about the real possibility of associating spiritual friendship with pure love. In fact the hypothesis that man might love the Virgin unselfishly and without thinking of her as the intermediary before God is highly questionable.

Another aspect which needs to be observed is the sensual representation of the Virgin Mary and the amorous bonds that she established with her believers. This

⁸² *CSM* 259, line 8, ‘for two minstrels whom She caused to love each other’ and ‘they both went from there in great love’.

⁸³ Swanson, *Religion and Devotion*, pp. 165-68.

representation was probably due to the process of humanization to which the Virgin was subjected: a metamorphosis which did not exclude the acquisition of some worldly imperfections. As pointed out by Catherine Guzmán in her article about antifeminism in the *CSM*, the Virgin was often displayed as a ‘jilted lover’,⁸⁴ pleased by anyone who wrote a poem in praise of her or simply who chose her rather than another human lover.⁸⁵ The counterpart was usually a knight and their relationship seemed to be forged on the code of courtly love and chivalric manners. A good example is *CSM* 16, which tells the story of a tormented handsome and generous knight who was going to lose his senses and even to die for a lady who openly refused him. The unbearable suffering led him to open his soul to an abbot in order to reach God’s piety through his spiritual aid. The mediator-clergyman, who addressed the knight with the appellation of ‘amigo’ (line 40), wisely suggested that he should pray for the Virgin’s intercession. Inasmuch as the Holy Mary is concerned, she acted as if she were the direct antagonist of the human lady with whom she was contending for the knight’s heart. When she appeared in her majestic splendour in front of the man’s eyes she asked him to choose between her and the other earthly woman. The love-game involved a choice the knight had to make ‘se me por amiga queres aver’⁸⁶ whose rules forced him to pick the right option in order to deserve the Virgin’s priceless love. Needless to say that in this case the title ‘amiga’ does not imply any sexual connotation although the atmosphere and the adopted vocabulary are manifestly sensual. In fact, the Virgin’s roles of mother and daughter are here subordinated to the other side of her profile: that of passionate, emotional and sometimes fickle woman. It has also to be pointed out that there is a striking coincidence between this miracle tale and one recounted by Gautier de Coincy in his *Miracles de la Sainte Vierge*.⁸⁷ Their plots are identical as well as their tones, vocabulary and approaches adopted by the Virgin to address her lover-knight.⁸⁸ The ending of Gautier de Coincy’s miracle is not different either: the knight, spurred to take a decision, opted for the Virgin’s favours and moved to a monastery so as to spend the rest of his redeemed life there.

⁸⁴ *CSM* 42, lines 77-80.

⁸⁵ C. Guzmán, ‘Antifeminism in the *Cantigas de Santa María* and the *Dialogo de mujeres* of Cristóbal de Castillejo’ in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 279-86.

⁸⁶ *CSM* 16, ‘if you wish me for your beloved’.

⁸⁷ Gautier de Coincy, *Miracles de la Sainte Vierge*, ed. by M. Poquet (Paris: [n. pub.], 1857), p. 531ff. in the Introduction of Johannes Herolt, called Discipulus, *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. by C.C. Swinton-Bland (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928).

⁸⁸ For example when the Virgin Mary asked ‘Fair sweet friend, is this lady who has made thee to sigh thus, more beautiful than I?’.

Where the voluble and impulsive Virgin's behaviour is concerned, it is interesting to recall the example of *CSM* 132, in which she reproached the knight with the following words: 'Porqué outra fillar yas | amiga e desdennavas | a mi, que por amor ti avia?' (vv. 42-43).⁸⁹ These words would hardly tell us that the speaker is not an outraged human lover disappointed by her partner. Most of these sensual elements, which abound in the *CSM*, found a parallel, but more orthodox pattern in Berceo's writing in which, although the amorous attitudes do not disappear completely, the relationship between the two lovers turned into a canonized bond legitimized by marriage. In miracle XV of Berceo's Marian collection, for example, the Lady spoke to her lover saying 'assaz eras varon bien casado comigo: | Io mucho te queria como a buen amigo'.⁹⁰ Clearly the link between them is portrayed as a virtual marriage. However, one might argue that the main reason why official marriages were accepted was because they were celebrated liturgically, even if nothing proved the existence of real passion and all-embracing love between the couple. Like the *CSM*, the collection by Berceo also constitutes an excellent model of courtly lyric, ennobled by the presence of the Blessed Lady as the subject of human love and uncorrupted passion.⁹¹

The Virgin Mary, despite her gender, occupied a central position not solely in the aforementioned amorous performances, that is of motherhood and friendship, but also in companionship and counsellorship. As Ana Diz has pointed out in her analysis of Berceo's miracle stories, man needed Mary's consolation in carrying on a life which was pure alienation, misery and isolation.⁹² In general, such a frustrated human condition was worsened by the abandon to which man was subjected once the changes of fortune caused the end of friendship.⁹³ The only companion who never abandoned him was the Virgin Mary who embodied the most reliable and omnipresent supporter and the counsellor able to teach and guide man in preventing the solitude of an unhappy and desolated life.

The best and wisest advice man could receive during his life came from the Virgin or from her ministers. *CSM* 155 is a case in point. It is the story of a wicked and proud knight of Alexandria who realized, once he reached old age, how miserable his sinful life had been and decided to find some rescue in confession and penitence. He

⁸⁹ *CSM* 132, 'why are you going to take another love and spurn me, who loved you?'.
⁹⁰ Berceo, *Milagros*, XV, p.84, vv. 341-42. English Transl. "Young man, you were well married to Me; | I very much loved you as a good friend", R.T.Mount and A.Grant Cash (transl.), *Miracles*, p.74.

⁹¹ According to those rules of courtly love the lover performed his amorous services to the Lady and in this way not only did he become a vassal of the woman who owned his heart but also a subject of his own feeling, personified in the Lordly Love.

⁹² Diz, 'Historias de certidumbre', pp. 391-93.

⁹³ The discussion about the causes of the death of friendship appears in *SP* IV: XXVII.

visited a holy hermit who suggested a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Unfortunately the knight was unable to undertake such a long and risky journey, but the hermit changed his advice and asked the knight to bring him a tankard of water which would have been considered the sign of his redemption. The apparently easy task turned to be, in fact, impossible to accomplish because the water drained away from him. The turning point was experienced only when the knight addressed his pleas to the Virgin, without whose succour he would have never succeeded. Nonetheless, the miracle happened without her direct intervention on the scene: the Blessed Lady did not appear in front of the supplicant, who managed to fill the tankard with the tears shed during his invocations to her. However, one should not draw the conclusion that the hermit who had first advised him represented a malevolent guide; he was, rather, simply powerless, above all if compared with the Holy Lady who was the perfect counsellor of those who behaved as God's friends:

du o pecador promete | de seer amigo de Deus
e se partir de pecado | e enmendar tortos seus. (Lines 7-8)⁹⁴

Not only was the Virgin Mary's advice more valuable than any human guidance, but it was also the most powerful weapon against the devil's temptations. The latter was depicted as the bad advisor *per antonomasia*, since he had the power to drag man to damnation and his corruption represented the hardest obstacle to overcome along the journey towards redemption. The examples of devils tempting religious and lay characters abound in the *CSM* where at least 47 songs depict such situations.⁹⁵ Most of them describe the devil's performances, transformation and his taking possession of minds, souls and bodies as well as his deft ability to transmorph into an apparently reliable shape in order to drag those who followed him towards great pains and, finally, damnation. The most powerful remedies were Mary's aid and advice, as the invocation of *CSM* 350 suggests:

e porend', ai, piadosa,
ta mercee nos escude
contra a compann' astrosa
do demo, e nos ajude;

⁹⁴ *CSM* 155, 'when the sinner promises to be God's friend and amend his misdeeds [...],' p. 189.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 11, 14, 17, 26, 38, 41, 45, 47, 58, 67, 72, 74, 75, 82, 85, 96, 109, 111, 115, 119, 123, 125, 154, 157, 182, 192, 197, 201, 213, 216, 238, 241, 254, 259, 267, 272, 273, 274, 284, 298, 311, 343, 365, 378, 392, 404, 409.

ca tu na coita mayor
vales ao peccador. (Lines 19-24)⁹⁶

With regard to this topic another comparison with Berceo comes to mind. Miracle XXIV of his Marian collection narrates the story of a generous and charitable man named Theophilus, respected and appreciated by his entire religious community since he was the *factotum* of the bishopric.⁹⁷ After the bishop's death and the election of his successor, jealousy and frustration led him to be easily deceived by a Jew who was in fact a devil's vassal. Theophilus fell into a miserable state because of such an evil counsellor: 'este nuestro canonigo e nuestro compannero / moviólo su locura, un falso conseiero' (line 840).⁹⁸ These accounts underline the fact that even Mary's devotees, including churchmen, could be tempted. As the *CSM* also remarked, only heartfelt confessions, penance and prayers addressed to the Virgin and the Saints could save those sinful souls. This subject is also discussed in the *SP* throughout a series of commandments against those 'que parescen amigos de fuera et son falagueros de palabra que han la voluntad contraria de lo que muestran',⁹⁹ in other words against false and treacherous friends. The existence of those norms, however, did not deny the possibility for man to find humble, honest and wise friends, endowed with exemplary virtues which enabled them to act out of pure benevolence.

Considering all of this, the conclusion one may draw is the existence of a direct dependence between good advice and the advisor's personal wisdom and acknowledged fame. This assumption would explain the impossibility for wicked men to be chosen as reliable guides, while also suggesting further reasons for which the Virgin Mary merited the title of 'perfect counsellor'. In fact, she appears in such a role in several of the Marian *cantigas* (for instance *CSM* 64, 119, 140, 248, 273, 275, 291, 313, 355) and in particular *CSM* 418 explicitly tells us that her task of counsellorship was one of the seven gifts that Christ donated to Her: 'O terceyro de consello | ést , e con mui gran razon o ouve Santa Maria' (lines 18-19). Moreover, it has not to be underestimated that beyond her role of exemplary advisor and guide towards salvation, the Virgin Mary also helped man in coping with personal and daily concerns or difficulties.

⁹⁶ *CSM* 350, 'therefore, oh Gentle Lady, may your mercy shield us against the horrid ilk of the devil and come to our aid, for your help the sinner in times of greatest trouble'.

⁹⁷ Berceo, *Milagros*, pp. 157-87.

⁹⁸ Mount and Grant Cash: 'this our canon and our companion, | moved by his madness and by a false adviser [...]', p. 144.

⁹⁹ *SP* IV:XXVII:III, p. 147, 'there are many who appear to be friend but are merely flatterers, and whose characters are the opposite of what they seem to be'.

§ 8. The Highest of the Virgin's Believers: The King

Among the relationships between the Virgin and her human devotees, her connections with the secular authorities occupied a central position. The sovereigns' superior status, their social privileges, the nature of their power, together with the fact that they frequently claimed superiority over the Church, have been subjects of numerous discussions. However, in this section, attention will be drawn to the fact that their declaration of submission to the Holy Lady, as her vassals, did not imply their automatic submission to the Ecclesia. In fact, kings played the role of mediators between God and their subjects and this conferred on them a privileged and safe position which, on the one hand, prevented the clergy from taking precedence over their power. On the other hand, monarchs vouchsafed their secular authority by declaring themselves instruments of the Holy Will. Their absolute supremacy in the temporal sphere was stressed clearly in the *SP*, although the honour of spiritual guidance was left to the Pope.¹⁰⁰ In the legislative code it was stated that it was impossible to compare those two separate powers since they ruled on two totally detached areas, namely politics and religion. Thus it appears to be a wise strategy that Alfonso X adopted in order to avoid a conflict of interests which would have destroyed the wide consensus given by his subjects to both the parties. However, the King's ideal separation between the two powers turned out to be nearly impossible to fulfil in practice, since contacts between them were inevitable, as the political episodes that Alfonso X personally experienced demonstrated. For instance, the Learned King tried to guarantee and safeguard Christian observance as well as his personal supremacy by controlling and limiting the bishops' influence and power over his dominions.¹⁰¹ But such an attempt was not as successful as expected; in fact the situation revealed itself to be extremely complicated, and would eventually even contribute to the monarch's downfall.

Despite this, in the *CSM* an idealized picture of the sovereign emerges, demonstrating his uncorrupted love and his submission to the supreme authority of God (though not to that of the Church). The King is portrayed as an exemplary believer who

¹⁰⁰ *SP* II:I:V, 'kings, each one in his kingdom, are the vicars of God, appointed over people to maintain them in justice and in truth in temporal matters, just as an emperor does in his empire'. This assertion seems to be the secular reformulation of a definition already found in the *Milagros de San Isidro*, for instance, in which the Pope was defined vicar of God. See Lucas de Tuy, *Milagros de San Isidro* XLVII, pp. 88-89: 'Del milagro que se mostró en el sol al tiempo que el dicho Pontífice Alejandro III fué elegido Papa', through that miracle Christ 'por aquel milagro del sol quiso mostrar que el Romano Pontífice es único y especial vicario suyo, contra el cual se presume levantar el diablo, que es el sol de la soberbia'. English trans. mine: 'he wanted to demonstrate through that miracle of the sun that the Roman Pontiff is the only and special vicar of God, against whom the devil, who is the sun of haughtiness, wants to rebel'.

¹⁰¹ O'Callaghan, *The Learned King*, pp. 49-63.

represented a model ideal for his subjects to emulate. He was far from being considered a superior creature (as the theory of *christomimētēs* required),¹⁰² but he was simply regarded as a true believer endowed with the gift of Holy grace. In all likelihood, this gift made his people aware that they were obeying a real persona who was experiencing a status of grace, eventually open to any good Christian, since that proved that such a privilege was not limited to Saints and martyrs exclusively. The *CSM*, as both a product of the King's personal spiritual experience and a collection addressed to everybody, even if at different reading levels, conveyed this message. Additionally the vernacular (which in thirteenth-century Iberia changed its nomenclature from 'romance' to Castilian) played a central role corroborating the idea of a shared religious experience and supporting the royal project of transition towards a nationwide identity.¹⁰³ The *CSM* show an idealized picture of Alfonso X, submissive to the supreme authority of God, the Virgin and the Saints. The paradox is that thanks to such reverential behaviour, the sovereign gained sufficient prestige to be recognised as a moral authority. Moreover, his attempt to inspire devotion and respect towards the Virgin has been interpreted by many scholars – Robert Burns and Joseph O'Callaghan among others – as part of a wider political and cultural project. Burns, for example, has destroyed the myth of a pure aesthetic goal pursued by Alfonso X as a lover of the finest arts by asserting that 'he proposed by those activities to reshape society, to bring Castile itself into the mainstream of high civilization and to set afoot a process that would produce a united, educated, artistic, and religious people'.¹⁰⁴

Nonetheless, the symbolic relationship between the Virgin and the king assumed different connotations, among which the Holy Lady symbolically represented the Church. Unlike the situation outlined in the *SP*, in the *CSM* the interaction between the Church and the king is described as a vassalatic relationship in which the ecclesiastical system is submitted to the royal power. This idea is conveyed through the metaphorical narration of *CSM* 295 which describes how the Holy Lady knelt before Alfonso and tried to kiss his hands. Despite the attempt of the sovereign to invert the position, she refused because she felt a duty to thank and reward the King's faith and devotion. Clearly the scene conforms to an unmistakable feudal ritual and it might suggest that Alfonso expected – without being able to impose it jurisdictionally – that kind of reverence from the Church (although their relationship was deteriorating in the years

¹⁰² Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 61-78.

¹⁰³ David Rojinsky, 'The Rule of Law and the Written Word', pp. 287-305.

¹⁰⁴ *Emperor of Culture*, ed. by R. Burns, pp. 5-6.

when the *CSM* were composed, that is to say in 1270s-1280s, and would turn into open crisis when a number of clergymen supported Sancho IV's rebellion).

Alfonso X tried to retain undisputed authority on secular matters by claiming that his royal power was a gift of divine origin. He also avoided the rituals of anointing and coronation – which all the other European sovereigns claimed – in order to prevent any form of control or imposition by the Church.¹⁰⁵ Also the 'Reconquest' contributed to strengthen the idea of his uncontested superiority; in fact, by fighting against the enemies of the faith, regaining the Muslim territories and reconverting them into Christian spaces, Alfonso X gained the epithet of champion of Christianity and defender of orthodoxy. Complementarily, the major tasks of his laws, policy and administration – all depicted as divinely bestowed tools – were to accomplish God's will and to guide people in living an honest life which would constitute their passport to Heaven. It has to be stressed, however, that he never tried to usurp the sacred role of mediator held by the Virgin. Contrarily, she continued to be the main addressee of his claims and to embody a perfect companion which no other human figure could have equalled.

For all these reasons, it is not uncommon to come across images of the 'Liege Queen' providing support in the battlefield or rescuing devoted kings in need. The *CSM* present some cases of monarchs imploring the Virgin for political and military aid and it is not uncommon to find literary accounts of the support they received in their campaigns against the Muslim armies. Cases in point are *CSM* 28, describing the conquest of Constantinople and *CSM* 181 which tells of the Almohad ruler of Marrakech Umar al-Murtada (1248-1266), who was supported by the Virgin's intervention against Aby Yusuf of the Merinids when he allowed a group of Christian mercenaries to go out of the city carrying with them the banner of the Holy Mary:

E assi Santa Maria | ajudou a seus amigos,
 pero que d' outra lei eran, | a britar seus êmigios
 que, macar que eran muitos, | nonos preçaron dous figos,
 e assi foi ssa mercee | de todos mui connoçuda. (Lines 40-43)¹⁰⁶

A closer look at *CSM* 348, which tells of a treasure of gold and silver which Alfonso X found thanks to Mary's advice, is also revealing:

¹⁰⁵ Sergio Bertelli, *The King's Body: Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, trans. by R. Burr Litchfield (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 10-34.

¹⁰⁶ *CSM* 181, 'thus Holy Mary helped Her friends, although they were of another faith, to defeat their enemies, for although they were many, they did not give two figs about them. In this way was Her mercy made manifest to all'.

Ben parte Santa Maria | sas graças e seus tesouros
 aos que serven seu Fillo | ben e ela contra mouros.
 Desto direi un miragre | que avêo en Espanna,
 que mostrou Santa Maria, | a piadosa sen sanna,
 contra un rei que de gente | levava mui gran companna
 por onrrar a fe de Cristo | e destroyr a dos mouros. (Lines 3-8)¹⁰⁷

In general, one can affirm that among the Christian believers, the king is depicted as a model and as a valorous knight fighting against his enemies in the name of his love for God and for the Virgin Mary. The latter symbolized both the lover per antonomasia and the emblem of Castile. For this reason any newly conquered territory was consecrated to her. In other words, since Mary metaphorically represented Castile, the lands which became hers turned into part of the Castilian kingdom automatically. The Virgin, then, represented a sort of guarantee for the Christian ‘Reconquest’, a justification for the sovereign’s expansionistic plans towards North Africa, a symbol of the legitimization of his imperialistic dreams and an emblem of the divine consensus which authorized the sovereign’s inheritance of the throne. This latter assumption is clearly stated in *CSM* 200:

Ca a mi de bõa gente
 fez vïir dereitamente
 e quis que mui chãamente
 reinass’ e que fosse rei.

[...]

Ca mi fez de bõa terra
 sennor, e en toda guerra
 m’ajudou a que non erra
 nen errou, u a chamei. (Lines 9-12, 29-32)¹⁰⁸

A similar reflection on the supposed divine origin of royal power recurs in *CSM* 409:

¹⁰⁷ *CSM* 348, ‘Holy Mary generously shares Her blessing and Her treasures with those who serve Her and Her Son well against the Moors. Concerning this, I shall tell a miracle which happened in Spain which Holy Mary, the gentle and compassionate One, performed for a king who led a great army to honour the faith of Christ and destroy that of the Moors’.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 200, ‘She caused me to descend from good lineage and willed that I should justly reign and be king. [...] For She who does not err made me lord of a fine land and helped me in every war when I called on Her’.

Reis e emperadores,
 todos comūalmente
 a todo seu ciente
 deven de bōa mente
 dar-lle grandes loores,
 ca per ela sennores
 son de toda a gente,
 e cada ũu sente
 dela compridamente
 mercees e amores;
 e macar peccadores
 sejan, a Virgen bōa
 mui toste os perdōa,
 sen nulla dovidança. (Lines 36-49)¹⁰⁹

Not only was the sovereign endowed with full authority, but he was even forgiven in case of any mistake. Amy G. Remensnyder has discussed this point further by arguing that Alfonso X was engaged in a process of identification with the Virgin, supported also by the visual coincidence – evident in the *CSM*'s panels – between his and the Holy Lady's gestures, positions, crowns and thrones; coincidences which strengthened and vouchsafed his position and mission in the audience's eye.¹¹⁰ In such an emulative attitude Alfonso X distanced himself from the former high medieval Christological theories, according to which the sovereign retained an ontological status of icon for Christ, and he rather acquired the functional role of friend and intermediary. In the footsteps of his father, Ferdinand III, Alfonso X stressed his dependence and cooperation with the Holy Mother by declaring himself her lover, friend, vassal and first of her devotees.

Another aspect to be borne in mind is that the sovereign did not invoke the supernatural intervention for matters of governmental policy and State affairs only. Physical handicaps, moments of crisis and sense of defeat were some of the main reasons for invoking the Lady's mercy and assistance.¹¹¹ One example is *CSM* 209 which reports the story of the illness suffered by Alfonso X, his recovery in Vitoria and

¹⁰⁹ *CMS* 409, 'kings and emperors should one and all, to the best of their ability, joyfully render Her great praise, for because of Her they are lords of all the people, and each one receives signs of mercy and love generously from Her. Although they may be sinners, the gentle Virgin quickly pardons them without hesitation'.

¹¹⁰ Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Marian Monarchy in Thirteenth-Century Castile' in *The Experience of Power in Medieval Europe: 950-1350*, ed. by R. F. Berkhofer, A. Cooper, and A. J. Kosto (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 253-70.

¹¹¹ For example see *CSM* 221 which narrates the illness suffered by the young King Ferdinand III.

his request to have the book of the *CSM* brought to him in order to be rescued by its miraculous contact. The collection, as a physical object, was thought to have the capability to give relief to the body, just as its contents and moral advice could be helpful in curing human souls and in guiding man to everlasting salvation. In this case a material object, a book, turned into the key to access the supernatural life. It is not therefore unreasonable to state that the unselfish ideas of pure love and friendship were sometimes eclipsed by personal interests and material goals, additional reasons which led the king to call for supernatural intervention. Among the most common demands made by Alfonso X, there was also the request to be delighted by friends and to discern the true signs of amity in people who surrounded him. *CSM* 401 is revealing: the sovereign implores the Virgin Mary to make him able to select good friends and to be preserved from treacherous counsellors:

Outros rogos sen estes | te quer'ora fazer:
 que rogues a teu Fillo | que me faça viver,
 per que servi-lo possa, | e que me dé poder
 contra seus êemigos | e lles faça perder
 o que têen forçado, | que non deven aver,
 [...]
 e que de meus amigos | veja senpre prazer, [...]. (Lines 32-38)¹¹²

These lines evoke the image of a corrupted court in which the ruler's power and mission needed to be watched over the nobles' threatening ambition, lack of loyalty and sinful behaviour:

[...]
 e, pois Rey me fez, queira | que reyn' a seu sabor,
 e de mi e dos reynos | seja el guardador,
 que me deu e dar pode | quando ll'en prazer for;
 e que el me deffenda | de fals' e traedor,
 e outrossi me guarde | de mal consellador
 e d'ome que mal serve | e é mui pedidor. (Lines 46-51)

¹¹² *CSM* 401, 'other requests besides these I wish to make of you now. Pray to your Son to let me live so that I may serve you and to give me power against His enemies and make them lose what they hold by force and should not keep. [...] and may I know only pleasure from my friends'.

[...]
 e dos que lealdade | non preçan quant' un pan,
 pero que sempr' en ela | muito faland' estan. (Lines 70-71)

[...]
 e me guarde meu corpo | d'ocajon e de mal
 e d'amigo encuberto, | que a gran coita fal,
 e de quen ten en pouco | de seer desleal,
 e daquel que se preça | muit' e mui pouco val,
 e de quen en seus feitos | sempr' é descomunal. (Lines 76-80)¹¹³

Such a derogatory description of the courtly connections and the comparison with other forms of worldly links seems to emphasize the value of spiritual relations over any other connection, including those established within the royal circle.

Another interesting case to analyse is *CSM* 292 whose protagonist is Alfonso's father, King Ferdinand III, whose relationship with the Virgin is described as follows:

Se el leal contra ela | foi, tan leal a achou,
 que en todo-los seus feitos | atan ben o ajudou,
 que quanto começar quiso | e acabar, acabou;
 e se ben obrou por ela, ben ll'ar pagou seu jor[nal]. (Lines 16-19)

[...]
 Assi estes dous leaes | lealdade fez amar,
 ca el sempre e servia | e a sabia loar ;
 e quand' algũa cidade | de mouros ya gãar,
 ssa omagen na mezquita | pōya eno portal. (Lines 26-29)¹¹⁴

¹¹³ *CSM* 401, '[...] and may He be guardian of me and the kingdoms he gave me and has power to give me when He so chooses. May He defend me from false and treacherous men and also protect me from bad advisors and men who serve unwillingly and are never satisfied. [...] and from those who care not a crumb for loyalty, although they always speak of it. [...] may She preserve my person from any damages and adversities and from false friends, who do not help in case of necessity, and from those who do not care about being disloyal, and from those who estimate themselves but they are unworthy in fact, and from those who are always extreme in their deeds'.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 292, 'if he bore loyalty toward Her, he found Her to be equally loyal, for in all his deeds She aided him so well that all he chose to begin and carry out, he achieved. If he performed good service for Her, She generously paid him his wages in return. [...] Thus the bond of loyalty made these two loyal hearts love each other, for he always served Her and rendered Her praise. When he conquered some city from the Moors, he placed Her statue in the portico of the mosque'.

As for any other form of pure friendship examined up to this point, the key words remain mutual love, goodness, loyalty and respect. The pattern, then, does not change: although the relationship between the king and the Virgin would have been impossible according to Aristotle's theory of equality, in fact it was made true by the privileged and moral position of the king, which allowed him to bridge the gap between them, though without reaching ever a perfectly symmetrical position. In fact, not only the king's social prestige, but also his personal values and virtues authorized him to be elevated to the role of one of the Holy Lady's friends.

Likewise, *CSM* 321 attests the king's virtuous behaviour by showing how he never betrayed nor tried to take advantage from his privileged status. In a largely superstitious and uneducated context, the monarch could have been easily tempted to overuse his power. This happened, for instance, in the Medieval English and French courts, in which the rulers claimed the miraculous thaumaturgical power of curing illnesses associated to tuberculosis, creating in this way the myth of the royal touch. As pointed out by O'Callaghan, in the Iberian Peninsula there was neither literary nor historic evidence of the existence of the royal healing phenomenon.¹¹⁵ The above-mentioned *CSM* 321 is a valid demonstration: a young girl suffering from an incurable throat disease, after many years of medical treatments given by doctors and physicians, was brought by her mother – who followed a good man's advice – in front of Alfonso X as the last attempt to rescue her. Wisely, Alfonso X did not claim any divine gift although the devotee's invocation offered him the easy opportunity to make people believe in such a pretentious ability. On the contrary, he addressed the devotee's pleas to the Virgin, the only one who could have cured her sick daughter. In terms of love, respect and trust he earned more by behaving in such a way rather than by entering an ambitious competition with the Holy Lady which would have had as a result his being regarded as a betrayer.

Alfonso X, as revealed in some of his works, aimed to garner both respect as a lord and love as a friend from his subjects. Obviously, had he accepted the role of Mary's antagonist by promoting himself as her worldly peer he would not have received supernatural aid. Therefore, one can infer that the theory of equality, in this case at least, has to be rejected in order to allow the persistence of their relationship. The reason for such a statement appears quite clear: had the sovereign claimed supernatural powers arrogantly and unfairly or professed an undifferentiated position with the Virgin, he

¹¹⁵ J. F. O'Callaghan, 'The *Cantigas de Santa María* as a Historical Source: Two Examples (nos. 321 and 386)' in *Studies on the Cantigas*, pp. 387-402.

would have lost the privilege to be considered her friend. Although it could appear contradictory, true friendship was possible once the king acted in a respectful attitude of love and vassalage towards the Virgin. Needless to say, the Marian production attributed to Alfonso X supports this consideration: the poems dedicated to the Virgin represent the homage of a man who was at the same time her lover, vassal, friend and servant and who was always positioned, despite his royalty and his role of 'vicar of God', a step lower than her golden throne.

To conclude, an interesting consideration emerges from the analysis of the different typologies of spiritual friendship hitherto examined; which is how the idea of mutuality challenged the innate antithesis existing between unequal parties and in particular between secular and supernatural figures. In fact, also in cases of connections between representatives of the two worlds, love could not be given univocally; human believers had to show their pure affection and benevolence only if they were respected and awarded with mutual favours by their holy counterparts. Nevertheless, these connections could be regarded as forms of mutual, but not equal, love since the gap existing between the involved parties was unbridgeable. For this reason, most of the relationships between holy figures and humans, even if described in terms of friendship, presented signs and peculiarities typical of the bonds linking the highest figures with their subordinates and in particular they recalled the structure and rituals of vassalatic relationships.

Chapter IV

Religious Friendship

§ 1. Religious Friendship: A Definition

After the analysis of the connections between and with the supernatural figures carried out in the previous chapter, in this section attention will be drawn to ‘religious friendships’, a definition adopted here to define the relationships forged within the ecclesiastical and monastic communities and between the clergy and their believers. Since the bonds established between the clergy and the laity and those between their respective affiliates were relationships frequently corrupted by secular and pragmatic goals, none of these connections but one – the glorious communion with God, fully achieved only in the eternal life – would deserve the connotation of truly spiritual. With this in mind, this chapter will differentiate three main typologies of religious friendship: first, the connections between members of the same monastic congregation; secondly, the relationships between different ecclesiastical orders and the alliances involving members of the secular clergy; thirdly, the links between the ecclesiastical figures and the believers of both the lower and the upper classes.

Other interesting connections which might be included within the category of religious friendship are the alliances which flourished under the patronage of the mendicant orders across Europe in the thirteenth century. They were associations, whose existence was recorded under the names of *hermandades*, *confradías*, brotherhoods, guilds, and various other equivalent denominations.¹ Their relevance is constituted by the fact that, at least in principle, they represented the overcoming of the vassalatic structures – to which the ecclesiastical system strictly conformed – and the affirmation of new horizontal links.

¹ *Hermandad et confradria in honore de Sancte Marie de Transfixio, Estatutos de la Confradía de la Transfixión de Zaragoza (1311-1508)*, ed. by Antonio Cortijo Ocaña (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2004), p. XVIII.

Friendships Within the Cloister

§ 2. Monastic Charity and Personal Connections

In the *SP* the body-metaphor used to depict the sovereign as the head of the political system² is also employed to convey the image of the Church, and the result is tantalizing:

[...] dixo san Pablo que santa elesia era como cuerpo et los servidores della como miembros que la mantienen en su fuerza, et serviéndola bien fácela ser apuesta: ca bien asi como del corazon del home reciben todos los miembros vida, asi de santa elesia reciben bien fecho et mantenimiento todos los que la sirven; et este bien son los beneficios et las dignidades que della han et onde se mantienen los que la sirven.³

The head and the heart stand respectively for the rational and the emotional parts of man; and they both represent the two inseparable, symmetrical, but at the same time separate, sources of life which ruled human behaviour and attitudes. In *SP I*, where this definition appears, the members to which the heart supplies energy and life were predominantly the ecclesiastic figures; however in the legal corpus the definition of religious community was enhanced to include also lay devotees and ‘canonigos seglares’ (secular canons).

Before analysing the Alfonsine works, religious friendship should be examined in a broader European perspective. The study by Brian Patrick McGuire is an interesting starting point in order to establish such a comparison.⁴ His area of analysis, however, was constrained to monastic lyrical and epistolary collections which witnessed the existence of amity bonds between members of different monasteries or between

² *SP II:I:V*, ‘Et naturalmente dixieron los sabios que el rey es cabeza del regno; ca asi como de la cabeza nacen los sentidos por que se mandan todos los miembros del cuerpo, bien asi por el mandamiento que nace del rey, que es señor et cabeza de todos los del regno, se deben mandar, et guiar et haber un acuerdo con él para obedescerle, et amparar, et guardar et endereszar el regno onde él es alma et cabeza, et ellos, los miembros’, ‘and, naturally, the wise men declared that the king is the head of the kingdom, for, as from the head originate the feelings by which all the members of the body are controlled; so also by the commands which originate from the king, who is the lord and the head of all the people of his kingdom, they should be directed and guided, and act in harmony with him, to obey him, to support, and protect, and aggrandize the kingdom, of which he is the soul and head, and they are the members’.

³ *Ibid. I:XVI*, ‘St. Paul said that the Holy Church was the body, and its servants the members, who preserved its strength by serving it well, and contributing to its adornment. For as all the other members receive life from the heart of man, so all those who serve the Holy Church receive from it advantages and support, and the advantages consist of the benefices and offices which they obtain from it, by means of which those who serve it are supported’.

⁴ McGuire, *Friendship and Community*.

inhabitants of the same religious community. The choice of such documentary sources is justified by the fact that both poems and letters were fundamental means of acquaintance and in some cases they constituted the major instruments for the accomplishment of what might be defined ‘friendships through absence’. McGuire has also argued that the interpretation and value of friendship in the religious communities changed according to a cyclical pattern of acceptance and repulsion which developed over all centuries and geographical frames. According to his argument, this historical process went from a depictive image of friendship, seen as a corrupted link distracting men from the ascetic and contemplative life in solitude promoted by the Eastern hermits, to a more positive interpretation of friendship as the basis of a communitarian life, as promoted by the Western Fathers. A later interpretation supplanted the previous one, according to which the closeness of virtuous companions was no longer judged as a path leading to mundane corruption, but rather an instrument to reach God.

With the Gregorian Reform, in the eleventh-century, monastic life was submitted to renewed canons and friendship also acquired a privileged position, as Pope Gregory himself stated: ‘amicus enim quasi animi custos vocatur’, that is to say that a friend was regarded as the guardian of his companion’s soul.⁵ The influence of that view is reflected in Isidore of Seville’s words: ‘amicus, per derivationem, quasi animi custos’.⁶ Isidore focused on the spiritual dimension characterizing these links, since the parties involved were sanctioned with full responsibility for mutual salvation, a goal which they could achieve through the intimate knowledge of the other’s feelings and thoughts. If applied to monastic relationships this model proved quite flexible because the reciprocal exchange might not subsist, since, ideally, a monk should show sincere *affectus* without claiming anything – not even corresponding love – in return. Moreover, the fear of tight personal relationships of *diathesis* (links involving selected people only) predominated at some point. This is noticeable, for example, in the Franciscan rule according to which, although the possibility to make friends within the monastery was not denied, in fact intimate contacts between the brethren had to be avoided or at least kept out of the brothers’ and followers’ sight.⁷

⁵ Gregory the Great, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia Libri II*, Homil. 27.4, (P.L. 176:1207).

⁶ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, ed. by Wallace M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), see in particular Book 10 ‘De Vocabulis’. English trans. mine: ‘a friend for affinity is a guardian of the soul’.

⁷ In particular this occurred when the involved figures belonged to the opposite gender. A well known case is that of St. Francis and Saint Clare, whose amity was preserved from any intimate contact in order to prevent ambiguous situations, rumours and doubts about the characteristics of their relationship: Hyatte, *Friendship in the Middle Ages*, pp. 72-73.

Turning to the Alfonsine texts, legal and moral norms regulating monastic life, pacts of love, respect and alliance which the monks vowed to their superiors, their brothers, the secular clergy and their believers were all subjects regulated by the *SP* (Book I). Unlike the considerations suggested by McGuire's study, in the Alfonsine code there is not much evidence of the risks that clergymen took in sharing the same environment with their companions, and contacts between them were presented as devoid of any sexual presumption. Additionally, the law stated that none of the members of a monastic order was to live alone, but they rather had to share space and time with their brethren. Nevertheless, an incautious reading of some of these laws could lead to misinterpretation. A case in point is *SP* I:VII:XV:

como solien á las vegadas haber en costumbre en algunos monasterios que en los dias de las fiestas dexaban pocos en la claustra et salia el convento con el abat fuera del monasterio á comer carne.⁸

It is difficult to assert whether or not something implicit or even scandalous was meant by referring to a few monks left alone in the cloister. What is unmistakable is that there is no explicit mention of irregular relationships and the only objective conclusion that one can draw is that the law reported the rigid prohibition of consuming meat on the penitence days. Similarly, in *SP* I:VII:XIV one can read that:

otrosi deben guardar que non fablen en la iglesia, nin en el refitor, nin el dormitorio nin en la claustra, fueras ende en lugares contados et á ciertas horas segunt la costumbre de aquel monasterio en que vevieren.⁹

The rules of keeping silence and speaking only in established areas of the monastery at fixed hours of the day also seem to confirm the duty of observance of the norms, rather than insinuating the possibility to experience scandalous relationships which such personal and private exchanges could create.

The following definition of 'chapter', given in *SP* I:VII:XVII, adds elements to the legal definition and norms concerning monastic life:

⁸ *SP* I:VII:XV, 'a custom which prevails in certain monasteries, where, on holidays a few of their number are left in the cloisters, and the main body of monks, along with the abbot, leave the monastery to eat meat'.

⁹ *Ibid.* I:VII:XIV, 'moreover, they should be careful not to speak in the church, or in the refectory, or in the dormitory, or in the cloister, except in stated places and at stated hours, according to the customs of the monastery in which they live'.

cabildo tanto quiere decir en latin como ayuntamiento de homes que viven en uno ordenamiento: et por esta razon aquellos lugares o se ayuntan tambien los de la órdenes como los otros clérigos seglares para fablar et ordenar algunas cosas son llamados asi.¹⁰

The monastic experience of life took place in physical spaces which holy men shared in order to dedicate themselves completely to the supreme task of honouring God: ‘llámanlos monasterios ó casas de religion, porque estan hi los homes de buena devocion et han cuidado siempre de servir á Dios mas que de otra cosa’.¹¹ Not only were monks allowed to share their monastic spaces, but in those cases in which they had to live in locations different from a monastery, such as a castle or a parochial church, they were even forbidden from living on their own:

[...] han de estar con él otros frayles: et esto mandó santa eglesia por confortarle, et por darle esfuerzo que pueda lidiar con los diablos, et con el mundo et con su carne, que son enemigos del alma: ca segunt dixo Salomon, en cuita está el que vive señoero, porque si cae en pecado non ha quien lo ayude á levantar porque salga dél.¹²

Therefore, the participation in the communal life implied the mutual responsibility of checking the other members’ reliabilities since ‘ca maldat de un home farie á muchos errar de aquellos con quien hobiese vida.’¹³ A safe conjecture which can be inferred from a complete overview of the monastic life as presented in the *SP*, is that the pillar of such ‘convivencia’ between monks was not simply the genuine love shared among the parties, but it was rather the need for mutual control, aimed at preventing each other from erring.

Having said this, our understanding halts in front of the apparently paradoxical affirmation of *SP* I:VII:XXIX referring to how monks should despise any temporal goods by remembering that ‘ca monge tanto quiere decir en griego como guardador de sí mesmo, et en latin uno solo et triste; ca debe ser señoero apartándose para rogar á Dios,

¹⁰ *SP* I:VII:XVII, ‘union of men who live together regularly, and for this reason those places where both members of monastic and secular order assemble in order to discuss and agree upon certain matters are also called chapters’.

¹¹ *Ibid.* I:XII:I, ‘and places such as these [...] are called monasteries or religious houses, because men occupy themselves there in pious devotions, and with a view always to serve God more than to do anything else’.

¹² *Ibid.* I:VII:XXIV, ‘he must be accompanied by other friars, and this the Holy Church commanded in order to comfort him and give him strength to be able to contend with the devil, with the world, and with the flesh, which are the enemies of the soul. For as Solomon said: “he who lives alone, lives in trouble, because, if he falls into sin there is no one to assist him to rise, that he may escape from it”’.

¹³ *Ibid.* I:VII:XIX, ‘for the weakness of one man will cause many of those with whom he lives to err’.

[...].¹⁴ The withdrawal from the tempting secular world was recommended, but without negating the profitable experience of mutual assistance which could be achieved within the monastic space, which was an isolated but at the same time communitarian world itself. The lack of any reference to close connections between two or a few members of the same *coenobium* was coupled with the prohibition of any favouritism. The latter was regarded as an indispensable condition in order to prevent envy, jealousy and disorders among the brethren. With regard to this aspect *SP* I:VII:XV deserves mention. It deals with the case in which a superior wanted to favour some of the monks of his community by donating them an extra portion of food as a reward for their merits. What the law specifies is that such a gift should be given as an allowance which, consequently, should endure discipline, but it should also take place out of the refectory in order to avoid any scandal: ‘et esto debe facer de guisa que non nasca dende escándalo á los otros’.¹⁵ According to the law, officially at least, in the monastic communities equality between the parties had to be kept and material and personal rewards had to be shared uniformly. However, there was an undeniable gap between the moral norms proposed by the law and its practice, as will be discussed in the next section.

A similar idea of ‘religious friendships’ also appears in the *CSM*. In the Marian collection ecclesiastical corporations and monastic groups are described according to the aforementioned egalitarian pattern. For this reason they were very often defined as ‘compaña’, while their members acquired the titles of ‘compannon’ (*CSM* 67, 85, 261, 284, 297, etc) or ‘companneyra’ for the nuns (*CSM* 71, 285). On the one hand, such definitions suggest the idea of a compact and homogeneous mass in which no individual prevailed over the others. On the other hand, however, such a harmonious and idyllic collective life was described as being devoid of any personal feeling and emotional exchange. In fact, the attempt to find in the miracle collection textual references of ‘personal friendships’ among the brethren has produced no positive results. By contrast, any relationship classifiable as ‘friendship’ developed either between the members of a religious order or between the religious figures and their believers according to the established rules, even if in the latter case the bond itself assumed strong paternalistic connotations.

¹⁴ *SP* I:VII:XXIX, ‘the word monk signifies, in Greek, a keeper of one’s self, and in Latin, one who is alone and sad: for he should be solitary by going aside to pray to God, [...]’.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* I:VII:XV, ‘and they should do this in order that no scandal may arise among the others on this account’.

§ 3. The Monastic Community: Unequal Relationships Between ‘Equals’

An important consideration should be made at this point: the supposedly egalitarian formulae regulating monastic life did not exclude the presence of internal fragmentations and unequal distribution of powers. This assumption explains why cloistered monks had to swear loyalty to the rule to which they belonged, but they also had to obey their superiors:

Et estos atales son llamados religiosos, que quier tanto decir como homes ligados que se meten so obediencia de su mayoral, [...] profesion llaman al prometimiento que face el que entra en orden de religion, quier sea varon ó muger: [...] de ser obediente al que fuere mayoral en aquel monasterio o veviere.¹⁶

The following examples from the *CSM* would confirm the aforementioned legal proposition. *CSM* 353 recounts the story of an abbot to whom a young boy was entrusted by his father. The abbot cared and loved the child deeply, to the point where he called him ‘fillo meu’ (my son). What is most important to point out here is the way in which the abbot referred to the other members of his community once he discovered, through the celestial revelation which the Virgin gave to his fostered child, that he was going to die the following day. Knowing that, he summoned all the other monks and departed from them delivering the following speech:

Ai, amigos, | cras m[e] irei eu, par Deus,
esto sei certãamente; | e poren'd' a Don Mateus,
vosso monge, por abade | escolled' en meu logar. (Lines 92-94)¹⁷

Despite the friendly epithet which the abbot adopted, which would suggest the idea of certain closeness and equality between him and the rest of his brothers, his authoritarian position is clearly shown. The fact that there is no further reference to any other contact between the abbot and the other monks also proves it. A similar case is that of *CSM* 187, whose protagonists are an abbot and the monks of a monastery, which was

¹⁶ *SP* I:VII:I-II, ‘such persons as these are styled members of the monastic orders, which means men bound by obligations, who have made themselves subject to obedience to a superior [...]. The promise which a party, whether man or woman, who enters a monastic order makes is [...] to be obedient to the superior of the monastery in which he lives’.

¹⁷ *CSM* 353, “Hear me, my friends, tomorrow I shall go away, I swear to God, I am sure of this. Therefore, choose your monk don Matthew as abbot in my place”.

originally a synagogue sold by the Jews to the Apostle who turned it into the first church in Syria. The monks were tempted to abandon the monastery, since famine had deprived them of any supplies, but their abbot managed to keep them together in the name of their common faith and by invoking the Virgin's aid:

Mas depois a tempo lles avêo mal,
 que ouve na terra gran fame mortal,
 assi que todos enton cuidaran morrer sen al;
 e o abade, muito chorando, lles dizia:
 "Nenbre-vos, amigos, en com'outra vez
 a gran mercee que vo-la Virgen fez
 do triigo, que sabedes que tornou tan rafez,
 que toda a gente do que nos deu guarecia. (Lines 34-42)¹⁸

Given these examples, it is not therefore unreasonable to suspect that the friendly denominations that the abbots adopted to address the rest of their community – which in the examined cases appeared in the abbots' direct speeches – were in fact standardized formulae based on the idea of belonging to a sole Christian brotherhood.

The presence of an internal grading within monastic communities is also noticeable from the fact that, whenever an abbot or a master was involved, their presence was inevitably highlighted, leaving no doubts about their superior positions. In this regard *CSM* 103 is enlightening. It tells of a monk who prayed to the Virgin in order to receive a vision of Paradise before his death. His request was fulfilled and the monk was given a wondrous vision which lasted three hundred years. After his awakening, though, everything had changed, including the members of the monastery to which he belonged. When he finally returned to the cloister, the new abbot welcomed him by naming him 'amigo' (line 39). The question which arises at this point is whether that was a standard formula which any prelate would use to address their subordinate believers indistinctively, or it was rather a more specific title adopted, in this case, because the other was recognized as a member of the same order.

Considering this, another aspect to examine is when and under what circumstances an individual emerged as 'amigo' among the undifferentiated group of religious brothers. There are numerous indications to assert that, at least in a secular

¹⁸ *CSM* 187, 'sometime later they fell into misfortune, for there was a mortal famine in the land so that all thought they would surely die. The abbot, weeping sorrowfully, said to them: "remember, my friends, the great gift of the wheat that the Virgin gave you once before when we were suffering such hardship, and all the people were fed by what She gave us'.

context, the definition of ‘amigo’ was used by members of the highest ranks to address those of the lowest, while the reverse is never observed. If that be the rule, the cloister did not represent an exception either: in fact, only the abbots used the appellation of ‘amigo’ to address the lower members of their communities. A thought-provoking case is *CSM* 274, whose protagonist is a friar who promised a robe of prayers to the Virgin, but he did not complete it because he, tempted by the devil, left the monastery and the robe unfinished. Nonetheless, he was granted with a miracle: the Holy Mother appeared in front of him and suggested that he should return to the cloister and finish the garment since he would expire in one year’s time. In the face to face contact that he had with the Virgin during her apparition, he was addressed as ‘amigo’ (line 60). What may surprise the reader is that, contrarily, in his farewell greeting to the rest of his monastic community, the friar hailed his brethren as ‘sennores meus’ (line 64). It goes without saying that although the holy performance had demonstrated that the friar was a praiseworthy devotee, who also deserved the Virgin’s pardon and intercession, he was not allowed to escape the role he had in the ecclesiastical pyramid, which confined him to a subordinate position.

CSM 384 is another case in point. The devout friar who masterfully painted the Virgin’s name in three magnificent colours fell gravely ill and another one was appointed by the abbot to stay at his side. While assisting his sick brother, the other fell asleep and in the meanwhile the Virgin Mary appeared to the ill patient and took him to Paradise leaving only his name painted in the *Book of Lives*. When the sleeping friar woke up and he realized that a miracle had occurred, he recounted the event to the abbot and to the rest of his community:

Mantenente o abade | chegou y cono convento,
 que eram y de companna | ben oyteenta ou çento;
 e aquel monge lles disse: | “Sennores, por cousimento
 o que vi vos direy todo, | se m’en fordes oydores.” (Lines 55-58)¹⁹

The reverential tone and vassalatic formulae used by the friar when he narrated the wondrous events to his superiors show the lack of any real balance and equality between the members of the same monastic community.

¹⁹ *CSM* 384, ‘how Holy Mary took the soul of a friar who painted Her name in three colors’, ‘the abbot quickly came with the monks of the community, who numbered eighty or a hundred, and that monk told them: “good gentlemen, I shall carefully recount for you all I saw, if you wish to hear me”’.

These lexical changes in the appellations adopted by, or used to define, friars suggested the existence of certain differences between them, as the examples taken from the Alfonsine works have demonstrated. However, this was by no means an exclusively Alfonsine peculiarity. In fact, in other miracle collections, members of a religious community were defined as ‘hermanos’ or companions, according to their status.²⁰ In this section only a few examples will be mentioned and they are respectively from the previously cited *Milagros de San Isidoro* and the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*. Chapter LXI of Lucas de Tuy’s work reports the following words, attributed to Isidore: ‘no se deben, por cierto, los hermanos escandalizar, antes se deben mucho unos con otros gozar cuando vieren a su fiel compañero volar y subir a la vida más estrecha y perfecta’.²¹ A similar lexicon appears in the story of Saint Martin, narrated in Chapter LII, in which it is told how Isidore commanded Martin to eat a book in order to get the full knowledge:

que te sea otorgado todo lo que pidieras a Dios, y serás mi compañero y participante de todos los Milagros que el Señor obra por mi en esta iglesia. [...] el glorioso San Isidro en su tiempo escogió por compañero de sus Milagros el bienaventurado Santo Martino, presbítero y canónigo de su monasterio.²²

Together with similar images of companionship between religious brothers, in Berceo’s miracle collection the notion of ‘sancta companna’ is given. It was defined as a homogeneous corporation lacking any excelling or superior figure, whose presence would threaten and probably alter such a delicate balance. According to this interpretation the religious community of Pavia, for example, is defined as: ‘[...] una rica mongia / De mui bonos omnes, mui sancta compannia.’²³ A closer look at the two miracle collections and at the Alfonsine works examined in this study would also reveal that the term ‘hermanos’ was adopted unfailingly for and between individuals who occupied an equivalent hierarchical position, while in most of the connections involving subordinate parties, that appellation was frequently replaced by titles related to companionship or friendship, the latter being a powerful rhetorical device of *captatio benevolentiae*.

²⁰ Lucas de Tuy, *Milagros de San Isidoro* XL, LXXII, p. 78 and 116.

²¹ Ibid., English trans. mine: ‘surely the brothers shouldn’t be distressed, but contrarily they should be pleased whenever they see one of their loyal companions ascending to the highest and most austere life’, p. 105.

²² Ibid., ‘may you receive whatever you ask God, and you will be my companion and you will join me in all the miracles which the Lord operates through my person in this church’, p. 95; ‘in his time the glorious Saint Isidore chose Saint Martin, presbytery and cleric of his monastery, as companion for his Miracles’, p. 79.

²³ Berceo, *Milagros*, XII, ‘a rich monastery of good men, a very holy company’, p. 64.

Outside the Cloister: The Secular Clergy

§ 4. Ecclesiastical Hierarchy and Related Bonds

Moving outside the monastic walls, this section will examine the connections involving and established by the secular clergy. The differences between the two religious systems are clearly presented in *SP* I:VII:XXX ‘en cuáles cosas acuerda la orden de los monges con la de los calonges reglares et en cuáles non’. The two categories had to follow some common rules, such as the duty of chastity and poverty, obedience to the superiors and prohibition of leaving their authorized abodes without permission. Moreover ‘[...] los canónigos seglares pueden morar solos, habiendo razon derecha por que lo fagan, lo que no pueden facer los monges [...]’.²⁴ The lack of any compulsory obligation to live in shared spaces with their brothers was not the only difference between the two categories. The rules imposed on the secular clergy were objectively less strict than the monastic ones.

The ecclesiastical system was based on a rigid pyramidal fragmentation which allowed only certain kinds of personal exchanges. The characteristics of those connections changed according to the position occupied by the figures involved: whereas a cleric who entered a religious order had to submit to the rules and to renounce his goods, including his vassals, the higher members of that hierarchy were exonerated from those restrictions and, contrarily, they were favoured with further concessions. An explanation for such a grading is presented in *SP* I:VI, which presented it as an arrangement set in heaven on the model of the divine organization of the hosts of the angels:

Et esto fue fecho por tres razones: la una porque asi como los ángeles loan á Dios siempre en los cielos, que á semeiante destos loasen estos á Dios en tierra: et la otra porque feciesen sus fechos mas ordenadamente et mejor: et la otra porque habiendo hi mayores et menores, conosciesen los menores mayoria á sus mayores, et les fuesen obedientes, et hobiesen su bien facer, et los mayores que amasen á sus menores serviéndose dellos et amparándolos en su derecho.²⁵

²⁴ *SP* I:VII:XXX, ‘in what respects the law of the regular canons agrees with that of the monks, and in what it does not’, ‘[...] canons of the regular clergy can live alone, where there is good reason for their doing so, which monks cannot do’.

²⁵ *Ibid.* I:VI, ‘this was done for three reasons: first, as the angels praised God eternally in heaven, so, in imitation of this, that priests should praise God on earth; second, that they might perform their duties with greater regularity, and better; third, because where there are superiors, the others had to be obedient to them, and attentive to their welfare: and that the superiors might love their inferiors, making use of them, and protecting them in their rights’.

In the *SP* the Aristotelian idea of equality as a medium to build a *perfecta amicitia* is distorted completely in favour of a status which was aimed at safeguarding the harmonious condition of love among those who shared the same diocese or religious spaces:

Et aun los santos padres tovieron que era bien por otra razon que estos grados fuesen en santa elesia, porque los homes hobiesen por ellos ayuntamiento veradero de amor et de paz que durase entre ellos.²⁶

The image which can be envisaged is that of a pyramidal network connecting mendicant orders, episcopal and archiepiscopal offices including, finally, the Pope. A consistent section of the *SP* I (from title V to IX, which deal respectively with prelates, priests, regular clergy, monastic vows and individuals allowed to order excommunication and interdict) explores this area. The distribution of powers presented in the law was described as irreversible in the sense that the subordinate ranks were usually not able to impose their decisions and jurisdictional rights over their superiors. A case in point is that of excommunication (*SP* I:IX), which always proceeded in a descending and unilateral direction.

The law considered all aspects affecting and characterizing religious life, with particular emphasis on duties and rights that clergymen held according to their status. In particular, as God's friends:

[...] et que no eran siervos, mas amigos, et que non eran huéspedes nin avenedizos, mas de su casa, como aquellos á quien dió poder de saber las poridades de los sus fechos.²⁷

They held the position of new Apostles, a role which offered them reverence and respect from the remainder of the religious and secular community. However, if on the one hand, a bishop 'ha poder sobre los clérigos dél en lo temporal et en lo espirital, et sobre los legos en las cosas espirituales',²⁸ on the other hand he must fulfil the same duty of respect and obedience towards the Pope, the Father of Fathers. The complete list of the acts which the Pontiff was authorized to perform in order to reward, punish or simply administer his subordinate confreres is developed in the emblematic title of *SP*

²⁶ *SP* I:VI, 'the Holy Fathers also adduced another reason to confirm the utility of such rankings withing the Church, so that true union of love and peace could last among them'.

²⁷ *Ibid.* I:V:I, 'they were not his servants, but his friends, and not mere guests, or acquaintances, but rather members of his own household, to whom he gave the power of knowing the secrets of his acts'.

²⁸ *Ibid.* I:V:XVI, 'he has authority, in temporal as well as spiritual matters, over the priests of his bishopric, and over laymen in spiritual matters'.

I:V:V. The affirmation that ‘otrosi entodo pleito de santa iglesia se pueden alzar primeramente al papa dexando en medio á todos los otros perlados’²⁹ does not leave space for any equivocal interpretation. The Pope was allowed to behave freely, as long as he demonstrated that his actions were for the benefit of Christendom:

habiendo alguna razon aguisada por que lo feciese que fuese á pro de aquella tierra, ó por ruego de los reyes [...] et puede facer concilio general quando quisiere, en que han de ser todos los obispos et los otros perlados: et aun puede llamar á los príncipes de la tierra que vayan, ó que envien hi los que fueren convenientes [...] et ha poder otrosi de facer establecimientos et decretos á honra de la iglesia et á pro de la cristianidat en las cosas espirituales, et deben ser tenudos de los guardar todos los cristianos.³⁰

Additionally, the head of the Church held the power to control access to the religious orders by conceding or denying entrance to potential candidates. Considering this, one might wonder whether it means that his authority overcame the purest individual vocation. *SP* I:VII:IX answers such an enquiry by stating that men should follow their vocation, which superseded any obstacles, including the prelate’s opposition, but they were not authorized to disregard the Pope’s permission which represented the unavoidable step to access religious life legitimately.³¹

As already mentioned, the Alfonsine legal code, despite being conceived as an instrument of equality and justice, promoted a certain hierarchical fragmentation within the religious system, aimed at maintaining order and justice. In fact, prohibitions and concessions were issued in order to avoid the insidious circles of arrogance, pride, avarice and thirst for power. An interesting case is that of *SP* I:XXII:XVII about the prelates’ misbehaviour in case they did not respect the law:

Et esto facen contral derecho que dice que en la iglesia deben estar en lugar honrado et mas alto que los otros, mas en casa deben ser como compañeros de los clérigos: pero esto deben facer de manera que se non afagan mucho á ellos de guisa que se les tornase en desprecio.³²

²⁹ *SP* I:V:V, ‘moreover, in every dispute concerning the Holy Church an appeal can at once, and in the first place, be made to the Pope, leaving all other prelates out of consideration’.

³⁰ *Ibid.* I:V:V, ‘[...] having some good reason for doing so; if it may be for the benefit of the country, or in compliance with the request of the King. [...] He can convoke a General Council, composed entirely of bishops and other prelates, whenever he wishes to do so. He can also summon the princes of the earth to come, or send suitable representatives [...]. He has likewise power to publish ordinances and decrees for the honour of the Church and the benefit of Christianity in spiritual affairs, and all Christians are required to observe them’.

³¹ *Ibid.* I:VII:IX.

³² *Ibid.* I:XXII:XVII, ‘such conduct is contrary to the law which says that in the church they ought to have a higher and more honourable place than the others, but at home they should be the companions of the priests, yet they should act in such a way as not to be too familiar with them, so as to render themselves liable to be treated with contempt’.

The law code presents a clear tendency towards objectivity which, consequently, would neither ignore nor obscure the weak points affecting the ecclesiastical structure, the presence of corrupted components, the unequal distribution of concessions and the forms of favouritism within and outside the religious communities. A case in point is the warning against the ‘perlado barajador’ (quarrelsome prelate):

que non sea barajador el perlado es porque quando estos atales non pueden complir por su soberbia lo que quieren, puñan de se allegar á los príncipes, e de ser lisonjeros et maldecientes, diciendo mal de aquellos que desaman, trabajándose de desatar el bien que facen, et metérlos en mala fama et en mal prez: et aun sin esto suelen ser envidiosos de la buena andancia de los otros, et mintrosos de su palabra, et descubridores de las poridades que les dicen, et arrebatosos por se vengar del pesar que les facen.³³

It seems safe to assert that the prevailing image of the ecclesiastical system emerging from the legal corpus is that of a mere secular institution characterized by favouritism, physical discrimination,³⁴ social and economic gaps which sometimes generated bonds more similar to vassalage than sacral or spiritual connections.

Following the same line of analysis adopted to examine the relationships established within the cloister, attention should also be devoted to the relationships of companionship and brotherhood established outside the monasteries. The majority of the ecclesiastical connections showed exchanges of confidence, secret speeches, advice and protection of the other’s thoughts which would suggest the existence of more intimate bonds than simple companionship. *SP I:V:LIX* speaks for itself:

otrosí el perlado debe tener consigo en su cámara clérigos honestos ó otros homes de orden quel sirvan, et que sepan qual vida face en su poridat, et que sean testigos dello; et de los bienes que vieren en él tomen enxiemplo bueno de que se aprovechen.³⁵

At this point, an important consideration needs to be made: none of the Alfonsine laws explicitly forbade the religious figures to forge personal contacts with other clergymen;

³³ *SP I:V:LIV*, ‘the second reason why a prelate is forbidden to be quarrelsome is, because when such men, through their arrogance, cannot accomplish what they wish, they try to attach themselves to princes, and to become flatterers and detractors, speaking evil of those they dislike, attempting to nullify the good which the latter do, and to give them a bad reputation and evil notoriety. And, even without this, they are accustomed to be envious of the good fortune of the others, lying in speech, betrayers of secrets told them, and quick to avenge themselves for annoyances which they suffer’.

³⁴ *Ibid. I:VI:XXV* is clearly stated that men with physical malformations were not allowed to receive the holy order.

³⁵ *Ibid. I:V:LIX*, ‘moreover, a prelate should have priests and other men in religious orders, who are honourable, to serve him, and who know what life he leads in secret, and may be witnesses of it, as well as of the excellence which they see in him, that they may follow his good example and profit by it’.

however, neither were they particularly appreciated nor recommended. Significantly, instead, the law listed the typologies of relationships which were strictly forbidden. Among them, beyond the predictably demonized contacts with women, especially when they were not close relatives or they were not reliable in terms of moral constraint (*SP* I:VI:XXXVIII), the other main category of people from whom men of the Church had to withdraw were individuals charged with Papal excommunication:

consentir non deben los clérigos que se acompañen con ellos para decir las horas nin en otra manera ningunt clérigo que fuese descomulgado del papa de la mayor descomulgacion; ca si lo recibiesen en su compañía caerian por ende en mayor descomulgamiento tambien como él [...].³⁶

The same prohibition was enhanced to include the entire Christian community, which had to avoid contacts with those groups: ‘acompañar nin acomunar non se deben los fieles cristianos con los descomulgados por el mal que les viene dellos et por la pena en que caen segunt dice la ley ante desta.’³⁷ The idea which accrued from those norms is that personal contacts could not be officially established outside the imposed social and religious categorization. Moreover, neither were individual values taken into account nor they could overcome such rigid boundaries.

It cannot be denied that most of the contacts established between clergymen were based on the attempt to achieve or safeguard some practical benefits. Alliances and pacts of friendship agreed between bishops with the aim of defending their own dioceses as well as their lives and privileges are excellent examples. It has to be remembered, however, that it was not an Iberian peculiarity. In fact, as Gerd Althoff has suggested in his study about political and social bonds in early Merovingian and Carolingian courts, the politically influential bishops signed alliances which ‘were clearly more than simple bonds between Episcopal confreres; they were entirely comparable with the secular friendship alliances [...] which were intended to ensure help and support in all areas of life’.³⁸ Moving back to the Iberian context and examining a broader chronological framework, one can certainly affirm that the situation was not very different from the German one. Officially most of the amity

³⁶ *SP* I:IX:XXXVII, ‘priests should not permit any ecclesiastic who has been excommunicated with the greater excommunication by the Pope, to associate with them in the service, or in any other way: for if they should receive such a person in their company they will, for that reason, undergo excommunication, just as he has, [...]’.

³⁷ *Ibid.* I:IX:XXXIV, ‘true Christians should not associate, or enter into negotiation with, excommunicated persons, on account of the evil which will result to themselves, and the punishment to which they will be liable, as stated in the preceding law’.

³⁸ Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 79.

bonds between ecclesiastical figures were created with the common aim of defending and protecting the true faith from any external danger. Moreover, even if friendships were always subscribed by the representatives or the heads of an ecclesiastic community, in fact the terms of the alliances reversed on all the subordinated members. Undeniably, these pacts of amity, which were formal promises which guaranteed mutual defence, protection and respect, were agreements signed between peers only formally, since in practice the masters of the orders established ‘friendships’ which involved and constricted both the clergy and the secular community subjected to their power.

The Church and the Wider World

§ 5. Clergymen and Believers: Roles, Positions and Attitudes

As already mentioned in the previous chapter on ‘spiritual friendship’, according to the Alfonsine legislation the Christian faithful acquired a safe and legitimized position in society thanks to baptism and the other sacraments which forged their identities as ‘amigos de Dios’ and antagonists of the infidels. In the name of this belief, the members of the ecclesiastical circles embodied a bivalent position of both advisors and friends of the highest social figures, like kings and Popes, and of the lower believers. The vocabulary related to fraternal love and friendship was strategically used by the clerics to ennoble their paternalistic attitudes towards their followers. An example is *EE* 318, in which we read the words pronounced by Saint Silvester who addressed all his listeners as ‘hermanos et hijos’ (brothers and sons), a rhetorical device probably adopted in order to reinforce the sense of brotherhood in Christ through the words of someone who occupied an outstanding position. Another example is *EE* 807 recounting how Estiano, a Greek bishop coming to Compostela, rejected the title of knight which the pilgrims adopted to name Santiago. It is interesting to note that in his preaching, which preceded the miraculous vision which prompted his volte face over the Saint’s denomination, the bishop addressed the crowd of ‘los de la uilla et a los romeros que y uienen’ as ‘amigos’.³⁹

The list of similar examples expands when the *CMS* are taken into account. An outstanding case is, for example, *CSM* 65. The scene is austere: the Pope appears, surrounded by a group of counsellors and by all the Christian suppliants looking for aid

³⁹ *EE* 807, ‘those of the town and the pilgrims who came there’.

and advice. The protagonist of the canticle, however, is not the head of the Church himself but a humble man who, incapable of reaching the Pontiff because of the social gap between them, seeks some advice at least from one of the Pope's 'privados'. The counsellor, both of the Pope and of the rest of the lay community, spoke to the poor man by using the sentence 'amigo, se me tu crevere / e desta ta coita bon consello queres [...]'.⁴⁰ The title 'amigo' created an empathetic bridge which put the monk closer to the Christian believer and contributed to dignify the miserable status of the latter. Note, however, that the contrary situation never happened because none of the subordinate devotees dared to name their superiors 'amigos', be they lords, knights or clerics. This same feature is to be found in numerous other literary works of the period. But when all this has been said, we find that by the end of the narration the humble man had still not received any advice from the Church's minister. It is possible to assume that the same situation would not have been experienced by the Pope, if he had asked for advice to his counsellors. The conclusion one can draw from this example is that even the title of 'amigo' did not symbolize true and natural friendship but it was rather a semantic tool used to convince people of the trustworthiness and protection offered by certain relationships. Another relevant aspect appears in the final part of the canticle, when we discover that the believer's soul was rescued by the support of a foolish man who, despite his ambiguous and debilitated condition, behaved as a true friend and a loyal counsellor. Nonetheless, despite his efforts, he only achieved the denomination of 'seu companheiro'.

Following the same line of thought, *CSM* 15 gives rise to further reflections. It tells the story of the unfair relationship between the Emperor Julian and Saint Basil. The latter paid an act of homage to the Emperor, but he was rewarded ungratefully with the menace of destruction of his monastery. In order to cope with such a threat and to convince his believers to pray for the Virgin's intervention, Basil summoned his community and opened his speech by addressing them as 'amigos meus' (line 73). Those linguistic manoeuvres assured to the public authorities the *captatio benevolentiae* of the believers in public speeches, sermons, didactic stories and miracle collections. Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* could also be taken as a parallel and emblematic example: the author, a man of the Church himself, addresses the audience by using a range of formulae which ran from the general 'amigos e vasallos de Dios omnipotent' (friends and vassals of the Almighty God) to the apparently more intimate and binding

⁴⁰ *CSM* 65, 'friend, if you believe me and wish good counsel on this problem of yours [...]'.

‘amigos’ (friends) and also ‘sennores e amigos, compaña de prestar’ (gentlefolk and friends, excellent company).⁴¹

Friends, counsellors, advisors, guides, confessors but also tutors and protectors in the name of God – although de facto on behalf of a third party – were the titles most frequently ascribed to clergymen in their connections with laity. Inasmuch as their pedagogical role was concerned, *EE* 851 deserves mention. The chronicle narrates how El Cid beseeched the Abbot of Saint Pedro de Cardeña to take care of his wife and daughters during his exile ‘et quel rogaua como a amigo que pensasse bien dellas’.⁴² It is debatable whether the blind trust that the Campeador showed in the cleric was due to their direct and personal acquaintance or it was generated from El Cid’s reliance that had on the other’s professed and sacredly vowed duties of friendship towards God and towards Christian believers.

It is safe to assert that clergymen, in their roles of confessors, recalled the image of perfect friends, able to keep a companion’s secrets and dispense wise and beneficial advice. Whereas the proof of pure amity relied on the preservation of a secret, any clergymen in prescribing the holy services of confession and penitence fulfilled that role. *SP* I:IV:LXXXV includes a specific law dedicated to this subject according to which the confessional secrecy could not be revealed without committing an act of iniquity:

[...] ca non puede ser descubierta sin grant vileza de corazon, como en no poder sofrir el que la oye en descubrir lo quel dicen por amistad fiándose en él.

Moreover, the cleric who committed such a betrayal was compared with a counterfeiter:

[...] que tal como este es asi como falsario que quebranta carta sellada con sello de señor, ó de amigo que gela hobiese dada en comienda fiándose de su lealtad [...]. Ca atal debe ser la confesion como sello de poridat que pone home por guarda de lo que es escripto dentro en la carta que non quiere que lo sepa ninguno.⁴³

As shelters and keepers of the believers’ spiritual *poridates* (secrets), clergymen behaved as intermediaries before God and sometimes also between the believers among

⁴¹ Berceo, *Milagros* 2, 8, 21, 23.

⁴² *EE* 851, ‘and he prayed him, as a friend, to take care of them’.

⁴³ *SP* I:IV:LXXXV, English trans. mine: ‘it cannot be revealed without erring on the side of baseness as if he was not able to bear the secret that the other one confessed to him trusting his friendship’. Parson Scott, ‘he resembles a deceitful man who breaks open a letter sealed with his lord’s seal, or that of a friend who trusted him, confiding in his loyalty, for confession resembles the seal secrecy, which protects what is written inside a letter, so that no one can know what it is’.

themselves. *EE* 966 is an enlightening example. The chronicle tells us that after Alfonso VI's death in 1109 a dynastic struggle broke out. The Aragonese king, Alfonso I (1104-1134), who had separated from his wife, Alfonso VI's daughter Urraca, invaded the Castilian and Leonese territories, plundering the Churches he came across as he did so. The supporters of Urraca's son by Raymond of Burgundy, Alfonso VII (1126-1157), sprang into action in defence of those territories and to stop the Aragonese invasion. Fearful that this conflict could favour a Muslim advance, the bishops and prelates of Castile, León and Aragón joined together with the intention of mediating between the two rival monarchs by promoting a compromise:

Mas los obispos et los abbades et los otros prelados de Castiella et de Leon et de Aragon, quando uieron que este desacuerdo era entre los reyes et los regnos de los cristianos, et podrie dar carrera a los moros para perderse la tierra por ocasion, [...], ayuntaronse et fueronse a meter entre amos los reyes a pedir merçed a ellos, et a los altos omnes en que era el recabdo, que non lidiassen; [...].

They suggested that the infant Alfonso VII, without any fear of losing his honour, since he was still considered a child, should ask Alfonso I of Aragon to leave his kingdom in peace in return for his loyalty and 'familial' respect (as if he himself was his son). The Aragonese king replied:

"[...] Et pues que agora gracia et amor me demanda, non le quiero tener nada de lo suyo, et daqui adelante ge lo dexo todo." [...] E alli firmaron pazes et amor entressi, que despues non ouo entrellos guerra nin desamor ninguno.⁴⁴

The historical intervention of the bishop, later archbishop, Diego Gelmírez in the development of these events (as recorded in the *Historia Compostelana*, for example) is wholly omitted in the Alfonsine chronicle and, by contrast, the undifferentiated ecclesiastical community of bishops and prelates occupied a central position. All of them played the role of wise counsellors and mediators, beyond that of masters and supporters of a political friendship which would have safeguarded the defence of Christendom, at least on the Iberian soil.

⁴⁴ *EE* 966, 'the bishops and the abbots and the other prelates of Castile, Leon and Aragon once they noticed the enmity existing between the Christian kingdoms and they realized that it could open the way for the Moors to enter their land, [...], they joined together and they acted as intermediaries between the two kings and they pleaded with mercy that both of them and their people stopped fighting'; "[...] and since you are asking me mercy and love, I don't want to keep anything which belongs to you, and from now on I will leave you everything". [...] And there they signed a pact of friendship between themselves, and there was neither war nor discord between them anymore'.

Far from any idealization, however, religious characters were not devoid of negative characteristics above all when they were victims themselves of false friends who caused their corruption and that of their followers. *EE* 478 elucidates this point further. The chronicle presents Muhammad, at that time a merchant, travelling between Egypt and Palestine and dwelling with the communities of Jews and Christians who lived there:

[...], e mayormiente con un monge natural de Anthiochia, que auie nombre Johan, que tenie el por su amigo et era herege; et daquel monge malo aprendio el muchas cosas tan bien de la nueua ley como de la uieia pora deffender se contra los iudios et los cristianos quando con ellos departiesse [...].⁴⁵

The monk in question, a heretic in fact, behaved like a friend only in appearance. In fact, by teaching him lies and blasphemies against God, he did not work for his friend's salvation, but he rather contributed to his damnation.

Those figures pinpointed for their negative connotations were not always heretics or believers of a different faith; they could simply be victims of human vices and instincts which corrupted their souls and undermined their relationships. *EE* 711, telling the story of Fernán González's imprisonment and successive rescue achieved through Sancha of Navarre's help, provides an interesting case. Once the archpriest of the castle where Fernán González was imprisoned discovered the unauthorized presence of Sancha, he received the Count's appeal: "amigo, ruego te que nos tengas poridad; et si lo fizieres, prometote que te de en Castiella una cibdad de las meiores que y ouiere, assi que sienpre la ayas por tu heredad"⁴⁶ The opening sentence seems to convey the idea of a friendship based on secret keeping, reinforced by the fact that the counterpart was a clergyman. But, a line later, one realizes that more practical interests regulated that supposed pact of amity, which was indeed an attempt of bribing the prelate. If this was not enough, not only was the archpriest not offended by the proposal, but he asked for additional favours. In fact, he proposed to have sexual intercourse with Sancha and to keep that occurrence as a further secret between them. The different semantic connotations assumed by the terminology of friendship in this narration prove the existence of different levels of interpretation. A clear example is represented by Sancha's words to the archpriest: "amigo, todo lo que uos queredes quiero lo yo fazer

⁴⁵ *EE* 478, 'above all with a monk from Antioch named John, who was his friend but he was an heretic as well; from that bad monk he learned many things both of the new and the old law in order to defend himself in any debates with Jews and Christians [...]'.
⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 711, "my friend, I pray you to keep our secret; and if you do it, I promise I will give you one of the best cities of Castile in perpetuity".

de grado [...] ca mucho ualdra mas que partamos el peccado nos todos tres”⁴⁷. In this case ‘amigo’ stands for lover, even though the real plot defined by the jailed couple was that of using it tactically in order to outwit the archpriest, conquer his trust and then jettison him by stabbing him unexpectedly.

At this stage it seems safe to assert that the Alfonsine works presented the links involving the clergy as superior and reliable bonds, without ever negating the possible interferences caused by individual faults. Respect and trust toward the members of the Church were attitudes imposed by the law, but the same legislation did not hide the fact that there were also cases of clergymen subjected to the dominion of passions and vices. These considerations led to other questions, although part of them may be answered only hypothetically. One of these unresolved issues is whether the inference about the misbehaviour of the clergymen was presented in the Alfonsine works for the sake of objectivity that the sovereign claimed for his legal code, or they were rather a veiled outcome of the King’s personal and unresolved discord with the Curia for his desired, but never achieved, imperial title.

§ 6. Religious and Secular Systems: Between Friendly and Vassalatic Bonds

The laws and procedures presented in *SP I* regulating theological and pragmatic aspects concerning ecclesiastical life are built around two major categorizations: on the one hand, the genuine spiritual friendship between God and mankind, and on the other hand the religious friendships established among individuals sharing a common faith. Feudal symbolism was applied to both of these categories; that is to say to the *amicitia Dei*, as well as to the relationships involving the clergy:

[...] ó como los perlados que pueden judgar á los de su señorío seyendo sus vasallos ó sus homes en que hayan derechamente cumplido poder tambien en lo temporal como en lo spiritual.⁴⁸

This segmentation and connection between the spiritual and the secular dimensions may be visually represented with the intersection of two pyramids in which the lowest

⁴⁷ *EE* 711, “oh friend, I want to satisfy all your requests with pleasure[...]as it would be worthwhile sharing the sin among the three of us”.

⁴⁸ *SP I:VI:XLVIII*; ‘[...]’; or where prelates have the power of trying those under their jurisdiction who are their vassals, or their subjects, over whom they have full authority according to law, in temporal, as well as in spiritual matters’.

spheres of the ecclesiastical system (representing the bottom of one of these imaginary pyramids) was still allocated at the top of the subordinated secular one. In other words, even the clergymen who occupied the lowest positions within the ecclesiastical system and were regarded as ‘vassals’ of their more highly-positioned brothers occupied privileged positions when compared with the rest of the lay community. This also proves that the ecclesiastical structure was forged on a vassalatic model according to which the high-status figures behaved like lords. They asserted rights such as summoning councils to which the rest of their subordinates – both religious and secular – had to attend (*EE* 872), expelled treacherous individuals from their dioceses and claimed material and human support from their believers, whenever they needed it.

Needless to say that in such a distribution of powers the Pope acted as the liege lord *per antonomasia*. *SP* I:V:VIII prescribes the acts of reverence that his subordinates had to pay to the Pontiff, performances which clearly resembled vassalatic rituals, for example the fact that all the believers ‘quel deben honrar llamandol padre santo et señor: [...] que quando algunos venieren á él quel besen el pie, et quel honren en todas cosas mas que á otro home.’⁴⁹ *EE* 873 is revealing. It relates the case of Bernard, Archbishop of Toledo, who was summoned by Pope Urban II to join the crusade to Jerusalem. The Archbishop started his journey to Rome promptly ‘con su hueste de cruzados que leuaua’ (with his army of crusaders), but once he left Toledo some disloyal clerics, among those who had remained there, claimed that Bernard would not come back from that enterprise, elected a new Archbishop, and expelled Bernard’s loyal followers. What happened later was that ‘et essos clerigos fueronse apriessa pora su sennor, et dixieronle lo que era fecho en la elesia de Toledo’. Having received the embassy from his loyal friends and vassals condemned to exile, Bernard returned to Toledo and ‘tollio las ordenes a los que lo fizieran et a su electo, et echolos de la elesia [...]’⁵⁰ replacing them with new ministers. But another and more powerful lord was waiting for him: the Pope. Later, Bernard undertook his journey to Rome and once he arrived there he offered the Pontiff his loyal services. His act of loyalty towards the Pope and his devotion for the crusading cause exonerated him from participating in the military campaign and allowed him to go back to Toledo with the mission of protecting it.

⁴⁹ *SP* I:V:VIII; ‘how the Pope should be honoured and respected’ and “they should honour him by calling him Holy Father, and Lord. [...] when any persons visit him, they must kiss his foot, and that they must honour him in all respects more than any other man’.

⁵⁰ *EE* 873, ‘and those clerics followed their master and they told him what happened in the Church of Toledo’; ‘he defrocked those who acted in that way together with his substitute and he expelled them from the Church’.

The relationships established within the ecclesiastical system could be arranged metaphorically on the same chessboard as the secular vassalatic connections. With regard to the latter, the only figure whose authority was incontestable was the king, while all the other ‘lords’ were subjected to him. Similarly, in the ecclesiastical context, the Pope occupied a superior position. Considering the feudal symbolism applied to religious friendships it is interesting to compare the aforementioned *EE* 873 with the description of Pope Calixtus’s visit to Cluny in 1120 recounted in the *Historia Compostellana*. When the Pope reached the congregation, he prostrated himself in front of the abbot and the monks who were summoned there. They promptly reacted by bowing down simultaneously, supplicating the Pontiff to stand up and to abandon such a degrading position. In this specific case the traditional vassalatic scheme appeared subverted, since it was the Pope the one who endeavoured to flatter Cluniac’s favours by addressing them as lords and superiors:

[...] desidero me confratem et commilitonem uestrum haberi; uideo enim, quia caritatis uestre excellencia totum fere mundum subiugauit. [...] Abbatem Cluniacensem precordialissimum meum, monacos Cluniacenses familiarissimos meos fore propemodum uolo.⁵¹

At the end of the same chapter of the *Historia Compostellana*, however, the reason for such an unexpected behaviour is revealed: Pope Calixtus was driven by mere interest. He wanted to make public advertisement of his friendship with the order of Cluny, which was the emblem of charity and sainthood, since that connection would distract public attention from the scandalous events which were discrediting the Roman Curia.

The Pope and the highest religious figures were able to escape the rules of vassalatic rituals and performances only when the highest representatives of the secular world were involved. An example is given in *EE* 319 which narrates the friendship between the martyr Saint Painucio and Emperor Constantine: ‘auie ell emperador Costantino tan grand amor et onraua lo tanto que lo abraçaua, muchas uezes et besaua en aquell oio diestro que auie sacado’.⁵² Neither of the two protagonists bowed reverentially towards the other, but they rather respected the rules of friendly exchanges between peers, which did not resemble any of the conventional vassalatic gestures.

⁵¹ *Historia Compostellana*, ed. by E. Falque Rey (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), II:XIV, p. 248, English trans. mine ‘[...] I would like to be considered your brother and companion since I can see how the excellence of your love has already conquered the entire world.[...] From now on I want the abbot of Cluny to be my fondest friend, and the monks of Cluny my intimate friends’.

⁵² *EE* 319, ‘the Emperor Constantine loved and respected him so much that had been plucked out from him and kissed him on the eye they had pull away from him’.

§ 7. A Case of Religious-Political Friendship: The Military Orders

A discussion of religious friendships cannot exclude mention of *hermandades* (brotherhoods) agreed within and between military orders. These were *militia Dei* (God's army) which flourished in the first half of the twelfth century as the result of an inner transformation experienced both in society and into the Church. They included both religious and secular members and their role became progressively more centralised.⁵³ The Temple, the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, Saint Lazarus, Saint Mary of the Teutonic Temple, Saint Thomas of Acre and the Saint Sepulchre are known as universal orders, as they were established in the Holy Land with the aim of regaining those territories to the Christian faith and freeing their inhabitants submitted to the Islamic yoke.⁵⁴ Between 1160 and 1180, together with these pre-existing international *militiae*, new Iberian regional orders, such as Calatrava, Santiago, Évora-Avis and San Julián del Pereiro-Alcántara, were born.⁵⁵ In the Iberian Peninsula the pretext of the Holy War was in many cases an excuse adopted by the monarchs to employ these monks in arms in order to pursue their own plans of territorial expansion. The justification for it was provided by the overwhelming dominion of the enemy per antonomasia, the Muslims, in the south of the Peninsula which persisted until the thirteenth century and beyond.⁵⁶

After this general introduction, renewed attention will be now devoted to the pacts of *hermandades*, described in the Alfonsine works, which were agreed among the members of each military order, between the different congregations, as well as between them and the Christian sovereigns. An important premise needs to be given here: the military orders, defined by Carlos de Ayala Martínez as associations of clergymen joined for the defence of Christianity and for mutual protection, represented proper institutions, since they were issued with official approval by the Pope and the secular

⁵³ A. Forey, *The Military Orders, From the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1992); *Military Orders and Crusades* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994); 'The Military Orders, 1120-1312' in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. by J. Riley Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 184-216; D. Seward, *The Monks of War: The Military Religious Orders* (London: Methuen, 1972; repr. London: Penguin, 1996); Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares hispánicas* and 'Tópicos y realidades en torno a las Órdenes Militares', in *Tópicos y realidades de la Edad Media*, coord. by E. Benito Ruano (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2002), pp. 105-156.

⁵⁴ L. García-Guijarro Ramos, *Papado, cruzadas y órdenes militares (Siglos XI-XIII)* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1995).

⁵⁵ D. W. Lomax, *Las Ordenes Militares en la Peninsula Ibérica durante la edad media* (Salamanca: Instituto de Historia de la Teología Española, 1976).

⁵⁶ Murcia was retaken in 1236 and Seville in 1248; the only exception was constituted by the tributary kingdom of Granada which survived until the fifteenth century.

rulers.⁵⁷ Originally, in the Iberian context, the orders received support by the Crown directly, and with the same Crown they often signed pacts of friendship and alliance. This was possible because the defence of Christendom was considered the orders' official prerogative. Therefore, Christian monarchs were indirectly allowed to require the intervention of the *militia Dei*, whenever their kingdoms were threatened by external or internal menaces.

It is worth underlining that the Spanish military orders were regulated by an internal hierarchy in which the master of the order, usually a bishop or a prior, was in charge of sanctioning the norms and signing alliances with other orders or with the Christian sovereigns. The master held an uncontested authority, above all if he was a *maestre caballero*, a spiritual guide also able to coordinate and instruct his subordinates in the battlefield. *EE* 1085 provides a noteworthy example. Beyond pointing out the military tasks of the orders, it presents a picture of the master and his followers which coincides in many aspects with that of a secular lord who went to battle together with his vassals:

Et don Fernando Ordonez, que a esa sazón era maestre de Calatraua, et los otros dichos maestres con sus freyres et con su conpanna caualgaron et fueron en pos ellos.⁵⁸

The parallelism would be extended when one takes into account the personal interests which moved the masters, and therefore the entire order that they ruled, to support a party and fight against another. *EE* 1106 confirms it:

Otra vegada acaescio que siguiendo otrosi mucho los moros o el maestre del Tenple posaua, por los escarmentar ende et por se vengar de algun enoio que dellos auie reçibido, caualgo en la grant madrugada, et echoseles en çelada [...].⁵⁹

As Ayala Martínez has asserted, the head of the military order and his subordinates were tied in a sacral chain and the master was obliged by his own position to avoid any

⁵⁷ He pointed out an important difference between the two detectable typologies of Spanish military orders. One of them was the Benedictine-Cistercian model, to which Calatrava, Alcántara and Santa María de España (the latter founded in the thirteenth century by Alfonso X of Castile) conformed, whose affiliates were monks who decided to adopt the military protocol and the knightly behaviour. The other format – to which the order of Santiago adapted – included laymen and knights who decided to submit to the religious discipline and rules.

⁵⁸ *EE* 1085, 'and don Fernando Ordonez who was the master of Calatrava at that time, and the other mentioned masters with their friars and their armies ride together to do it'.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 1106, 'another time it happened that, since the Muslims followed the master of the Temple wherever he stopped, in order to give them a lesson and to take his revenge for some annoyances which he had received from them, he rode in the early morning and he ambushed them'.

arbitrary action towards the other members since, having elected him, they were ‘authors of his mastery’.⁶⁰

Pacts of mutual respect, defence and protection were signed between the brethren, mirroring in several aspects the political agreements regulated by the secular law, to the point that ‘la ruptura del *pacto* estaba disciplinariamente penada para ambas partes, y en el caso del maestre, que no era en modo alguno inmune a la disciplina regular, podía finalizar con su destitución’.⁶¹ This statement recalls the model of the good sovereign issued by the *SP*, in which the king is depicted as the promoter and defender of the juridical system as well as subject to it himself.⁶² Coincidentally, the masters of the orders were subjected to the same rules as their subordinates. Moreover, unlike the sovereigns, their role lacked any direct divine legitimization, thus the masters were rigidly dependent on the rules of the order as much as on their brethren’s will.

As demonstrated by Joseph O’Callaghan the pacts of friendship between members of the orders ‘reveal a continuing desire to achieve a true spiritual fraternity which could be translated into cooperative action on the field of battle’.⁶³ Nevertheless, those religious-military alliances could be undermined by envy originated by matters of donations, benefits and land-boundaries; for this reason the agreed friendships ‘tried to imbue their knights with a sense of brotherhood which transcended immediate loyalties to one Order or to the other and encouraged them to regard themselves as members of a single community united by a common purpose and a common discipline’.⁶⁴ This statement made by O’Callaghan echoes *EE* 1012 which emphasizes the sense of community experienced within the orders, whose members behaved as a unique force in arms, joined in the defence of the true faith. In the aforementioned Chapter 1012 the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa is narrated:

Otrosi fueron y prelados de la iglesia, et omnes de orden que aduxieron y sus cuerpos et sus cosas [...] omillosos ellos et oradores en sus offiçios, auanuistos en los consseios [...]. Alli fueros otrosi los caualleros de las ordenes con sus maestros: el maestre Roy Diaz de Calatraua, con su caualleria, como de hermanos, que plazie a Dios; [...]. Alli fueron otrosi los freyres de la caualleria dell Ospital, que son

⁶⁰ Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*: ‘se generaba así un vínculo sacral que, convirtiendo al maestre en superior jerárquico de la comunidad, le obligaba a no actuar de manera unilateral o arbitraria con sus miembros, que al fin y al cabo le habían elegido de manera directa o mediante comisiones delegadas del capítulo’, p. 194.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *SP* prologue, p. 4, ‘vean las sus cosas que han de enmendar et las enmienden, et segunt aquesto que lo fagan en los suyos’; ‘they should see things which need to be changed and they should emend them, as well as applying the same norms to their own actions.’

⁶³ O’Callaghan, ‘Hermandades Between the Military Orders of Calatrava and Santiago During the Castilian Reconquest, 1158-1252’, *Speculum* 44 (1969), 609-18 (p. 609).

⁶⁴ O’Callaghan, ‘Hermandades Between the Military Orders’, p. 616.

hermandad que se trabaian de caridad sancta et omiliosa por amor de la fe, et todos ençendudos a entençon de aquello que es mester a la Tierra Sancta et en cuyo mantenimiento et deffendimiento ellos uiuen; et aqui tomaron atreuudamiento espada de deffenssion; et fueron en esta batalla en uno con su prior Gutierrez Ramirez.⁶⁵

Since the defence of the Christian orthodoxy was the reason justifying the behaviour of the military orders on the battlefield, one may reasonably deduce that the advertised fraternal and communitarian ideals were mainly used rhetorically and propagandistically. For example, the support given to the master of the Hospital, as described in *EE* 1099, demonstrates how the mission lacked any personal motivation which transcended the martial one. Evidence of this is the attack led by don Gutierrez, Bishop of Córdoba, and Sancho, Bishop of Coria:

con su conpanna de cauallo et de pie; et a guisa de omnes esforçados que auian sabor de librar sus cristianos de muerte de sus enemigos, començaron a yr acorrerle a todo el mas grant yr de los cauillos.⁶⁶

The narration, together with others such as *EE* 1100 and 1101, focused on the bellicose features of those alliances and on their merciless attacks against the Muslim enemies, rather than on the purest values of brotherhood which were meant to regulate such corporations.

The military orders represented the spiritual and secular compromise of an age in which bewildered individuals looked for protection and certainties both in their daily lives and in their spiritual search for eternal salvation. The brothers who swore an oath to the order assumed the moral obligation of loyalty and defence of Christendom, the believers and their territories. The characteristics of those friendships differed whether the engaged parties were the religious orders exclusively or they also involved the secular powers. In the first case, the members of one order offered their military succour and shelter to other religious *militiae*; in the second, services were provided by claiming material benefits and properties in return. When the coalition involved the king, it became a proper political alliance in which the master had to pay vassalatic homage to

⁶⁵ *EE* 1012, ‘moreover prelates of the Church and other members of the order, carrying with them their bodies and goods, went there [...] they were humble, they fulfilled their devotional duties and their ability in advising had been proved [...]. And also the knights of the orders together with their masters went there: the master Roy Diaz of Calatrava, with his knighthood, which are like brothers, as God wishes [...]. And also the friars of the knighthood of the Hospital, which are brotherhoods operating for the sake of holy charity and faith, hastened there [...]’.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 1099, ‘with his infantry and cavalry; and by recovering all their strength in order to free their Christian companions from the menace of death inflicted by the enemies, they assaulted that place with all their horses’.

the sovereign who possessed the authority of granting, renewing or revoking his concessions.

Additionally, the highest-placed members of the orders frequently joined the political life of the kingdom, sometimes even becoming counsellors and military advisors. However, as with any form of friendship, their pact could end abruptly as soon as the original conditions were lost or a more profitable agreement was stipulated. Alfonso X experienced it personally when, due to his frontier policy, he wanted the military orders to move their settlements to the troubled frontier areas. His plans created obvious discontent among the masters of the orders to the point that some of them joined the nobles' rebellion. As for any broken friendship, they could not always be re-forged. In this case don García Fernández, master of Alcántara, managed to repent and re-gain Alfonso's favour (as attested by the *privilegio rodado* conceded to him in 1283), while others never achieved it, since their betrayals had taken them to a point of no return.

Overall, it is possible to assert that here, too, in the cases of friendships signed either within or with the military orders, most of the idealized formulae of friendship were adopted in order to endow such agreements with the highest moral values, even if they were in fact strategically aimed at achieving pragmatic goals which relied on a rigid hierarchy. Reading between the lines, one can infer that even religion was used as an instrument reinforcing such a hierarchical system. In fact, the examples concerning the military orders analysed in this section suit the general pattern of Alfonso X's policy, which proposed pragmatic and opportunistic alliances in a positive way, by emphasising their resemblance to friendship and partially obscuring the practical interests which lay behind them.

§ 8. Beyond Literature and Written Records: Relationships Between Alfonso X and the Military Orders

Before drawing a general conclusion on the interpretations of religious friendship emerging from the Alfonsine works, mention should be made of some historical episodes of alliances and *hermandades* agreed between the Learned King himself and the *militiae Dei*. This brief historical overview might help to unravel a few thorny issues, such as the kind of connection existing between the instructions given in Alfonso X's didactic works and his behaviour, as well as the similes and metaphorical images recalling events which he experienced personally, even if they were inserted in the

chronicles concerning events which occurred in the past (since the *EE* stops at Ferdinand III's reign).

Alfonso X's ambitious political project of creating a centralised kingdom to which every social component had to pay homage and obedience included the military orders. Not only did the King de facto personally choose the candidates as leaders of the orders, who were usually very close to the court (like the master of Alcántara, Pedro Ibañez, nominated master of Calatrava in 1254; and Pedro Nuñez, appointed master of Santiago in 1280), but he also bound them in a chain of natural-vassalatic dependence. Alfonso X masterfully managed to create a sort of double locked vice which gradually restrained them both legally, by granting *rentas* and possessions in return of loyalty and military services, and personally, through acts of friendship which linked them to the sovereign directly. The *privilegios rodados* issued by the sovereign and collected in the *Diplomatario andaluz* present numerous examples.⁶⁷ Some of these concessions, although presenting the name of the masters as first addressees of the concessions, were in fact privileges granted in perpetuity to the entire order, as confirmed by the fact that the validity of the terms were also applied to their successors.

It is noteworthy that Alfonso X also founded the atypical *confradía* of Santa María de España (c. 1270). It was a military confraternity with naval characteristics, managed by the infant Sancho IV in the role of 'alferez de Sancta Maria et almirant della su confraria de Espanna'.⁶⁸ General opinion holds that Alfonso X's patronage of the confraternity – 'que nos estableçemos a seruiçio de Dios e a loor de la Uirgen Sancta María, su maadre'⁶⁹ – was undertaken propagandistically as a further act in praise of the Virgin. Nevertheless it has also been interpreted as an attempt to emulate his German ancestors who had already and strategically supported the Teutonic orders in order to include them in their sphere of influence. Personal devotion, ideological and political control over the Christian subjects and the need for self-preservation after the nobles' revolt in 1272 were all elements that lay behind Alfonso X's decision to create the confraternity. Although official documents stated that the reason in existence was

⁶⁷ *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, ed. by González Jiménez, Manuel (Sevilla: Fundación de El Monte, Caja de Huelva y Sevilla, 1991). They were official documents presenting a circular device (*signo rodado*) which contained the king's name imprinted at the bottom of the text. Side by side the names of the involved parts, when present, were recorded; however, from the thirteenth century the nobles and other eminent figures were mentioned, irrespective of their real attendance during the signature. Further reading: Evelyn S. Procter, 'The Use and Custody of the Secret Seal (*sello de la poridad*) in Castile from 1252 to 1369', *The English Historical Review*, 55 (1940), 194-221.

⁶⁸ J. Torres Fontes, 'La Orden de Santa María de España', *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana*, 3 (1977), 73-118.

⁶⁹ Formula used in the letters of donations and concessions to the order, see *Diplomatario Andaluz de Alfonso X*, ed. by González Jiménez (Sevilla: Fundación de El Monte, Caja de Huelva y Sevilla, 1991), doc. 451, 458.

for the defence of Christian orthodoxy, in fact it was deeply politicized and used by the royal power in cases of internal civil wars and dynastic conflicts.

Significantly, the affiliation of royal paternity was termed at the beginning as ‘confradía’ rather than order. The denomination ‘orden de caballería’ (military order) appeared only later in some Aragonese documents of 1274 and officially in 1277 only. Why Alfonso X claimed a form of religious ratification but not an Apostolic one is not difficult to guess. In all likelihood it was aimed at avoiding any restriction, dependence and control which the Apostolic nominee would have imposed. In fact, events demonstrated that he always tried to keep the two spheres – Church and State – apart. Prudently Alfonso X did not impose his legislative power over the Church, which was rigidly regulated by Canon law, but he included that code into his *SP* (Book I).⁷⁰ In such a way he proposed himself as the guardian of those norms, without sabotaging their validity in spiritual matters.

However, friendships with the military orders were not always easy to keep and in case they were lost, great dangers could occur to the sovereign who had, in the first instance, enforced them. This is precisely what happened during the turmoil set in motion by Sancho IV’s rebellion, when the military orders, inflamed by the discontent generated by the policy of centralization promoted by Alfonso X, joined the aristocratic cause. For example Pedro Núñez, master of Santa María, acted as promoter of a series of *hermandades* against Alfonso. In fact, as reported in the ‘carta sellada’ dated 13th July 1282 (Seville), concerning how ‘Alfonso X quita Montemolín a la Orden de Santiago y la entrega al consejo de Sevilla’, the King rewarded the citizens of Montemolín for the loyalty they demonstrated in supporting the royal cause by refusing to obey to the Order and to its members who:

deseruieron errando contra nos como agora fizieron el maestre don Pero Nunnez, a quí nos fizimos tantas merçedes e bienes que los no podríamos poner en carta, e los freyres desta Orden que se acordaron con él, alçandosenos con nuestra tierra, e fizieron al nuestro linage que se alçase contra nos, pora tollernos nuestro poder e nuestro sennorío, no quisiemos que lo nuestro ficasse en ellos, más que tornase a nos.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Canon law regulated the relationships between the Church and the Christian community and within the Ecclesiastical world; consequently, there was no reason for the king to intervene in that sphere.

⁷¹ *Diplomatario andaluz*, doc. 501, pp. 528-29, ‘they disobeyed and betrayed us like the master Pedro Nuñez did, to whom we acted so mercifully and with so many favours which cannot be listed on paper, and the friars of this Order joined him, rebelling against us with our lands, and they pushed our lineage to fight against us in order to deprive us of our power and supremacy, we do not want our things to fall in their hands, rather that they return to our possession’.

Beyond the protection against such cases of disloyalty, the other motivation which justified the intervention of the military orders at a king's side was the need of defence of the true faith against the threatening forces of the infidels. This explains why Sancho IV, for example, was able to claim their support since he had accused his father, Alfonso X, of having received military aid by the Moor Abū Yūsuf, emir of the Benimerines and his only ally during the uprising. Sancho accused his father of unorthodox behaviour and, therefore, he was allowed to claim the intervention of the military orders. In a similar way Alfonso X's factions blamed Sancho for his alliance with the emir of Granada and for the excommunication that he had received from Pope Martin IV.

From the narrations presented in the Alfonsine works and from the sovereign's personal experiences it might be safely inferred that the pacts of amity and protection signed between the king and the religious *militiae* were characterized by deeper political and pragmatic implications. In general, most connections based on strong religious and ideological models could represent mere façades. In fact, it was not so rare that amicable titles and formulae were consciously used in order to ennoble other practical and secular agreements. Moreover, religion worked as a cohesive tool connecting the parties in the name of a shared faith and devotion which made them feel like friends and brothers in God's name, without ever escaping the internal ranking which also characterized both the secular and monastic religious communities.

Chapter V

Political Friendship I

§ 1. Ancient and Modern Interpretations

Political friendships have always been attractive fields of research whose study has generated a kaleidoscope of definitions and interpretations concerning both their nature and typologies.¹ A number of scholars, particularly from the late 1990s, have dedicated special attention to this subject.² Among others, Jacques Derrida remodelled and adapted classical definitions of political friendship to the structures of modern democratic systems.³ Derrida's voice was not isolated and significant debates arose, for instance, between modern communitarian thinkers and liberal philosophers; the former torn between the idea of an exemplary friendship aimed at the common good and the awareness of the absence of such a noble feeling in their contemporary society, and the latter arguing that tolerance and social respect were the fundamental prerogatives for the survival of any democracy.⁴ It has to be noted, however, that in spite of their modernity, all those theories bear the mark of the earliest speculations on the subject which hark back to Plato and Aristotle.⁵ The latter, especially, elaborated the notion of *politiké philia* and added that such a relationship was not necessarily dependent on any private and emotional links between individuals.⁶ On the contrary, similar bonds flourished whenever people were naturally gifted with a sense of moral justice which rendered

¹ Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship*.

² J. M. Cooper, 'Political Animals and Civic Friendship', in *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*, ed. by Neera Kapur Badhwar, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 303-326; Judith Nisse Shklar, 'Politics and Friendship', *Proceedings of The American Philosophical Society*, 137 (1993), 207-212; Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, 'On Civic Friendship', *Ethics*, 107 (1996), 97-128.

³ Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. by George Collins (London: Verso, 1997).

⁴ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); *New Communitarian Thinking: Persons, Virtues, Institutions, and Communities*, ed. by Amitai Etzioni (Charlottesville; London: The University of Virginia Press, 1995); Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*; Plato, *Republic*, trans. by Desmond Lee, 2nd edn (London: Penguin Books, 2003). See also *The Phaedrus, Lysis and Protagoras of Plato: A New and Literal Translation Mainly From The Text of Bekker*, ed. by J. Wright (London: Macmillan and Co., 1921); John T. Bookman, 'Plato on Political Obligation', *The Western Political Quarterly*, 25 (1972), 260-267; Frederick Rosen, 'Obligation and Friendship in Plato's Crito', *Political Theory*, 1 (1973), 307-316; Nancy Sherman, 'Aristotle on Friendship and the Shared Life', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 47 (1987), 589-613; Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*; Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves*; Jean-François Pradeau, *Plato and The City: A New Introduction to Plato's Political Thought* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002); Thanassis Samaras, *Plato on Democracy* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002); Lenn E. Goodman, Robert B. Talisse, *Aristotle's Politics Today* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

⁶ See Chapter I, p. 22.

them sensitive to respect others and, therefore, to guarantee the political and social stability of their community.⁷ Yet, a clarification is needed: any political – which was also public – friendship was considered imperfect if it excluded the individual private life, which represented the only ambit within which a real and pure *amicitia* could be established. In time, Cicero enhanced the list of factors influencing political relationships by proposing concord and utility as central factors: ‘hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus’.⁸ The idea of a shared mindset, rooted on common cultural backgrounds, traditional values and geographical origins, was considered the most fertile ground on which a natural collaboration between people might flourish.

The general definitions presented above constitute only a few, but fundamental, premises of the present section which aims at enumerating the theorizations, formulae and practices of political friendship as they were perceived and enacted in thirteenth-century Iberia and, especially, as they were presented through the filter of the Alfonsine production.

§ 2. Definition and Typologies According to the Alfonsine Works

In the following pages attention will be devoted to the way in which politically-aimed *amicitiae* were regulated by the Alfonsine law, and how they developed frequently into military and diplomatic armistices, as it is seen in the narrative of historical events presented in the *EE*. Despite its significance, the works patronized by Alfonso X cannot be seen as the indicators of a completely new perception of those political alliances, whose leading ideas derived from the most ancient conceptions on this subject. However, a careful work of adaptation to the needs of his thirteenth-century court was masterfully achieved. In particular, it has to be stressed that the majority of the examples from the *EE* taken into account in this section belong to the part of the *Versión Regia* which Menéndez Pidal has attributed to the Alfonsine scriptorium; therefore, it was influenced by classical sources, but not subjected to the subsequent

⁷ Bernard Yack, *The Problems of a Political Animal: Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Suzanne Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995); Aristide Tessitore, *Readings Aristotle's Ethics: Virtue, Rhetoric, and Political Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Richard Mulgan, ‘The Role of Friendship in Aristotle's Political Theory’, in *The Challenge to Friendship in Modernity*, pp. 15-32.

⁸ Cicero, *De republica*, repr. from the 3rd edn of Cardinal Mai, Rome 1848, and trans. by G. G. Hardingham (London: B. Quaritch, 1884), I, 39, ‘fellows are not just people joined together, but a group of individuals sharing a juridical agreement and certain common interests’.

revision of the work undertaken under the patronage of Sancho IV.⁹ Before pursuing this field in depth, a few examples will be given in order to illustrate the classical legacy left to Alfonso X's works. For example, the Aristotelian emphasis on the social and political commitment of citizens endowed with self-justice also appears in the *SP*:

E por ende dixo Aristotiles que si los homes hobiesen entre sí verdadera amistad, non habrien meester justicia nin alcalles que los judgasen, porque la amistad les farie complir et guardar aquello mesmo que quiere et manda la justicia.¹⁰

The corollary seems to be that legal impositions had not the full right to exist as coercive tools since people would act for the others' and for their own sake spontaneously, without being taught or ordered to do it.

An important point to highlight, in view of the fact that treaties before the twelfth century were extremely rare, if non existent, is the difficulty in establishing which terms, duties and benefits were agreed by each party to those alliances.¹¹ The watershed was represented by the written formulation of those pacts, whose peculiarities and specific features were recorded in official documents, whose reference might be found also in municipal *fueros*, *cartas pueblas* and *privilegios rodados*. Significantly, the comprehensive legal code of the *SP*, even recognising the value of those treatises of friendship, provides only general advice, while avoiding specific bureaucratic details concerning their formulation. This might suggest that the formalized friendships represented much more the legacy of rooted customs that the law could not ignore, rather than a desired legal solution that it would promote. Illuminating in this respect is the narration presented in *EE* 679 about Nuño Rasura:

et seyendo alcalde, de lieue pocas uezes libraua pleytos por juyzio; mas antes punnaua en abenir los omnes por amiztat et por amor en los pleytos que uinien ant ell, que non por afrontarlos por sentencia de juycio.¹²

⁹ See introduction to the *PCG* by Menéndez Pidal, p. XXXIV.

¹⁰ *SP* IV:XXVII:I, 'for this reason Aristotle stated that if true friendship existed among men, they would have no need of courts or magistrates to judge them, because friendship would cause them to do and to observe what justice orders and directs'.

¹¹ Like in other European contexts, also in the Iberian Peninsula the oral rituality and symbolism characterizing these agreements predominated until the twelfth century, when the written formulae experienced a progressively wider success. M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), p. 12 and 149; Pascua, *Guerra y pacto en el siglo XII: la consolidación de un sistema de reinos en Europa occidental* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1996), pp. 40-48; and 'Peace among equals', pp. 193 and 210.

¹² *EE* 679, 'and being the governor, he rarely brought a lawsuit by judgment, but he first tried to achieve concord between those who were summoned in front of him in the name of friendship and love, rather than by using judicial sentence'.

Once again, the idea of an innate individual moral justice seems to prevail on the juridical impositions. The law was a didactic one and, in some cases, a coercive instrument which proved powerful and efficient only when interpreted as the externalization of individuals' remarkable moral statures.

In this study, even though the area of research has been circumscribed to the Alfonsine production, an unequivocal definition of political friendship has proved difficult, especially at a general level. Nevertheless, an attempt to catalogue the different typologies has been made: on the one hand there were the social agreements between citizens based on a shared sense of justice; on the other hand, the alliances stipulated between individuals or groups which swore mutual protection in order to fulfil a mission or to receive either military or economic support. This first split was complicated further by the subdivisions to which the second category (friendship based on interest) was frequently subjected, since it might include relationships between peers (monarchs, rulers and Popes) as well as between members of different social ranks who would owe and receive advantages according to the terms established by the pacts that they stipulated. As Esther Pascua has argued, the terminology adopted to define these links was various and it included formulae such as *amicitia* and *convenientia*:

estos dos sustantivos resumen la doble naturaleza del tratado político interfeudal: por un lado, la *amicicia*, es decir, la confraternidad derivada de la relación de parentesco, la convivencia o la pertenencia a un mismo grupo social y, por otro, la *convenientia*, el pacto jurídico que concilia los intereses de distintas partes.¹³

Another element to consider is that in all the typologies of political agreements discernible in the Alfonsine works there are not always explicit lexical references to 'political friendship'. By contrast, a range of terms related to companionship, kinship and feudal connections was frequently adopted.

These lexical variants assumed significant importance for the range of connotations that they conveyed. *Companna*, for instance, was a definition generally attributed to any military congregation constituted with the aim of providing mutual support on the battlefield and, therefore, without implying any personal and emotional link. *EE 3* supplies an interesting instance. In this narrative the title of *compannas* is attributed to the tribes which progressively invaded and occupied the Iberian territories. A close reading of the passage reveals that, except for the unity derived from their

¹³ Pascua, *Guerra y pacto en el siglo XII*, p. 44; Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia*.

ethnic origins, any other form of social unanimity was impossible to achieve since: ‘tod estas tierras sobredichas fueron pobladas assi cuemo uos contamos, e ouo y muchos cabdiellos que fueron sennores dellas e que ouieron grandes guerras entre si [...]’.¹⁴ It might be deduced that political friendship could exist only in a context in which powers and roles were clearly defined and consolidated. Only in such a context was friendship allowed to play a pivotal role as an instrument of protection from the external threats rather than being adopted as a weapon to force or even destroy already weak internal balances.

Bearing medieval social stratification in mind and the fact that limited forms of interaction were allowed between certain sectors of society, at this point another category (also labelled as *companna*) should be taken into account: the affiliation of two or more rulers, frequently descending from the same offspring, who agreed to share the duties of power. The *EE* presents several cases in which a sovereign decided to allot his throne – or at least the duties related to it – with a ‘compannero’, who was connected to him by blood and parental ties, as the following examples prove:

E luego que fue alçado Decio por emperador, tomo a su fiio consigo por compannero en ell imperio [...].¹⁵

[Constantine] alço por emperadores a Costantino et a Costancio et a Costante sus fijos, et dioles por compannero et por equal en el sennorio a Dalmacio Cesar su sobrino, por las bondades que en si auie et por que se semeiaua mucho a el.¹⁶

[Valentinian] recibio por compannero et por equal dessi a Valente, su hermano, et fizo lo llamar agosto.¹⁷

E recibio Graciano por compannero a Valentiniano, su hermano.¹⁸

[...] el rey don Ramiro tanto fue de grand bondad et de grand mesura et tanto amaua all hermano, quel fizo consigo compannero en el regnado.¹⁹

¹⁴ *EE* 3, ‘all the aforementioned lands were populated as we have told, and there were over there many rulers who were lords of those lands and they had great wars among them’.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 264, ‘once Decio was crowned as Emperor, he entitled his son as companion in ruling the Empire’.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 330, ‘[Constantine] nominated his sons Constantine, Constancio and Costante as emperors, and he gave Dalmacio Caesar, his nephew, to them as companion and peer in lordship, for the goodwill that he had and for the fact that he resembled very much the Emperor himself’.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 350, ‘[Valentinian] received his brother Valente as companion and peer, and he entitled him as Augusto’.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 355, ‘Gratian received his brother Valentiniano as companion’.

Alongside the secular establishments there were also the Apostolic figures who applied the same conventions, as attested by the choice made by the unlearned Pope Benedict who ‘tomara otro consigo como compannero, et consagrol por papa por que cumpliesse el officio de Santa Eglesia por el’.²⁰

Likewise, in the Islamic system of rule, the co-operation between lieges was regarded as a worthwhile opportunity. The Alfonsine chronicles tell us that in 722, when the Christian armies advanced towards the ‘Reconquest’ of the territories occupied by the Muslim forces, the Arabic caliph Omar, successor after Zulema’s demise, took power, but he summoned his brother Yazid and ‘[...] tomol por compannero et ayudador del regno’.²¹ Omar, according to his habits and nature, behaved wisely which, together with his unwillingness to use brute force in order to set order in his dominions, contributed to create his eulogised portrait as a friend of his people:

Este Omar seyendo muy rico de auer et complido de todas buenas mannas, quitosse quanto el mas pudo de guerrear et de batallas; e tanto fue de sofrido et sabroso a todas las yentes, que non sabien todos que onrra le dar por ello, nin que loor; ca nol onrrauan nil loauan tan solamiente los suyos, mas en uerdad los estrannos de las otras tierras; [...] maguer moro [...].²²

It is striking that, in contrast with these pseudo-historical records, the Alfonsine law (*SP* II:I) envisages a warning to the emperor, who should never share his power with anyone else since this would undermine his position and debilitate his role:

[...] por toller desacuerdo de entre las gentes et ayuntarlas en uno, lo que non podrien facer si fuesen muchos los emperadores, porque segunt natura el señorio non quiere compannero nin lo ha menester [...].²³

Nevertheless, continued the law, an emperor should choose loyal and wise counsellors by whom he should be surrounded, and who should also work to keep the throne safe.

¹⁹ *EE* 630, ‘King Ramiro was so benevolent and moderate and he loved so much his brother, that he nominated him as his companion and shared his kingship with him’.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 807, ‘he chose another one as companion, and he nominated him Pope so that he could perform the Apostolic office on his behalf’.

²¹ *Ibid.* 570, ‘he took him as companion and helper to rule’.

²² *Ibid.* 570, ‘this Omar, who was a wealthy man and endowed with all good manners, tried to avoid as much as he could wars and battles; and he was so much appreciated and revered by his people that they did not know which honours and praises they could pay him for all that; and not only did his people honour and praise him, but also foreigners and dwellers of other lands did the same; [...] despite the fact that he was a Muslim’.

²³ *SP* II:I:I, ‘[...] to remove discord from among the people and unite them; which could not be done if there were many emperors, because according to nature, sovereignty does not require a companion, nor does it have need of one; [...]’.

The legal code, which resembled in many aspects the paradigm of the *specula principis*,²⁴ contains another section regulating the same subject (*SP II:V:XVI*) which advises kings about how to protect themselves and their plans by being careful about revealing their secrets to those who claimed to be friends without first proving their effective reliability.

Amicable agreements were a means to achieve, impose and perpetuate power, mostly by avoiding the use of violence. Before supplying other examples, a brief historical note would be useful in order to clarify by which historical factors the Alfonsine perspective was influenced. Formed as a kingdom in 1035, Castile was a powerful growing force, heavily involved in wars both against the other Iberian Christian kingdoms and against the wealthy and prolific Muslim kingdoms of the South. The weakness of the Peninsula, split by centuries of internal conflicts between descendants from the same dynasties, had also favoured the access of foreign invaders. In order to fight against these enemies, treaties of peace needed to be agreed between the Christian sovereigns themselves and between them and their respective courts and subjects. As stated by the law, friendship was the instrument to preserve order and unanimity among citizens and to safeguard the royal power, which was strictly dependent on public concord.

This general statement is substantiated by a number of examples proceeding from the *EE*. For example, it is said that the Romans conquered the Peninsula ‘por amistad que pusieron con algunos de ellos’²⁵ rather than by adopting coercive means, which were used only when absolutely necessary. It is also remarked that the Roman conquest alternated between violent raids, periods of war, and episodes of benevolence that the incomers practiced towards the invaded populations in order to secure their advance. One significant episode is that of the brothers Scipio, sent as delegates from Rome who, after crossing Gaul and facing Hannibal, descended through the Pyrenees:

Entonce començaron a falagar a los omnes de la tierra et a prometelles et fazelles bien por ganar los et pasar los assi; assi que se les tornaron una grand partida dellos, et a los que pudieron auer por amor no les quisieron fazer mal, et a los otros matauan los et astragauan los quanto mas podien.²⁶

²⁴ Roberto J. González-Casanovas, ‘Courtly Rhetoric as a Political and Social Code in Alfonso X: The Prologues to the *Espéculo* and the *Siete Partidas*’, in *Medieval Iberia, Essays on the History and Literature of Medieval Spain*, ed. by Donald J. Kagay & Joseph T. Snow (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 129-142.

²⁵ *EE* 23, ‘for the friendship they had with some of them’.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 24, ‘then, they began to flatter people of that place and to promise and to do good actions towards them in order to obtain their benevolence and have them; so, they managed to have a huge number of

The emphasis that the Alfonsine narrative put on certain events would suggest that instead of pure friendship, it would be more appropriate to talk about submission to the strongest power, since the support provided to the new rulers was depicted as the result of fear rather than of natural benevolence felt towards them.

Another noteworthy example appears in *EE* 26 in which it is explicitly said that, during the conflict between the Roman army and Hasdrubal's forces, the former vacillated at the beginning because 'encabo uieron los romanos que non auien ayuda de ningun cabo e estaban en tierra estranna [...]'. Despite those first difficulties, once the Romans defeated their adversaries and exhibited their military supremacy: '[...] los Romanos començaron a ganar la tierra lo uno por amor, lo al por fuerça'.²⁷ This example should be borne in mind as a useful indication for the classifications which will be discussed later, regarding political friendships involving unequal figures, whose reasons to agree to an alliance were frequently material necessities, fear and the need for protection.

To follow this line of thought another interesting example is that of the young Scipio, son of Cornelius Scipio 'e por mostrar mayor amor a los espannoles tomo todos los presos que dellos tenie, e diolos a sos parientes en don'. His magnanimous action, which was in fact suggested by his real political and military purposes, had as a result that:

[...] todos los mas e los meiores omnes dEspanna se uinieron pora el, e partieron se de Asdrubal, e fezieron que le tornaron muchas uillas e castiellos e todo lo demas de la tierra, e algunas dellas por lit, pero la mayor partida por amor.²⁸

Any attempts made by the contenders to re-conquer both those territories and people's consensus, by signing alliances and requiring the intervention of external forces, failed because 'Cipion uencie siempre e ganaua la tierra lo uno por amor, e lo al por fuerça [...]'.²⁹

them, and they did not harm the conquered people which submitted with benevolence, while they killed and devastated as many as they could of those who refused to do so'.

²⁷ *EE* 26, 'in the end the Romans realized that they were not supported from any part and they were in a foreign territory'; '[...] the Romans began to conquer the land by using goodwill on the one hand, and by adopting violence on the other hand'.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 30, 'in order to show the deeper love that he had for the Spaniards, he took two of the prisoners that he held and gave them as an homage to their families'; '[...] all the greatest and most important people of Spain joined him, and they abandoned Hasdrubal, and they managed to have back many villas and castles and all the rest of the lands, some of them using violent means, but the most by goodwill'.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 32, 'Scipio always gained the territory either by goodwill or by force'.

A similar example, emerging from the later events of Roman history recorded in the *EE* regards the difficulties experienced by the Roman delegates in Spain when they intervened after Scipio's African defeat. Yet, the peninsular inhabitants were restless and the danger of turmoil was foreseeable. Nonetheless, one of the descendents from Scipio's family, scornful of danger, offered to leave Rome and shoulder the burden himself: 'e a queste era omne que se fazie muy compannero de las gentes por auer so amor, e por esta manera uinien muchos a so ayuda'.³⁰

Victory and occupation did not guarantee power to last; on the contrary, they had to be preserved by military force and diplomacy. Political alliances responded to those needs, by supplying mutual defence and truces between the parties. The events which followed Hasdrubal's demise are significant, since Scipio, in order to preserve his embassy and therefore his power, '[...] puso otrossi amiztades con aquellos que touo por que podrie mejor acabar so fecho [...]'.³¹ Evidently friendship represented the most effective tool to cement their power, to build a steady and peaceful social system and to guarantee its longevity. Moreover, mutual love between dwellers of the same country, and also between those and their sovereigns, were considered crucial to preserve a peaceful living.

To conclude, friendship was depicted – both in the Alfonsine legal and historical collection – as a fundamental link in both the private and public lives of men. In fact, neither could a subject live without a friend nor could a social and political system survive without the mutual agreement and coexistence of its members. Kings, emperors and rulers did not transcend such a pattern either: they needed to behave in an amicable manner towards their subjects, while the latter were morally and legally obliged to respect and love their lords, a feeling which was likely to proceed naturally from the respect and love that they ought to feel for themselves and for their community.

³⁰ *EE* 41, 'and this was a man who made friends with the people in order to secure their benevolence, and for this reason many offered him their aid'.

³¹ *Ibid.* 34, 'he made friends with those that he considered useful in order to achieve his goal'.

§ 3. Rules of Political Friendship: Loyalty and Betrayal

The general rules of *amistad* presented in the admonitions of the Alfonsine law-code, coincided in many aspects with the characteristics of political friendships illustrated in the historical narrations of the *EE*. Both the theoretical norms of the *SP* and the pragmatic cases recorded in the chronicles revealed that loyalty, good will, respect and wisdom were, also in a political context, indispensable features which men should possess in order to be revered as valuable friends. Loyalty, especially when it was sworn to the sovereign through an oath of vassalatic homage, was the main requisite that a friend should possess, both in his public and private life. A case in point is the episode of the infant Alfonso VIII of Castile (1158-1214) who fought against the arbitrary imposition of his uncle Ferdinand II of León, who aimed to usurp his legitimate possessions. Conforming to principles which would be later stated by the Alfonsine law – that is to say that people should love and protect their king reverentially (*SP* II:XIII) – the Castilian subjects supported the infant Alfonso VIII not only in order to defend his legitimacy, but also in the name of the moral obligation that they felt towards him, their fellow-citizens and towards themselves: ‘et escogieron mas de seer desondrados con el uerdadero sennor et lealtad, que non obedesçer al princep que non deuien, crebantando su lealtad por ganar y algo’.³²

Therefore, as for any other form of friendship, especially in cases of political connections, betrayal was contemplated as the worst of the sins that a person could commit against their friends; a sin which would harm the others as much as it generated scorn and bad reputation for those who committed it. Such a conception justifies the presence of explicit admonitions against the authors of malevolent actions, who should neither be trusted nor allowed to enter any friendly relationship, especially with the king. The description of Antoninus Pius’s behaviour reported in *EE* 210 is eloquent. The Roman Emperor was accustomed to honour and praise those who showed their loyalty and defended his interests; by contrast ‘[...] a los malos dizie les, muy mansamientre et con buena uoluntad, que non podien seer amigos dell emperador por los fechos que fazien’.³³

As much as loyalty was the *sine qua non* condition in order to be considered a friend, treachery condemned those who committed it doubly since neither the victim nor

³² *EE* 990, ‘and they chose to be dishonoured together with the lord to whom they were loyal, rather than obeying the prince that they should not obey, behaving treacherously in order to gain something’.

³³ *Ibid.* 210, ‘to the evil people he used to say, calmly and with goodwill, that they could not be friends of the Emperor for the bad actions that they committed’.

those who were informed of the betrayal would confide in the perpetrator in the future. Such was the case of Sergius Galba, Roman governor of the province of Tarraconensis of Hispania, and perpetrator of a series of malevolent actions against the people of Lucena. The Alfonsine chroniclers recount that, after a first battle in which he was defeated, Galba attacked Lucena again, supported by new forces. Fearing his return, the inhabitants of the town of Lucena proposed a peaceful agreement to him. Galba treacherously accepted and summoned them, but that was in fact a stratagem he used to fulfil his revenge; in fact, he murdered all those who answered his call. His misconduct brought the peninsular inhabitants to react violently both against him and the power he represented:

Esta deslealtad fue muy sonada por toda Espanna, e dalli adelante se alborozaron todos los espannoles contra Roma mas que numqua fizieran.³⁴

Treason was the main feature characterizing also the events involving Viriatus, who fought alongside the Romans for fourteen years, and who, in the end, was murdered by his own people:

Encabo mataron le los sos a traycion, aquellos en que se el mas fiaua; e cuydaron auer de los romanos gualardon, mas ellos non gele quisieron dar por la traycion que fizieran en matar so sennor.³⁵

Evidently, the closer the relationships, the more harmful were the consequences of betrayal. To prove such a point it is worth mentioning the events presenting Emperor Domitian as protagonist. Led by arrogance, he committed a series of dreadful actions against his subjects, but ‘mas al cabo fue el quebrantado et enflaquecido de coraçon por que entendio que todos sus amigos et sus priuados et sus afforrados andauan conseiando cuemo lo matassen, et mayormente su mugier [...]’.³⁶ The situation reached its nadir with the Emperor’s murder, committed by Parthemius, who was his eunuch.

The consequences derived from a traitor’s actions were deleterious for the political and military enterprises which the betrayed individuals were trying to fulfil, since their actions were seriously menaced by the disclosure of secret plans to the

³⁴ *EE* 42, ‘this betrayal was revealed all around Spain and from that moment all the Spanish people rioted against the Romans as they had never done before’.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 44, ‘in the end, he was killed by his own people, by those that he had trusted, treacherously; and they tried to have some reward from the Romans; but the Romans did not give them any because of the treachery they had done by murdering their lord’.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 189, ‘in the end he was turned down because he understood that all his friends, followers and protected were plotting how to kill him, and above all his wife [...]’.

enemy. An example can be seen in the narrative of Charlemagne in war against the Muslim forces which were advancing from the interior areas of the Iberian Peninsula towards the Pyrenees. The Emperor dispatched his forces to advance into the heart of the Peninsula, but his action failed due to the betrayal of one of Charlemagne's men:

Et dize don Lucas de Tuy que en veniendo, que cerco a Tudela, et ouierala presa synon fuese por la traycion que fizo y vn conde que andaua en su companna, que auia nombre Galaron, que era de conseio con los moros.³⁷

The discussion on betrayal might be summarized through the words which the *EE* attributed to King Alfonso the Chaste: “‘agora veo et entiendo que las palabras antiguas son verdaderas: que nunca se puede omne guardar de traydores nin mestureros’”.³⁸

Unlike the shameful betrayal and along with loyalty and wise behaviour, another fundamental rule of friendship has to be mentioned: the mutual warranty of secret keeping. The divulgation of a secret corresponded to an undisputable act of betrayal and it represented outstanding proof of the fact that those individuals were not worthy to be named friends. A single example will suffice to illustrate such an argument and it is provided by *EE* 599. It relates that Carlos Mainete, son of King Pepin of the Franks, after having served Galefre, King of Toledo, for several years (since he had left his reign, owing to a disagreement with his father) ‘fablo con sus caualleros en poridad’³⁹ delivering clear instructions about the most efficient way for them to partake of his plans to go back to his dominions, now that his father had expired. Therefore, those of his followers who were ennobled with the dignity of trustees were also morally and legally obliged to keep the secrets revealed to them, for their own protection and to guarantee the success of the mission itself: ‘[...] deben guardar mucho los del pueblo que non descubran poridat de su rey, ca esto es cosa de que nascen dos males; el uno deshonra et el otro daño [...]’.⁴⁰

³⁷ *EE* 619, ‘and Lucas de Tuy said that, coming towards Tudela, he reached it, and he nearly seized it if it was not for the betrayal of a count who was there in his company, who was named Galaron, who was a counsellor of the Muslims’.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 621, ‘now I see and understand that the ancient sayings are true: that man cannot be preserved from betrayers and traitors’.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 599, ‘he talked to his knights privately’.

⁴⁰ *SP* II:XIII:XXVI, ‘[...] the people should also be careful not to reveal the secrets of their king, for this is something from which two evils arise; first, dishonour, second, injury’.

§ 3. 1. Pragmatic and Moral Motivations Leading to Political Friendships

The episodes quoted up to this point envisage cases of political friendship which were, in fact, mere military alliances aimed at achieving strategic and pragmatic results which, once obtained, made the same pacts meaningless to perpetuate. Thus, in *EE* 429 it is commemorated how:

Odoacer, ueyendosse en grand cuenta por la cerca que era mui luenga et mui mala, puso su amistad con el rey Theoderico, et metiosse en su poder et fizol pleyt et omenage de seer siempre a su mandado et del obedecer en todo.⁴¹

General Odoacer paid his tribute of loyalty and submission to Emperor Theoderic in order to obtain his protection against the incumbent dangers which the Italian campaigns were likely to inflict on his person and his army. Evidently, Odoacer's oath was far from being a declaration of good will and pure benevolence, but it was rather an opportunistic request. For this reason it was destined to expire as soon as the situation no longer necessitated that alliance.

This case also recalls the Aristotelian definition of friendship based on interest, thus deprived of any pure feeling of love and benevolence shared between the parties. The question which might arise here is what kind of interests converged into a political alliance. The analysis of the Alfonsine works has displayed a number of possible answers which go beyond the plans of territorial expansion, defence of the frontiers, and strategic and military protection. In fact, circumstances are given in which political agreements were signed in the attempt to solve either a personal or a familial situation in which a friend was contractually obliged to intervene, for instance in rescuing or avenging the offences suffered either by an ally or by one of their closest friends. Some of those duties also appeared explicitly stated by the law, such as the obligation for a friend to rescue his companions in case of imprisonment:

Et el amigo otrosi que con otro hobiese grant amor de voluntat et non le quisiese ayudar en aquello que él pudiese porque saliese de cativo, quando ende saliere puedel decir mal ante el rey [...].⁴²

⁴¹ *EE* 429, 'Odoacer, seeing himself in a dangerous position due to the long and heavy siege, made friends with King Theoderic, and put himself under his power and made homage to him and swore to be always at his service and to obey him in everything'.

⁴² *SP* II:XXIX:III, 'a friend also, who shows great attachment to another but is unwilling to assist him to escape from captivity after the latter is liberated, can be denounced by him in the presence of the king [...]'.

The failure to accomplish their duties by those who had declared to be friends was punished with public scorn, shame suffered in front of the sovereign and the confiscation of properties. In this specific case, rescuing a man was regarded not just as an act of Christian charity, but also as a moral and contractual duty that subjects linked by faith, lineage, vassalatic bonds, marital connections and ‘amor de voluntad’ (that is to say voluntary friendship) had to respect.

In the list of motivations which led individuals or groups to agree pacts of friendship, there were also defence, protection and military support against the intervention of both external and internal enemies. With regard to this aspect the story of Petreus and Afranius is noteworthy. Once the two protagonists realized that the perpetuation of the war between Caesar and Pompey would have been deleterious as much for their honour as for their people, according to the *EE* 101, they decided to submit to Caesar voluntarily by pleading for a truce and offering their oath of friendship in return. As noted, among the reasons which contributed to stop the conflict there was the appealing idea of the protection of honour, which was also invoked as the principal element that any pact of friendship should defend and guarantee.

Although pre-eminent, the defence of honour was also prone to degenerate and intensify. Such was the case of the siege and destruction that Hannibal’s forces inflicted on the Spanish city of Saguntum (erroneously named Sigüenza in the *EE*), whose inhabitants were linked in a bond of friendship with the Roman invaders. Witnessing the progressive collapse of all their chances of success, the surviving citizens decided to kill their own companions, their families and friends rather than abandoning them to the humiliation of the foreign massacre:

E quand ellos uieron que por ninguna guisa no lo podrien soffrir, ouieron so acuerdo que mas ualie que ellos matassen a sos amigos, que no ueellos matar e catiuar a sos enemigos. Desi mataron sos padres, e sos hijos, e sos mugieres, e sos amigos [...].⁴³

To conclude, it seems safe to argue that friendship was a matter of pragmatic interests as much as, in some cases, a moral commitment aimed at safeguarding their counterparts’ person, fame and respectability.

⁴³ *EE* 19, ‘and when they saw that they could not suffer it in any way, they all agreed that it was worthier to kill their own friends, rather than witnessing while they were killed and captured by their enemies. So they killed their fathers, their sons, their wives, and their friends [...]’.

§ 3. 2. The Inheritance of Friendship and Enmity

In as much as the comparisons between the general rules of friendship and their applications in the spheres of political agreements are concerned, the principle of the inheritance of friendship deserves particular attention. The classic axiom of *amicus amici, inimicus inimici* speaks for itself: individuals were friends of their companion's friends and, similarly, their friends' enemies turned into their own foes. The same formula might be successfully applied to political relationships, which frequently reverted onto the contractors' families, kin groups, clans and offspring, to the extent of being bequeathed to later generations. In consideration of such a diachronic legacy, the promises of peace between kings were dynastically perpetuated, in principle at least, and therefore legitimately preserved. Military agreements may be accommodated within the same paradigm, as the narration of Scipio's conquest of Spain suggests:

[...] e otrossi uinieron a el los caualleros de Celthiberia, aquellos que ouieran dantes amor con sos tios, y el recibolos muy bien e puso les a todos grandes soldadas e fizoles mucho dalgo.⁴⁴

The transmission of the bond, which in those cases assumed all the characters of a treaty, could be implicitly renewed in case the successors shared the same will as their ancestors. The description given in *EE* 990 with regard to the infant Alfonso VIII of Castile, Sancho III's heir, develops this second point in more detail: '[...] que era de abraçarle los omnes et amarle por el priuilegio del padre, esto es, por ell exiemplo de las bondades que el padre fiziera [...]'.⁴⁵

The official protocols which bound the parties to respect the terms previously agreed were far more constrictive than the mere sense of moral duty. Nobody, in those cases, would reject or withdraw from their obligations, on pain of denunciation as a betrayer. Such a note might be recalled to justify the request of aid made by Count Sancho García to the kings of León and Navarre in order to take revenge against the Muslims who had killed his father. In order to achieve it, the count evoked the pact that his father had signed with them:

⁴⁴ *EE* 30, '[...] and the knights from Celtiberia, who were their uncles' allies, also came to him and he welcomed them very well, and he gave great rewards and all the rest to them'.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 990, '[...] people should embrace and love him for the privilege of his father, just for the examples of good actions that his father performed'.

[...] el conde don Sancho non pudiendo soffrir el tuerto que los moros le fizieran en matarle su padre, llamo los leoneses et los nauarros por la postura que ouieran fecha con su padre de ayudarse unos a otros [...].⁴⁶

The pattern of inheritance outlined above is not peculiar to friendship, but it adjusts to the transmission of enmity as well. Take for example *EE* 714. The story refers to the imprisonment of King Sancho I of Navarre (d. 925) (whom the chronicler erroneously calls 'Garcia') by Count Fernán González. The Count detained him until the King's subjects (summoned by his daughter, Sancha) claimed his liberation. At their request the Count responded by mercifully freeing the King. After his liberation, however, the monarch went back to his dominions in Navarre, convened his court and proclaimed: ““amigos, uos sabedes como yo so desonrrado del conde Fernand Gonçalez, et la mi desondra uestra es; et bien sepades que o yo sere del uengado, o y porne el cuerpo””.⁴⁷

In the words of Gert Althoff, who analysed the same dynamics in Medieval Central Europe:

sworn friendships in pacts possessed the character of a treaty. The treaty on the one hand dealt with concrete arrangements. On the other hand, however, it brought with it obligations that applied fundamentally and generally: a friend was not permitted to cultivate ties with enemies of his friend.⁴⁸

The following anecdote, from Alfonso X's life, seems to gainsay such a principle of 'inheritance' of friendship in practice. The King received Écija from his father, but he donated it to his friend and military supporter Nuño González de Lara, who later became one of Alfonso X's favourites. Nevertheless, the Lara family had been considered enemy of Ferdinand III from the beginning of his reign, when the Laras had supported the Castilian enemy Alfonso IX of León. Surprisingly enough Alfonso X favoured the Laras.⁴⁹ This episode is significant since it opens another field to research, that is to say how friendship could be re-established also between former enemies and, in such cases, how it turned into an official statement of peace. This calls to mind one of

⁴⁶ *EE* 765, '[...] the Count don Sancho, who could not suffer the offence that the Moors made against him by killing his father, summoned the Leonese and the Navarrese in the name of the pact that they had signed with his father according to which they had to help each other [...]'.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 714, 'my friends, you know how I have been dishonoured by Count Fernán González, and my dishonour is your own dishonour; and you well know that either I will take my revenge on him, or I will leave my body there'.

⁴⁸ Althoff, 'Friendship Between States and People', p. 193.

⁴⁹ The relationships between the crown and the Laras constitute a very complex subject. See for example Simon R. Doubleday, *The Lara Family: Crown and Nobility in Medieval Spain* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

the Alfonsine laws according to which war was an indispensable instrument that, if well managed, would guide people to civil peace, since it ‘[...] aduce despues paz, de que viene asosegamiento, et folgura et amistad [...]’.⁵⁰ The same law explained which reasons might generate conflicts, highlighting two specific contingencies: first, the contentions which might arise between co-existent powers when one of them threatened the position of the other; second, the need of joining forces against foreigner invaders. In both cases war was the necessary premise without which no steady peace could be achieved. Among the typologies of war which are listed in the law – *justa*, *injusta* and *civilis* – there is one termed *plus quam civilis*, which refers to the hostilities which might break out between people of the same kinship whenever they were obliged to fight against each other in order to obey the rules imposed by the alliance or the natural submission that they had sworn to their lords (*SP* II:XXIII:I).⁵¹ To emphasize such a statement, the same law refers to the aforementioned contention between Caesar and Pompey and the bloody civil war which resulted from it: ‘[...] en la qual guerra los romanos guerreaban los padres contra los hijos, et los hermanos contra los hermanos, teniéndose los unos con Caesar et los otros con Pompeyo’.⁵² This example proves that pacts of friendship could sometimes overcome familial and blood ties. Therefore, the models of inheritance of friendships and enmities could be applied exclusively to those cases in which the parties shared the same good will, but only when there were not external factors which contributed to undermine the original link existing between them.

§ 3. 3 Gestures, Rituals and the Symbolic Value of Marriage

After having presented the typologies in which political friendships might develop, the interests on which they were based and the characters who were involved, another aspect to analyse, common to all those categories, is the solemnity and rituality characterizing the making of those agreements. Any political alliance was generally encompassed publicly and its terms and conditions were stipulated in front of witnesses who were summoned to testify its validity. The oral agreements, which predominated up to the twelfth century, were neither less influential nor powerful than the later written contracts and they even contained implicit norms, frequently derived from the customary laws and pertaining to tradition. Their ritualized forms recalled in most cases

⁵⁰ *SP* II:XXIII, ‘[...] it afterwards brings peace, from which result quiet, rest and friendship’.

⁵¹ This is a notion based on Lucan’s *Pharsalia* rather than a generally-recognized legal category.

⁵² *SP* II: XXIII:I, ‘[...] and in which war Romans fought, fathers against their sons, and brothers against their brothers, some of them supporting Caesar and others Pompey’.

the religious formulae, whose diffusion deeply affected the enactments of the secular spheres of medieval society.⁵³

An interesting reading is provided by *EE* 623 which narrates the Emperor Charlemagne's deeds in Spain. The Alfonsine chronicle is radically different from apologetic sources such as the *Vita Karoli Magni*,⁵⁴ which attributed the conquest of all the north of Spain, from France to Santiago, to the French Emperor. In contrast, the *EE* (whose sources for this passage are the Tudense, the Toledano, but also the *Cantar de Bernardo del Carpio*) presented a version of the facts according to which Charlemagne only managed to besiege Barcelona, Girona, Ausona and Urgel. For the sake of objectivity, however, even though in contrast with the aforementioned version by Rodrigo de Rada (which the *EE* estimated as the most reliable source) the narration by Lucas de Tuy is also mentioned and it narrates how Charlemagne, after the defeat at Roncesvalles:

[...] puso su amor el rey don Alfonso con el, et que fue Carlos en romeria a Sanctiagio et a sant Saluador de Ouiedo, et que confirmo el rey don Alfonso en todo su reyno con conseio de los estableçimientos de sant Esidro et los otros sanctos padres, et desi se torno Carlos para Francia con paz et bien, et quel dio el rey don Alfonso todos los quel catiuara en batalla, et leuolos consigo et aun otros dones muchos quel dio [...].⁵⁵

Secular and religious symbolism intermingled when it came to strengthen and reinforce the value of the alliance through the adoption of elements which appealed to the shared religious background of the contractors and of those who witnessed the agreements. The gestures concerning the act of subordination were prescribed also by the law – ‘en qué manera debe el pueblo honrar al rey nuevo luego que regnare’ – in which the subjects were taught to swear their vassalatic submission and their loyalty to their sovereign

⁵³ Althoff, ‘Amicitiae [Friendships] as Relationships Between States and People’, pp. 191-210; ‘The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages’, in *Medieval Concepts of The Past*, pp. 71-88; Sergio Bertelli, *The King's Body*, pp. 10-34. About the formulation of agreements of peace see the Chapter ‘The Making of the Treaty of Paris (1259) and the Royal Style’ in *Essays in Medieval Diplomacy and Administration*, ed. by Pierre Chaplais (London: Hambledon Press, 1981), pp. 235-253.

⁵⁴ Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni: The Life of Charlemagne*, ed. and trans. by Evelyn Scherabon Firchow, Edwin Hermann Zeydel (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1972; repr. Saarbrücken: AQ-Verlag, 1985); see also *Monumenta Germaniae historica: inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum*, ed. by G. H. Pertz (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1984).

⁵⁵ *EE* 623, ‘[...] he did not conquer other cities and places in Spain, except for those we have mentioned’; ‘[...] King Alfonso made friend with him, and Charlemagne went in pilgrimage to Santiago and to Saint Salvador of Oviedo, and Alfonso's power was confirmed in the entire reign, thanks to the establishments of Saint Isidro and all the other Holy Fathers, and then Charlemagne came back to France, with the achieved peace and good, and with the booty that King Alfonso gained in battle and gave him, and Charlemagne brought them with him together with many other gifts that he had received [...]’. See also Christopher Holdsworth, ‘Peacemaking in the Twelfth Century,’ *Anglo-Norman Studies* 19 (1997), 1-17.

‘besándole el pie et la mano en conocimiento de señorío, ó faziéndole otra humildat segunt costumbre de la tierra [...]’.⁵⁶ Moreover, since the promise had been made in the name of God and in respect of the Christian faith, it seemed to be divinely ordained and therefore even more praiseworthy.

No less important than fiefs, oaths of vassalage and donations, was the role played by marriage, which usually contributed to reinforce political alliances. As sanctioned in *SP IV*, the marital bond was simultaneously an institutional, social and spiritual link which tightened the partners together through love and loyalty. It cannot be denied, however, that there were pragmatic and material interests – which involved dowry, benefits claimed by inheritance and material profits – which intervened in wedding arrangements much more than the ideal values on which the relationship in itself should be based. By tracing the evolution of the history of marriage, it is possible to demonstrate how, during the Middle Ages and before, it was recurrently and customarily used as one of the most efficacious instruments to bolster an alliance between two families, dynasties and even kingdoms.⁵⁷ *EE* 128 narrates how Emperor Vespasian (AD 69-79) consolidated the truce with his erstwhile enemy Vitellius (who Vespasian later nominated consul after having received his oath of loyalty) by arranging an honourable marriage for his ally’s daughter. Such a manoeuvre represented a further statement of the Emperor’s goodwill aimed at halting the social turmoil which had been exacerbated by the enmity existing between the two.⁵⁸ In that specific situation marriage was used indirectly, since it compromised a third person – Vitellius’s daughter – who was related to one of the two protagonists. Inevitably it constituted a strategic chain linking even more closely Vitellius to the Emperor by thankfulness and reverent respect for the profitable marriage that the sovereign had arranged.

There were, admittedly, numerous pragmatic reasons behind a marriage, which might be celebrated in order to guarantee succession to the legitimate heirs, to maintain peace between the kingdoms that each consort represented, to gain military support in

⁵⁶ *SP II:XIII:XX*, ‘by kissing his foot and hand, in recognition of sovereignty, and by showing their humility in other ways according to the custom of the country [...]’.

⁵⁷ Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); David d’Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). An interesting reading for a comparison with the discipline of marriage as recorded by the English legal sources is Conor McCarthy, *Love, Sex and Marriage in the Middle Ages: A Sourcebook* (London, Routledge, 2004), pp. 93-128. See also Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, pp. 1-21 and 105-112; *Love, Marriage and Family in the Middle Ages: A Reader*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2001). With regard to the Iberian situation see Stone, *Marriage and Friendship in Medieval Spain; Marriage and Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. by Eukene Lacarra Lanz (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-58.

⁵⁸ *EE* 182, ‘[Vespasiano] desi a la fija de Vitellio so enemigo caso la muy noblement et diol muy grand algo a marauilla, et fizol todauia grand onra’ (‘therefore he arranged a noble wedding for Vitellius’s daughter and gave her an immense dowry, and revered her with great honour’).

case of enemies' attacks, to undertake offensive campaigns, to forge international alliances and to improve diplomatic and commercial relationships with foreign powers. The following examples from the *EE* clarify some of these aspects. A good start is the case of King Pelagius (718-737), who gave his daughter Esmeralda in marriage to the Duke Pedro of Cantabria, as a reward for the help that the Duke had offered him during the campaigns against the Muslims (*EE* 575). Two centuries later at the court of Sancho I of León, Fernán González received advice from the Queen, according to whom he should marry her niece, who was also King García of Navarre's daughter 'et dixol que por esta razon aurie todo bien et todo amor entrell et el rey de Nauarra, et serie casamiento muy bueno pora ell'.⁵⁹ The union, advertised as extremely favourable for the Count, turned out to be a source of trouble for both the parties. These consequences were not unexpected, at least by the Queen, who had voluntarily pushed towards the wedding: '[...] faziel tod aquello con enganno, por desamor et grand enemizdad que tenie en coraçon'.⁶⁰

The policy of marriage was also adopted in order to re-establish alliances which had been destroyed by contentions and rivalries. A case in point was the delicate situation between King Sancho III of Navarre and Vermudo III, whose 'desamor' was inflamed by the fact that Sancho III had been accused of stealing part of the dominions of León which legitimately belonged to Vermudo. Downhearted by the continuous conflicts and tensions, his wise counsellors agreed in advising Vermudo as follows:

[...] conseiaron a este rey don Vermudo que diesse su hermana donna Sancha, [...], por mugier a don Fernando, fijo deste rey don Sancho; et por debdo que auie entrellos estonces, aurién paz unos con otros.

The wedding was defined '[...] carrera de paz et de amor por aqui entrel et el rey don Sancho de Castiella'.⁶¹ The 'buenos omnes' behaved as loyal friends of King Vermudo, by advising him of the value that the wedding policy could have to vouchsafe peace and establish future agreements. Wise counsellors also participated actively in planning the union between Alfonso VIII of Castile and Berenguela, Alfonso IX of León's daughter,

⁵⁹ *EE* 709, 'and she said that in this way he could have all the best and the love of the king of Navarre, and that it would be an excellent marriage for him'.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, '[...] she did it treacherously, pushed by the hatred and enmity which lay in her bosom'.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 800, '[...] they advised don Vermudo to give his daughter Sancha in wife to don Fernando, King Sancho's son; and for that agreement, there would be peace between them'; '[...] the way of peace and love from that moment between him and King Sancho of Castile'.

by playing the role of direct intermediaries ‘omnes grandes et buenos que andidieron en medio’.⁶²

As emphasized in *EE* 1004, marriage was seen, in some cases, as the wisest solution to solve a dispute between kingdoms:

[...] vnos de los grandes omnes de los regnos, temiendo los dannos et los peligros de la guerra, metieronse en medio, et fallaron carrera de abenencia et de amor et que podrie esto uenir por casamiento, [...].

The counsellors’ advice describes the advantages of the wedding which, in fact, contributed to turn the sovereigns’ enmity into a pacific relationship which assumed progressively the connotations of a proper friendship. The unequivocal presentation of those results is given in the same chapter of the *EE* which depicts the King of León, Alfonso IX, as follows:

[...] estonçes enemigo, maguer que parient, mas ya agora so yerno et amigo [...]. Et la paç firmada entrellos como entre padre et fiyo, quedaron las guerras et los destroymientos entrellos et sus yentes et sus regnos por algunos dias.⁶³

After having analysed whether and how the relationships defined as political friendships suited the general rules and parameters of *amicitia*, as well as the peculiarities and forms according to which they were established, the following section will explore the social identities and roles of the individuals involved.

§ 4. The King as a Friend and the Friends of the King

Among the individuals involved in a political relationship, the king was the principal signatory, around whom numerous alliances were established. For this reason in this section attention will be devoted to the figure of the king in his role of both God’s and his people’s friend. *SP* II discusses kingship and describes the way in which, on the one hand, both kings and emperors should behave towards God, their families, their courts

⁶² *EE* 997, ‘important and good men who worked as intermediaries’.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 1004, ‘some of the most important men of the reign, led by the fear of dangers caused by a possible war, intervened, and they thought how a peaceful and benevolent agreement could be achieved through marriage, [...]’; ‘[...]once enemy, as well as relative, but now he is son-in-law and friend [...]. And the peace signed between them as between father and son; war and destruction ceased between them, between their people and their reigns for some days’.

and their subjects. On the other hand, the same law prescribes how all the aforementioned categories should mutually accomplish the same duties toward the king:

otrosi dixieron los sabios que el mayor poderio et mas complido que el emperador puede haber de fecho en su señorio es quando él ama á su gente et él es amado della, et mostraron que se puede ganar et ayuntar este amor haciendo el emperador justicia derechamente á los que la hobieren menester [...].⁶⁴

In order to gain and preserve people's love, support and respect, monarchs not only had to behave rightfully and wisely, but they also had to act as powerful defenders of their realms and, most of all, of their subjects. The latter were ordered by the law to prove their allegiance to their king, since God had chosen him as a secular intermediary to rule on His behalf.

But juridical admonitions did not always coincide with practice; in fact, sovereigns and lords also adopted formulae of *captatio benevolentiae* to address their followers in order to gain their benevolence. A few examples will suffice here to clarify this point. One of them is *EE* 565, in which it is recounted that King Pelagius addressed his army with the appellation of 'amigos' in order to secure their loyalty. By delving back in time, another case in point is *EE* 102, concerning the case of Pompey, who tried to create an army from a numerous host of people of different ethnical and geographical origins, who were summoned to help him against the advancing forces led by Caesar: 'quando Pompeyo oyo lo que Julio Cesar fazie en Espanna, punno el otrosi de se guisar et de auer amigos quel ayudassen contra el; [...]'.⁶⁵

Unlike the rare cases of 'amistad pura', all the other agreements aimed at achieving pragmatic goals were destined to expire, including those involving the sovereigns. The latter risked the favour of their subjects, if they either behaved malevolently or did not reward properly those who deserved it. Even the emperors, despite their uncontested superiority over all the other social parties, had to behave wisely and liberally in order to keep their people's allegiance and subordination. Similarly, kings:

⁶⁴ *SP* II:I:III, 'moreover, wise men have declared that the greatest and most perfect authority that an emperor can exercise de facto in his dominions, is when he loves his people and he is beloved by them. They showed that his love could be gained and increased through the emperor administering exact justice to such as had need of it; [...]'.

⁶⁵ *EE* 102, 'when Pompey heard what Julius Caesar was doing in Spain, he tried to get prepared and to make friends who could help him against Caesar; [...]'.

deben siempre mas guardar la pro comunal de su pueblo que la suya misma, porque el bien et la riqueza dellos es como suyo, et otrosi deben amar et honrar á los mayores, et á los medianos et á los menores, á cada uno segunt su estado [...] et meter amor et acuerdo entre su gente [...].⁶⁶

The commandments of the law leave no doubt about the attitudes that the monarchs should adopt towards their subjects, who were individuals who deserved to be treated according to their personal and social merits, as well as according to the types of relationships that they enjoyed with the sovereigns.

The fundamental principle expressed by the law is the mutual obligation for both lords and subjects to exchange love, loyalty and respect. According to this rule and despite their broadly recognized superiority, kings were not allowed to claim their people's friendship if their own behaviour was not exemplary. What remains ambiguous is whether the subjects ended up loving their lords voluntarily or they rather chose to fulfil such a commitment because if they showed reluctance to do so, they would risk condemnation and punishment. Such a question is more than legitimate if one considers that, in Alfonso X's own era, those who proved to be the monarchs' virtuous friends and counsellors were respected and even materially rewarded for their honourable behaviour, while those accused of treachery were severely punished (like Alfonso X's brother, Prince Fadrique, who was executed by order of the same sovereign in 1277) or, in the most lenient cases, exiled (such as his brother Prince Enrique).

The *EE* is rich with examples concerning the forms of friendship between the kings and their subjects which suggest that the model imposed by the Alfonsine law was also seen to apply to cases of ancient and contemporary history. For example, as originally recorded by Suetonius and reported in *EE* 186, Emperor Titus is described as being '[...] folgura et amor de tod el linage de los omnes que fueron en su tiempo, ca fue marauilloso en toda manera de bondades; fue onrado de todas buenas costumbres'. Titus's example supplies an excellent proof of the necessity for any ruler to be loyal to his people and very careful in selecting his friends: 'siempre escogio por sus amigos omnes de buenas costumbres [...]'.⁶⁷

An analogous description is given of Emperor Trajan's attitudes 'e fue Traiano muy franque et muy compannon a sus amigos, et amo mucho los caualleros, et fue muy

⁶⁶ *SP* II:I:IX, 'they should always consider the common good of their people rather than their own, because the prosperity and wealth of the former is, as it were, their own. They should also love and honour those of superior rank, those of moderate station, and those who are inferior, each according to his condition [...] foster love and harmony among their people'.

⁶⁷ *EE* 186, '[...] ease and love all of the men of his time, he was marvellously endowed with any form of virtue and good manners'; 'he always chose good and honourable men as friends'.

manso contra los cibdadanos, et muy franque en soltar los pechos a las cibdades; [...].⁶⁸

The reasons behind the benevolent and righteous approach adopted by Trajan might be discovered through his own words, reported in *EE* 192:

[...] cuentan del las estorias que por que era tan bueno et tan mesurado et tan compannero de los omnes, et los affazie tan mucho assi, quel preguntaron un dia sus priuados et sus amigos por que lo fazie; et el dixoles que tal emperador querie el seer a los que no auien dignidades ni sennorios, quales solie el querer, al tiempo que las no auie, quel fuessen los otros emperadores.⁶⁹

He explicitly stated that his actions were the same that he had expected from his predecessors, when he still had not gained the imperial crown. The Alfonsine scribes made Trajan's deeds fit the teaching proposed by their patron, according to whom a sovereign should not take his people's allegiance for granted, but he should rather put all his effort to obtain their benevolence.

In the list of Roman emperors regarded as outstanding lords as well as friends of their people also Flavius Jovianus represents a remarkable case: 'e por la bondat de los emperadores que regnaron en pos el, fue contado entre los dios, no por fechos que el fiziesse, mas por que era muy compannon a todos'.⁷⁰ A further example might be seen in the narrative of *EE* 985 in which Sancho III of Castile is depicted as '[...] liberal era contra los amigos, liberal contra todos, derecho en los suyos et de justicia et de piadad de hermano, fascas piadoso contra ellos como hermano, et omildoso contra las eglesias, et temient a Dios'.⁷¹

Once again the idea that mutuality was regarded as the *sine qua non* condition for all the relationships involving the king is highlighted. An explanatory case is that concerning the ruler of Valencia al-Qadir and his *alguazil mayor* (prime minister) Aboeça Abenlupon. Their relationship was unsteady, owing to the continuous shift of the counsellor's behaviour between moments of distrust and others of devotional loyalty. In the end, however, Aboeça opted definitively for allegiance to his lord and, therefore, he earned the King's favour and benevolence as a reward for his enactment:

⁶⁸ *EE* 192, 'Trajan was very liberal and a good companion of his friends, and he deeply loved his knights, and he was very merciful with his citizens, and very honest in collecting tributes from the cities; [...].'

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 192, 'as it is narrated, since he was a good and balanced man, and a good friend of all the men, and many considered him as such, one day his counsellors and friends asked him why he behaved as such; and he replied that he wanted to be a good emperor for those who had neither a status nor a lord, as he desired that the other emperors would have behaved in times when they did not'.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 349, 'and for the goodness of the emperors who reigned after him, he was welcomed between the divinities, not for what he did, but because he was a good friend for everybody'.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 985, '[...] he was liberal towards his friends, towards everybody, and righteous in his affairs and honest and merciful as a brother, even pitiful to them as a brother, and humble towards the Church, and God-fearing'.

Quando uio el rey que tan de coraçon le siruie et tan lealmientre, fizol mas su priuado et onrrol mas, et asseguro con pleyto et con yura et con cartas quel nunca le toldrie aquella priuança nin le camiarie por otro ninguno, et que non farie fecho ninguno menos de mostrarlo a el primero, et dessi como el touiesse por bien que assi farie, et que assi como el le siruie lealmientre en todas las cosas, que assi querie el que fuesse sabidor en todos los sus fechos ante que el ninguna cosa fiziesse; que porque ell official que assi fuesse leal a su sennor, lealdad et mucho bien fazer recibiesse de su sennor.⁷²

It is safe to assert that kings had the right to be fully loved, revered and respected by their subjects only if they behaved moderately and benevolently towards them. If that be so, another corollary might be inferred: sovereigns who did not manage to become friends of their people proved, indirectly, to be unfair rulers. Both the Alfonsine law and chronicles confirm such a theory. To clarify this point the story of Abdelmelic, the ruler appointed as *mayordomo de sennor* (administrator) to manage the peninsular dominions on behalf of the caliph Ysca Amiramomellin is interesting to cite:

[...] fue loco et garrido et astragador de las yentes ca non cataua poco nin mucho por el pro de la tierra, nin daua nada por ello, e falagaua las yentes en fintosamiente con sus palabras engannosas; et demostrauales la cosa que era derecho, et faziale despues el tuerto; e alli o los asseguraua et les prometie amistad, alli los crebantaua muy mal; et en logar de mantenerlos en iusticia, conffondielos et achualos en mal logar.⁷³

The Muslim delegate represented the anti-type of the perfect ruler. Moreover, the Alfonsine chronicle stresses the antithesis existing between his malevolent actions and the righteous preaching that he delivered. Such a contradiction recalls the moral and legal principle according to which any sovereign had to impose norms of good behaviour while demonstrating them practically. Alfonso X, for instance, proposed a series of laws that he personally was obliged to respect both legally and morally:

⁷² *EE* 878, ‘when the King saw how amicably and loyally he served him, he made him his closest confidant and he honoured him even more, and assured him with a fief, an oath and an official document, that he would never deprive him of that privilege and that he would not exchange him with anyone else, and that he would not do anything before consulting him, and that he would do only what the other considered the most rightful thing to do, and as much as he served him loyally in everything, in the same way he wanted to let him know everything before doing it; because the counsellor who was so loyal to his lord, had to receive loyalty and great benevolence in return’.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 586, ‘[...] he was mad and pleasant and dangerous for the people, and he did not think about the good of his land and he did not give anything for it, and he flattered people unfaithfully with his treacherous words; and he showed them the right things to do, but then he acted contrarily; and he reassured them and promised his friendship, and then he damaged them badly; and instead of maintaining them in justice, he confused them and brought them to the wrong way’.

todos los hombres deben seer tenudos de obedecer las leyes, et mayormientre los reyes por estas razones; [...] Otrosi el pueblo las debe obedecer [...].⁷⁴

El rey debe guardar las leyes como á su honra et á su fechora, et el pueblo como á su vida et su guarda, et por esto todos son tenudos de las guardar tambien los de las órdenes como los seglares, tambien los altos como los baxos, tambien los ricos como los pobres, tambien las mugieres como los varones.⁷⁵

Nobody, from the higher to the lower ranks, was exonerated from fulfilling the commandments of the law, not even the sovereign.

In order to complete this juridical and historical portrait of kingship, the following section will be devoted to analysing their relationships with their closest court members. Mutual interest seems to be the keyword to understand the nature of those connections: in fact, sovereigns needed loyal counsellors who might provide administrative, military and political advice, and, symmetrically, the selected candidates would enjoy the benefits provided by such a powerful position at court.⁷⁶ The characteristics which any counsellor had to possess, in order to deserve such a title, were the same required for any good friend, that is to say *buen seso* (wisdom), loyalty, ability to keep a secret as well as lack of any malice, cowardice and malevolent thoughts. The law remarked on the indispensability of those qualities by prescribing, for instance, how a monarch should confer with his counsellors before making any decision:

Et este consejo debe tomar con homes que hayan en sí dos cosas; la primera que sean sus amigos, la segunda que sean bien entendudos et de buen seso: ca si tales non fuesen, poderle hie ende avenir grant peligro, porque nunca los que á home desaman le pueden bien aconsejar nin lealmente [...].⁷⁷

The following list of examples from the *EE* confirms the aforementioned legal statements:

⁷⁴ *SP* I:I:XI, ‘everybody should obey the laws, and above all the kings for these reasons; [...]. Also the subjects must obey them’.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* I:I:XII, ‘the king should observe the laws as he would his honour and his handiwork, and respect his people as he would do with his own life and safety, and for this reason all the people should obey them as well, religious as well as secular figures, the highest as well as the lowest ranks, the rich as well as the poor, women as well as men’. This quotation, together with the previous one, have been taken from a variant version of the text, presented as such in the edition adopted.

⁷⁶ S. Barton, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 104-147.

⁷⁷ *SP* II:IX:V, ‘he should take this advice from men who posses two qualifications; first, they must be his friends, second, they must be of good understanding and endowed with prudence. For if there are not persons of this description, he will incur great danger from them, for those who dislike a man can never advise him well or faithfully’.

Este rey Mitridates, assi cuemo cuentan las estorias, fue omne de grand saber et de grand conseio, et desque sopo et regno, siempre ouo consigo philosophos et omnes sabios.⁷⁸

[...] Vlpiano conseiador dell emperador Aexandre en los juyzios, omne muy noble et muy sabidor, et grand maestro en derecho [...].⁷⁹

During the Roman era, the senators were the highest figures in power who influenced the Emperor's decisions since they were in charge of advising him:

E Julio Cesar auie en la cort muchos ayudadores que eran de su part e del so uando, e tenien con el descubiertamiente; e trabaios estonces por si et por sus amigos de enbargar el fecho de Ponpeyo.⁸⁰

Despite their appointments as royal advisors, the senators did not gain any lordly title which could have undermined the existing balance of powers:

Pero estos senadores no fueron metudos en cuenta de sennores, pues que no eran dados sinon por ueedores e por conseieros [...] Et los senadores et el comun, pues que non quisieron reyes, fallaron por so acuerdo que les cumplie de auer entre si algunos omnes buenos por mayores qui los conseiassen en la cibdat et en huest et en todos sos fechos; et escogieron daquellos que uieron que eran mas guisados, et fizieron la priuança et el poder della cuemo en manera de sennoria, pero en razon de conseiar et no mas.⁸¹

All of the cases mentioned up to this point have demonstrated that the attempt to draw a distinction between the figures of counsellors and friends, as well as to define their respective areas of competence are not easy tasks and they are complicated further by the fact that even the vocabulary adopted frequently coincided, as the following quotation corroborates: 'et era entonce el rey Agripa en Roma con ell emperador [Gayo Calligula], et era mucho su priuado et su amigo'.⁸² In contrast, King Vermudo III, at the beginning of his reign, was guided by God and by 'buenos consegeros que auie quel

⁷⁸ *EE* 84, 'this King Mithridates, as history tells us, was a very wise and good man who, since he came to power, always had with him philosophers and wise men'.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 255, '[...] Ulpianus was the Emperor Alexander's counsellor, a very noble and wise man, and a great master of law [...]']

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 86, 'and Julius Caesar had many helpers at court that he appreciated and they supported him and were officially his trustees; for this reason he decided for his sake and for the sake of his friends to undertake a mission against Pompey'.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 108, 'but these senators were not regarded as lords, since they only were considered witnesses and counsellors [...]. And both the senators and the citizens, since they did not want any king, agreed to elect some wise men among them who could represent them and advise the community and the people in all their deeds; and they chose among them the most excellent individuals, and they did not give them the privilege of lordship, but only that of counsellorship'.

⁸² *Ibid.* 166, '[...] and there was then in Rome King Agrippa with the Emperor [Gaius Caligula] and he was a very close private and friend [...]']

guiauan'.⁸³ Among all the members of the court, the kings addressed only the counsellors with the appellation of 'friends', a title which was always used in a univocal direction, since the subjects referred to the monarch by using reverential titles.

Other noteworthy elements to study are the identities of such wise counsellors and their distinctive features and competences. Not only were they wise by nature, but they were also erudite and endowed with a solid cultural background which even occasionally exceeded that of a sovereign. An interesting instance is reported in *EE* 467, about the Arabic King Abdalla who '[...] auie muy grand companna con un judio que sabie mucho de la sciencia a que llaman estrenomia, que era muy entendudo et muy sabio en la ley de los judios et de los cristianos'.⁸⁴

Being well-learned, wise and expert in manoeuvring the mechanisms of the political settings, the counsellors played also the role of diplomatic intermediaries, above all in cases of war or whenever an external threat menaced the social and political stability of the reign. With regard to this aspect a significant case is *EE* 761 which narrates the events which happened during the reign of Alfonso IV of León (925-931), who 'mantouo su regno muy bien por conseio de los sabios por quien se guiaua'.⁸⁵ Habitually the sovereigns trusted their counsellors in making decisions of fundamental importance both for themselves and for the future of their realms. That was the case of Alfonso IV, who was inclined to follow his trustees' advice regarding the crisis with the Muslim Abdalla to whom, according to his counsellors, the Leonese king should give his sister Teresa as wife:

et fizieronlo ellos por fazer al rey don Alffonso auer paz con aquel moro Abdalla rey de Toledo, et de la otra parte que aquel rey Abdalla fazie semeiança que era cristiano, pero encubiertamente, et auie yurado ya et prometido al rey don Alffonso de ayudarle contra los otros moros a quequier quel fuesse mester.⁸⁶

However, the political alliance, aimed at establishing mutual defence and territorial protection between the two rulers, failed miserably when the princess refused to marry a believer of a different faith. The influence on wedding policy was one aspect of the role that the counsellors played in orienting the kings' decisions and, therefore, the fate of their kingdoms. The example below, about the succession to the throne after Sancho III

⁸³ *EE* 782, 'he had good counsellors who guided him'.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 467, '[...] he was very good friend with a Jew who knew a great deal about a science called astronomy, who was very learned and wise in the Jewish as well as in the Christian law'.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 761, 'he maintained his reign masterfully thanks to the wise counsellors who guided him'.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 'and they did it so that King Alfonso could have peace with the Muslim Abdallah, King of Toledo, and on the other hand King Abdallah declared to be Christian, but secretly, and he had already sworn and promised to King Alfonso to help him against all the other Muslims that he wanted to defeat'.

of Navarre's death (1035), helps to expand this point. *EE* 787 tells us that since his adolescent son, the infant don Garçia, needed to get married, all the nobles of the reign met to decide and, subsequently, to advise the young descendant about the lady to marry and the terms that their marital agreement should contain: '[...] ayuntaronse los altos omnes buenos de Castiella, et ouieron su conseio de comol casassen'.⁸⁷

Marital dispositions were not the only matters on which royal counsellors had the power to say the last word. They also took active part in the *cortes*, as the following example about the assembly summoned by Ferdinand I of León-Castile after the siege of Coimbra attests: 'despues desto aun fizo sus cortes en Leon, et ouo su conseio con sus ricos omnes et sus omnes buenos de la corte de yr sobre los moros que morauan en el regno de Saragoça [...]'.⁸⁸ Another example of the administrative duties undertaken by the king's counsellors appears in *EE* 590 which narrates the rebellion of the Arabic population against the power of Yuçaf, King of Córdoba: 'este Yuçaf fizo escriuir en el libro publico de los pechos et de las rendas de la tierra por conseio de los altos omnes de su cort et de los otros del pueblo, [...]'.⁸⁹

Interestingly, although very rarely, a person from outside the courtly circle was allowed to act as a friend and counsellor of the king. To illustrate this point it is worth quoting *CSM* 265 in which the story of John of Damascus is narrated. The young scholar was appreciated for the good reputation he had gained; in fact, once he entered the order of Saint Benedict and dwelled in a monastery in Rome, the Emperor went to visit him and ask for his advice:

[...] e ýano y
 veer amead', e el estand'aly,
 seu consell'oya senpr'e seu sermon.
 [...]
 E sempre lle consellava que con Deus
 se tevesse muit'e des i aos seus
 sempre ben fezess', e pobres romeus
 ouessen mui gran part' e mui gran quinnon. (Lines, 56-64)⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *EE* 787, '[...] all the best and highest ranked men of Castile joined together, and they decided the terms of his wedding'.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 807, 'after this, he summoned the *Cortes* in León, and he asked the counsel of his magnates and the wise men at court about the attack against the Muslims who dwelled the kingdom of Saragossa'.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 590, 'this Yuçaf commissioned to write the book of tributes and incomes of his reign, following the advice of the most honourable men at court and among the other people'.

⁹⁰ *CSM* 265, '[...] he went to see him there often, and while he was there, he listened to his counsel and his instruction. John always advised the emperor to respect God and to do good to his subjects and to grant generous charity to the poor and the pilgrims.'

At this point, the practice of keeping secrets has to be examined carefully since it represents one of the fundamental elements that both friends and counsellors seemed to have in common. In fact, a counsellor was regarded as the repository of the king's trust and in order to fulfil his demands he had to preserve the information disclosed to him confidentially, which might concern either the sovereign's private life or the public affairs of his reign.⁹¹ A few examples are enlightening: first of all, *EE* 761 in which it is told how King Alfonso V 'mantouo su regno muy bien por conseio de los sabios por quien se guiaua';⁹² second, the aforementioned *EE* 975, in which it is told how the wise counsellors helped Alfonso VII in a personal choice, by advising him about the lady he should marry and the practical benefits that he should get from that union: 'et ell emperador razono tod el fecho ante los omnes buenos [...]'.⁹³

Dissolute counsellors, as well as individuals tied to the king by parental or blood ties, who made friendships in order to pursue their ambitious projects at the expenses of the sovereign, were the worst snakes in the garden of the court, for they voluntarily threatened the stability of royal authority. The nobles' rebellion against Alfonso X, occurring between 1272 and 1274, as recorded in the *Crónica de Alfonso X*, is a significant case in point.⁹⁴ On that occasion not only did the nobles betray the loyal friendship that the monarch had extended to them, but they also strengthened a pact of alliance against him. Interestingly enough, the record of those events is echoed in the verses of *CSM* 235:

Hũa vez dos ricos-omes | que, segundo que eu sei,
se juraron contra ele | todos que non fosse Rey,
seend'os mais seus parentes, | que divid' é natural.
[...]

E demais, sen tod'aquesto, | fazendo-lles muito ben,
o que lle pouco graçian | e non tñyan en ren; [...]. (Lines 21-26)⁹⁵

⁹¹ The topic of secret keeping, above all when it regards the king, is regulated in *SP* II:V:XXVI and *SP* II:XIII:XXVI.

⁹² *EE* 761, 'he masterfully administrated the reign thanks to the advice of the wise counsellors who guided him'.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 980, 'and the Emperor discussed the whole matter in front of his wise counsellors [...]'.
⁹⁴ *Crónica de Alfonso X: según el Ms. II/2777 de la Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Madrid*, ed. M. González Jiménez (Murcia: Real Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1999), Chapters XX-LVIII, pp. 60-170.

⁹⁵ *CSM* 235, 'one time some of the nobles, I know it to be true, joined in a plot against him so that he would not be king. Most of them were related to him by blood ties. [...] Furthermore, he had been very generous with them, and they were ungrateful and scorned it as nought'.

Even if a monarch possessed a noble soul and behaved amicably, his position was neither safe nor unassailable; for this reason private and official agreements were needed both between rulers and, in some circumstances, even between them and their subjects. Unquestionably, however, the latter were those who most necessitated the strengthening of those pacts, without which they could not even receive any grain of human mercy. That happened, for instance, to the prisoners of Emperor Tiberius Caesar who implored him to let them die rather than being tortured. The answer that they received was that since they were not even friends, they did not deserve such an indulgent act of piety: “no eres aun mi amigo que te yo aquesso faga”.⁹⁶

To draw a conclusion from this first section dedicated to political friendship it might be argued that the general trends and the main characteristics of political agreements recalled, at least in principle, the fundamental values and rules of pure friendship. However, these connections proved to be strictly ruled by pragmatic interests, even if the involved parties frequently adopted conventional gestures and rituals in order to ennoble them.

⁹⁶ *EE* 157, “you are not even my friend to do it for you”.

Chapter VI

Political Friendship II

§ 1. Friendships With Believers of a Different Faith

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, once the process of Christian expansion had reached its apogee, most of the Muslim rulers of al-Andalus had to kneel to the Christian monarchs, swear vassalatic oaths and pay tributes in order to maintain their possessions. In some cases the Muslim rulers were even called to help the Christian sovereigns in the campaigns that they held either against other Muslim rebels or against other Christian monarchs who had claimed, legitimately or not, part of the Iberian dominions. With this in mind, this second chapter on political friendship aims at analysing a specific range of political and military relationships which were established not just between Christian rulers and their subjects but also between representatives of different faiths.

The *EE* is rich with episodes which describe the contingencies and reasons which prompted the Christian lords to befriend the Muslims. Those motivations were either personal or political, such as the safety of a kingdom. One of the first examples which appear in the *EE* is about Silo, King of Asturias (774-783) who, in order to impose his power over Galicia:

Este Silo luego en comienço de su regnado puso sus pazes con los moros, et fue sobre Galizia que se le alçara, et lidio con ellos de la tierra [...] et uenciolos, et metiolos so el su sennorio.¹

After Silo's death, as recounted in *EE* 605, his son Alfonso II was in line to succeed to the throne, but his uncle Mauregato 'cresciol soberuia por alçarse rey' and for this reason signed an alliance with the Muslims to seize his nephew's power: 'e fuesse pora los moros, et puso su pleyto con los moros, et demandoles ayuda et prometioles que los seruirie lealmientre sil ayudassen a ganar el regno de su sobrino'.² His Muslim allies respected the pact by supporting the advance of Mauregato with their military forces,

¹ *EE* 603, 'this Silo, then, at the beginning of his reign made friends with the Moors, and went towards Galicia, which had rebelled against him, and fought its dwellers [...] and he won against them, and he subjugated them and imposed his lordship'.

² *Ibid.* 605, 'the ambition of becoming king grew in him'; 'and he addressed the Muslims, and he made an agreement with them, and he called them for aid and he promised to serve them loyally if they would help him in obtaining his nephew's reign'.

thanks to which he gained the throne of Asturias, while Alfonso II fled to Navarre. Although the main goal which had pushed Mauregato to sign the alliance with the Muslims had been successfully achieved, he tried to preserve the agreement: ‘e el por auer siempre ell amor de los moros, fizo muchas cosas que eran contra Dios et contra su ley: [...]. E por esto que el fazie fue aborrescido de Dios et de los omnes’.³ In the case of Mauregato, the creation and maintenance of bonds of political and military friendships predominated and overstepped the moral rules that any good Christian, as friend of God, should respect and for this reason he was inevitably punished.

Other historical events presented in the Alfonsine chronicles echoed the idea of a strict correlation between personal interests and immoral agreements signed with those who were openly recognized as enemies of the true faith. An example is *EE* 565, which tells of the *alcalde* of Asturias, Manuça, who ‘era cristiano, mas pero auie yura fecha con los moros et era de su parte [...]’. Guided by his sensual passion – since he fell in love with King Pelagius’ sister – Manuça conjured a plot to marry the lady and in order to succeed ‘[...] puso por ende con el su amistad engannosamientre’.⁴ By professing his friendship, though actually false, he gained Pelagius’ trust and managed to convince him to go to Córdoba. The stratagem was useful to gain time, so that during the King’s absence, Manuça could marry his sister.⁵ After the King’s return, once he discovered Manuça’s offence, he tried to bring his sister back to Asturias, but the Muslims, who had signed an agreement with Manuça, planned to kidnap her again:

Los moros luego que llegaron a Asturias, quisieran le prender a aleue; mas sopolo el luego por un su amigo que ge lo fue dezir yl conseio que pues que non tenie armas nin poder con que se les pudiesse defender que se fuesse su uia.⁶

King Pelagius, warned by a friend about the forthcoming steps that the Muslims would take against him, managed to reach Asturias and claim his people’s aid (by naming them *amigos*) in the name of their common faith.

³ *EE* 605, ‘and in order to have always the Muslims’ goodwill, he did many things which were against God and against His law [...]. And for those actions he was disdained both by God and by all men’. For example, it is narrated how Mauregato placed the young women, daughters of his *infazones*, at the Muslims’ mercy, so that they could do with them what they wanted.

⁴ *Ibid.* 565, ‘he was Christian, but he had sworn his loyalty to the Moors and therefore he was on their side’; ‘[...] he made friends with him, treacherously’.

⁵ José-Luis Martín, *Amor, cuenstión de señorio y otros estudios zamoranos* (Zamora: Centro Asociado de la Uned, 1993), pp. 9-10.

⁶ *EE* 565, ‘once the Muslims reached Asturias they wanted to take her back; but he discovered the plot thanks to a friend of his who told him that and suggested that he should flee since he was without any weapons and means by which he could defend himself’.

Another interesting case of friendship signed in order to achieve a personal goal is that of the brave knight Bernardo del Carpio, who had fought alongside Alfonso III ‘el Magno’ in all his campaigns against the Muslims, but in the end ‘puso su amistad con los moros quel ayudassen, et que daquel castiello guerrearie ell al rey don Alffonso et correrle ye toda la tierra’.⁷ The alliance, which included his magnates and his army (that he demagogically addressed with the appellative of *amigos*), was aimed at obtaining their military support to fulfil a personal task: the rescue of his father from the imprisonment, a confinement imposed by King Alfonso III in order to respect his ancestor Alfonso the Chaste’s will, enemy of the Count.

Up to this point we have come across some alliances between representatives of the different faiths inspired by personal motivations and aimed at resolving familial and personal issues. But now the focus will be drawn to explore cases of friendships agreed with the aim of seizing and reinforcing the contractors’ political authority. Most of the cases which adhere to this category share one peculiarity: the characters who signed a pact with the Muslim rulers were usually betrayers of the Christian monarchy that they should have served. However, they did not work to dismantle the Christian monarchical institution, but they rather aimed either at improving their own position within it, or at seizing power for themselves. The events concerning the treachery supposedly committed by Roy Blasquez at the expense of his nephews, the *siete infantes de Lara*, are a case in point. One can read in *EE* 738 how Roy Blasquez planned a trap for the *siete infantes* and tried to involve al-Mansur, ruler of Córdoba, in his plot. The Count wrote a letter to his Muslim ally in which he explained how to kill them and to assassinate even the messenger. However, Roy Blasquez was not in the position to control the Muslim ruler, who was neither his subject nor his vassal; ergo, the only point on which he could rely was the pact of mutual friendship that they had formerly agreed: “A uos Almançor, de mi, Roy Blasquez, salut como a amigo que amo de todo mi coraçon”.⁸

Nevertheless, such a declaration of goodwill did not reflect the real intentions of the speaker. In fact, a more pragmatic motivation lied behind this agreement. Al-Mansur was reminded that he would have the lands of the Christians at his mercy if he helped the Count. However, the Muslim behaved magnanimously (he did not kill the messenger, for example, but he mercifully decided only to imprison him) and he

⁷ *EE* 654, ‘[...] he made friends with the Muslims in order to be helped by them, and from that castle he would fight King Alfonso and invade his lands’.

⁸ *Ibid.* 738, “You Al-Mansur, receive from me, Roy Blasquez, all my respect since you are a friend that I love with all my heart”.

demonstrated all of the qualities which his Christian counterpart lacked completely. This is not enough, however, to affirm that in the Alfonsine works there was a positive propaganda in favour of the Muslim values against the Christians'. As all the former examples have demonstrated, there is better reason to conclude that all the acts of treachery were regarded as the worst sins that anybody, of any religion and ethnic origins, might commit. In fact, across the spectrum of human values, a traitor was considered much worse than a Muslim, even though the latter could not escape the 'guilt' of being a religious dissenter.

Nonetheless, friendships signed with Muslim allies could cause the disappointment and enmity of other Christian monarchs, as *EE* 694 suggests. This chronicle tells of Sancho I of Navarre, who was accused by King Ramiro II of betrayal, not just for having attacked his dominions in Castile, but most of all because '[...] por fazerle mayor mal, pusistes uuestra amistad con los moros'.⁹ Admittedly, most of these treaties which had been agreed with the Muslim rulers were instruments adopted in order to safeguard the frontiers of the Christian kingdoms. With regard to this point, the case of Count Fernán González presented in *EE* 707 is of interest. The *EE* tells us that in 958 the Count, together with all the *ricos omnes* of León, planned a conspiracy aimed at enthroning his son-in-law Ordoño IV, usurping the crown of King Sancho I, who was obliged to flee to Pamplona. Later, assisted by his grandmother Toda Aznárez and his uncle García Sánchez I of Navarre, Sancho managed to regain the throne, but such cooperation was not sufficient to defeat Ordoño IV. Given that situation, the most appealing option was to recur to Abd al-Rahman III, to whom Sancho I paid homage and swore his friendship: 'el rey don Sancho tomo el conseio de su tio, et enuio estonces luego poner pazes con Abderrahmen'.¹⁰ The *EE* continues by reporting the positive outcome of that friendship, which indirectly influenced also Sancho I's personal life. In fact, treated by an Arab physician, Sancho overcame his obesity (for which he had been dubbed as 'el Gordo') which helped him in the battlefield. The re-invigorated Sancho advanced with his Muslim-Christian army over the territories of León, regained power and forced the usurper Ordoño IV to go into exile to Asturias. By 960, thanks to his friendship with the Muslims, and especially to their military support, the kingdom of León was again under Sancho's control.

Another example of friendship signed with the Muslims with the aim of usurping power from another Christian ruler (in this case a member of the same family)

⁹ *EE* 694, 'in order to damage him even more, you made friends with the Muslims'.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 707, 'King Sancho followed his uncle's advice, and then he acted in order to sign a friendship with Abderrahmen'.

is *EE* 800, which concerned the agreement between King Ramiro I of Aragon and the lords of Saragossa, Tudela and Huesca, against García (Ramiro's brother) who was the legitimate heir of Navarre:

En tod esto el rey don Ramiro de Aragon, hermanos deste don Garcia et deste don Fernando, fijos deste don Sancho rey de Nauarra, puso su amiztat esse don Ramiro rey de Aragon con el rey de Saragoça et con el rey de Tudela et con el de Huesca, que eran moros, et trabaiosse con ell ayuda destes moros de correr la tierra a su hermano don Garcia que fincaua rey de Nauarra despues de la muerte de su padre, [...].¹¹

Another case in point is the coalition signed between Alfonso VI (1040-1109) and the Muslim ruler of Toledo al-Mamun. *EE* 827 recounts a significant event which happened while the two kings, already in peace, were riding alongside the river Tajuña. Two of the Muslim knights who were among al-Mamun's retinue, while having a private conversation, expressed their thoughts about Alfonso VI and one of them told the other of his dream, in which he saw the Christian monarch entering Toledo as its ruler triumphantly. While they were pronouncing these words, simultaneously, Alfonso's hair stood on end and there was no way to press it down again. The Muslim king interrogated the two squires and, having a full picture of what had happened, he was convinced by his counsellors to interpret those facts as an unmistakable sign of the events to come. The counsellors suggested that Al-Mamun should not hesitate to kill the Castilian lord. But the Muslim, known for his wisdom, refused to follow this malevolent counsel. Behind his decision there were two principal motivations: first, he did not want to break the existing pact of amity by betraying the other's loyalty and trust; a second, far less noble and more pragmatic motivation, was that he would obtain more benefits from a peaceful agreement with the Castilian monarch rather than by killing him and making enemies with his people:

Estonces el rey Almemon dixo que en la su fe et en la su lealtat uiuie ell alli, et que lo non farie; mas que se seruirie dell en guisa quel non uiniesse ende daño, et demas quel non querie crebantar la yura que auie fecha, lo uno por quel amaua muy de coraçon, lo al por quel auie fecho muy grand seruicio en batallas que fiziera contra sus enemigos et los venciera yl defendie el regno.¹²

¹¹ *EE* 800, 'in all this, King Ramiro of Aragon, who was Don Garcia and don Fernando's brother, and don Sancho King of Navarre's son, the aforementioned King Ramiro signed a friendship with the King of Saragossa and with the King of Tudela and with that of Huesca, who were Muslims, and he managed, with the aid of those Muslims, to invade the territories of his brother don Garcia, who had been crowned King of Navarre after his father's death, [...]'.

¹² *Ibid.* 827, 'Then King Al-Mamun declared that he was living there faithfully and loyally, and that he would not do it; but that he would rather serve him so that he would not come to any harm, and moreover he did not want to destroy the oath he had made, on the one hand because he loved him sincerely, on the

Mutuality was also regarded as a *sine qua non* condition in cases of political agreements. For this reason, Al-Mamun asked Alfonso VI to swear loyalty to his family and to his closest friends, as well as to respect the terms of their pact, at least while both of the contractors were alive. The King of Castile agreed and their peace was re-confirmed:

El rey don Alfonso, con la sana lealtat que tenie en coraçon, yurogelo, et prometiol demas que yrie con el contra todos los omnes del mundo que contra el fuessen. El daquela ora adelante fue el rey don Alfonso mas su priuado del rey Almemon et mas su amigo.¹³

At this point it would be interesting to compare the Alfonsine narration (endowed with abundant fictional elements) with the description given in the Latin source from which the episode is evidently extrapolated, that is to say the *Chronicon Mundi* by Lucas de Tuy. Such a comparative analysis will prove that whilst the concept of personal collaboration between sovereigns in the political field already existed in the Tudense's version, the terminology of 'friendship' was instead introduced in the Alfonsine re-elaboration (while in Lucas de Tuy they are defined *familiarior*). The passage from the Tudense reads as follows:

Jura ut Adefonsus et quod pascebat barbarus se facturus promisit, et etiam contra omnes hostes eius promisit omnimodum auxilium et obsequium prestaturum et ex hoc factus est Amenon et Adefonso familiarior et ipsum tenerrime diligebat.¹⁴

According to the Alfonsine chronicle, the stability and resistance of the agreement between the two rulers were both proved by events to come, as one can read in *EE* 840. This chapter describes the situation generated after Sancho II's death (1072). In the dynastic row, the legitimate heir to the crown of León was meant to be his brother Alfonso VI, who had been exiled by Sancho, but supported by his sister Urraca. As guardian of his honour and power, Urraca forbade that Al-Mamun should come to know about Sancho's death, since she did not trust the Muslim ruler and she feared that

other hand because he had served him in battle very loyally against the enemies, and thanks to him he had won and defended the reign'.

¹³ *EE* 827, 'King Alfonso, with the honest loyalty he had in his heart, swore it to him, and he promised that he would join him against all the men in the world that would become his enemies. And hereby, King Alfonso was one of Al-Mamun's closest counsellors and friends'.

¹⁴ Lucas de Tuy, *Chronicon Mundi* ([n. p.]: [n. pub.], c. XVII), f. 149 (r) and 150 (f). For a recent edition see *Chronicon Mundi*, ed. by Emma Falque Rey, in *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis*, LXXIV (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 'Alfonso swore to the Muslim that he would intervene, and he promised that he would help him against all his enemies in any possible way, and that he would respect him. From this event, Alfonso became Al-Mamun's friend and he appreciated him heartily'.

revealing such news would prove dangerous for Alfonso VI, who might be imprisoned or kidnapped by the Muslim enemy, who had been Sancho II's ally. However, such important news could not be silenced and the awareness of it made Alfonso VI hesitate about the behaviour that he should adopt towards Al-Mamun. Would it have been better for him to reveal the truth or to hide the event, taking the risk to be accused of treachery and to see the alliance turning into open enmity as soon as Al-Mamun would discover it? Despite all the contradictory advice received from his counsellors, Alfonso VI chose to behave honestly, in the name of the respect and aid that the other had always showed to him. In fact, his move was right and Al-Mamun, thankful for his ally's honesty, agreed to renew their pact of friendship:

Et desi fizo Almemon al rey don Alffonso renouar la yura quel fiziera antes de seguridad por ell et por sus fijos, et aun si mester le fuesse quel ayudarie contra los otros moros. Et cuenta la estoria que otra tal yura fizo Almemon al rey don Alffonso. [...] Et espidieronse alli ell uno dell otro con grand amor [...].¹⁵

The agreement was solid and it was put into action also a few years later, when the King of Córdoba attacked Al-Mamun. As recounted in *EE* 848, Alfonso VI continued honouring the terms of their alliance: 'et el rey don Alffonso, quando lo sopo, saco su hueste muy grand, et fue ayudar a Almemon por la postura que auie con el, assi como es ya dicho'.¹⁶ Interestingly enough, and in accordance with the Tudense's version¹⁷ the Afonsine chronicle narrates that Al-Mamun hesitated and sent messengers to remind the terms of the agreement to the Castilian king, in order to check whether the other was intervening with peaceful intentions:

Almemon quando lo oyo, non sabiendo en que razon lo fazie el rey don Alffonso, ouo miedo que uinie contra el, et enuiol dezir por sus mandaderos que se acordasse dell amor quel el mostrara et de la onrra quel fiziera et de la postura que auie con ell, et que rogaua que ouiesse paz entrellos.¹⁸

¹⁵ *EE* 840, 'and so King Al-Mamun made King Alfonso renew his oath of security for him and for his sons, and he also made him promise that he should help the other against other Muslim forces. And the chronicle reports that the same oath was sworn by Al-Mamun to King Alfonso [...]. And they parted there from each other with signs of great love [...]'.
¹⁶ *Ibid.* 848, 'when King Alfonso discovered it, summoned all his army, and went to help Al-Mamun for the pact agreed between them, as it was said before'.
¹⁷ Lucas de Tuy, *Chronicon Mundi*, f.158 (r).
¹⁸ *EE* 848, 'when Al-Mamun heard it, since he did not know for which reasons King Alfonso was doing it, feared that he was coming against him, and sent some of his messengers in order to remind him of the love they had between them and the honour and the promise that he had signed with him, and he begged that peace between them was kept'.

All the aforementioned episodes prove that the pacts of friendship stipulated between rulers were not unbreakable and, above all, those stipulated under the pressure of particular threats were likely to change once a situation evolved. Moreover, the uncertainty and doubts which assaulted Al-Mamun before trusting his Christian ally bear witness to the fact that such volte-faces were neither impossible nor rare. Therefore, it might be deduced that the positive experience of Al-Mamun, who was reassured by Alfonso VI and supported by him in his campaign against the King of Córdoba, was by no means commonplace.

At this stage it would be interesting to analyse the agreements signed between Alfonso X and Muslim rulers. To undertake this kind of analysis the main source which will be taken into account is the *CSM*. An interesting starting point is *CSM* 185. Alongside the description of the miracle that the Virgin Mary enacted to save the castle of Chincoya (in the kingdom of Jaén) from the Muslims who tried to besiege it, the verses of the *cantiga* provide indications concerning the ambiguous relationship between Alfonso X and the King of Granada Ibn al-Ahmar (1237-1273). The events, although literarily embellished, are historically recognizable. O'Callaghan dates them back to 1264, when the Mudejar revolt flared up in Murcia.¹⁹ The scholar also proved that it would not be implausible to recognize in the figure of the castellan of Chincoya the Christian *alcalde* Sancho Martínez de Jódar. The latter, as reported in the *cantiga*, was tied by a personal friendship with the Muslim castellan of Bélmez and for this reason the two are depicted kissing each other according to the ritualized gestures performed to confirm a friendly agreement (panel 2). But the castellan of Bélmez was a traitor; in fact he offered his friend's life and castle on a platter to the King of Granada.²⁰ His malevolent plot was carefully planned: first, he would summon the Christian castellan to renew the friendship between them and, once the other was finally outside the castle, he would capture him, having no other obstacle to his triumphant achievement. By behaving as such, he played on the other's trust and benevolence:

E disse-lle que saisse | con el seu preito firmar
ante crischãos e mouros | dos que eran no logar,
que o guardasse, ca ele | queria a el guardar,
e sobr' esto fossen ambos | sas juras grandes fazer. (Lines 35-39)

¹⁹ O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X: A Poetic Biography*, pp. 110-113.

²⁰ The aforementioned King was probably Ibn al-Ahmar, dubbed 'the red' and actually represented in the miniatures of the *cantiga* with the predominance of this colour in both his cloths and banner.

The unexpected factor was that the castle was not abandoned by everybody, since two squires who were accompanying the castellan, decided to turn back on their steps, foreseeing the treachery awaiting them:

[...] e com' os mouros son falsos, | quíça travarán de vos;
o poren' ao castelo | nos queremos tornar-nos. (Lines 46-47)²¹

To conclude, the works attributed to Alfonso X bear the mark of the widespread diffidence felt towards believers of different faiths. In fact, the diffused prejudices against these groups influenced and oriented both the monarch's and his court's behaviours and attitudes. Significantly, however, the accomplishment of treacherous actions was regarded as much worse and even more dangerous than any declaration of enmity which could arise between representatives of different faiths.²² Although it was very unlikely to happen, still a Muslim – usually belonging to the highest social ranks – could be regarded as an excellent friend, when he respected the indispensable condition of loyalty towards the allies.²³

§ 2. Political Alliances Stipulated Against People of Different Beliefs

The examples examined up to this point have shed some light on the relationships between Christians and Muslims, which were aimed at encompassing a military mission against a third enemy. The aim of this section, instead, is to analyze the agreements stipulated against the Muslim invaders, in the name of a shared Christian faith. During the reign of Alfonso X both Muslims and Jews were entitled to certain protection under the law and they were neither forced nor encouraged to convert. However, the lack of heavy incentives to conversion had a pragmatic justification: all the believers of non-Christian faiths were obliged to pay tributes to the crown, taxation from which Christians, instead, were exonerated. Consequently, what at first sight might appear a simple magnanimous action was in fact a political strategy, aimed at obtaining economic profits to fill the coffers of the kingdom.

²¹ CSM 185, 'he asked him to come out to sign a pact with him in the presence of those Christians and Moors who were in the place, that they would protect each other and swear solemn oaths on it'; '[...] and as the Moors are treacherous, perhaps they will seize you. Therefore, we wish to return to the castle'.

²² Bagby Jr, 'The Moslem in the *Cantigas*', pp. 181-182.

²³ See another interesting perspective in Rebecca L. Slitt, 'Justifying Cross-Cultural Friendships: Bohemond, Firuz, and the Fall of Antioch', *Viator*, 38 (2007), 339-350.

These pragmatic assumptions would partially undermine the power of religion, which had always been used as a cohesive element around which both the social and political systems had been organized. The examples given in the *EE* concerning the wide and multicultural Roman Empire are interesting in this context. It has to be borne in mind that the narrations of this historical period were deeply influenced by the relatively tolerant Alfonsine perspective, by whom they were recalled and which coloured these memories with softer hues. An instance of this is found in the statement which *EE* 316 attributes to the Emperor Constantine:

E por esto, amigos, conuiene que sepades todos que no queremos nos que se tornen ningunos por fuerça cristianos [...]. Demas no ayan ningunos miedo que pierdan el nuestro amor por non querer seer cristianos; ca la nuestra piedat tal es que no queremos que ninguno aya miedo en fazer bien. Mas pero esto deuen saber todos: que mas nuestros amigos seran aquellos que de su grado quisieren tomar la fe cristiana.²⁴

Later in time, the Iberian Peninsula still appeared as a melting-pot, even though the occupiers had changed. The Arabs were always on the look out for the Iberian territories; therefore the Christian rulers of the newly-born Christian kingdoms were forced to agree pacts of friendships among themselves, either to stop the Muslim advance or to face them in the battlefield. It was for this reason that Alfonso III, King of Asturias (866-910), ‘[...] puso su amiztat con los prouenciales et con los nauarros’.²⁵ *EE* 646 also adds that he married Amelina of France establishing in such a way a strong chain which would guarantee French support and protection for the threatened realm of Asturias.

Another instance of anti-Muslim alliance was that between Pedro II of Aragon (1196-1213) and Alfonso VIII of Castile (1158-1214):

Este rey don Pedro de Aragon ouo siempre muy grand amor con el muy noble don Alffonso rey de Castiella, et fue con ell en la batalla de Hubeda do fueron uençudos los moros [...].²⁶

²⁴ *EE* 316, ‘and for this, friends, we want all of you to know that we do not want to force you to become Christians [...]. And also that you should not fear to lose our love if you do not convert; our mercifulness is such that we do not want anybody to be afraid of performing good actions. But everybody has to know that those who will voluntarily choose to convert to Christianity will be regarded as better and closer friends’.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 646, ‘he made friends with people from his region and from Navarre’.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 797, ‘this King Pedro of Aragon has always been a good friend of the noble don Alfonso, King of Castile, and he fought with him in the battle of Úbeda where the Moors were defeated [...]’.

There were circumstances in which the accomplishment of the terms established by a pact of friendship caused irremediable damage and sometimes even the allies' death. The events involving Pedro II of Aragon represent a case in point. In order to honour the alliance signed with Count Raymond of Toulouse (who had also married Pedro's sister, Leonor), the King of Aragon intervened in defence of the Cathars, who were protected by the Count of Toulouse, against the Archbishop of Narbonne, who had recruited nobles from northern France to undertake a crusade against them. The events developed dramatically:

Et maguer que el rey don Pedro era buen cristiano, pero que uiniera en ayuda del conde con quien auie debdo a deffender los hereges que son yentes sin Dios, quiso Dios que muriesse [...].²⁷

Pedro II respected the pact signed with his ally, but in doing so he destroyed his own fame as God's friend, and for this reason he 'earned' his death as divine retribution.

To pursue this matter further, it has to be borne in mind that friendships in the name of a common faith were strengthened either for defensive or offensive purposes. As recounted in *EE* 692, King Ramiro II, together with Fernán González, went against the emir of Saragossa, who had rebelled against the former. The operation was apparently successful:

Mas Abenahia, que era ende rey estonces, quando uio que el rey don Ramiro et Fernand Gonçalez, conde de Castiella, eran acordados et abenidos en uno, ouo grand miedo dellos, et tornose uassallo del rey don Ramiro con toda su tierra [...]. Et pues que esto ouieron fecho alli, tornose el rey don Ramiro pora Leon muy onrradamiente; et el conde Fernand Gonçalez, pora Castiella, otrossi muy onrrado; et el rey don Ramiro et el conde Fernand Gonçalez pagados uno dotro et muy amigos.²⁸

Nonetheless, the result was only temporary. Once the two Christian allies left the dominions of Saragossa, the Muslim leader betrayed them by pledging an oath of vassalage to the Caliph of Córdoba.

Likewise, *EE* 705 deserves attention. After Ordoño III's initial mistrust towards Fernán González, whom he suspected to be the instigator of a civil rebellion aimed at

²⁷ *EE* 797, 'even though King Pedro was a good Christian, since he went to help the Count, with whom he had agreed a pact of friendship, to defend the heretics who were people without God, God wanted his death [...].'

²⁸ *Ibid.* 692, 'but Abenahia, who was King at that time, when he realized that King Ramiro and Fernán González, Count of Castile, were allied and friends, feared them, and turned vassal of the King Ramiro with all his land [...]. And after they did it, King Ramiro went back to León full of honour; and the Count Fernán González, went back to Castile, with all the honours as well; and the King Ramiro and the Count Fernán González [became] friends and they were satisfied of each other'.

seizing power, the sovereign changed his attitude once the count swore his goodwill and sincere love to him: ‘al rey plogol ende, et dalli adelante ouo acuerdo et abenencia entrellos’.²⁹ The Count’s loyalty was proved by his intervention against the Muslims who were attacking San Esteban de Gormaz. Fernán González managed to overcome the Muslim forces, who, on their part, had underestimated the value of the Christian alliance, thinking that the crisis formerly experienced between the two newly-joined allies had weakened their defences.

There is evidence to suggest that such political friendships against Muslim enemies assumed similar relevance during Alfonso X’s reign. One of the most unmistakable cases is *CSM* 169, which describes the miracle performed by the Virgin Mary to save the church dedicated to her in the Muslim district of La Arrija, in Murcia. Despite the several attempts to destroy it, the church appeared inviolable. The Christian sovereigns, who were later to occupy the city, had reluctantly granted their consent to destroy it, but the Muslims were not able to do it since a blessing protected the building. One of those mentioned Christian monarchs was Jaime I of Aragon, who had supported his son-in-law in the campaigns against the Muslims since he had realized, after the Mudejar revolt in Murcia, that not just Castile but also his own Aragonese possessions were in danger. In 1265 Jaime I invaded Murcia and forced its Muslim inhabitants to surrender. In all likelihood that was the time in which the Muslim citizens begged for his permission to destroy the church dedicated to the Virgin.³⁰ After this victory and before returning to his dominions, Jaime I handed over the newly-acquired possession to Alfonso X. If one accepts this as historically reliable, it may be concluded that perhaps the Aragonese sovereign was respecting an unwritten agreement stipulated with the Castilian monarch and that was probably the reason why he deserved mention in the *CSM*, in which he was poetically commemorated, for his exemplary behaviour, as a king *de gran prez* (worthy).

I would generally conclude that, in the Alfonsine works, both friendships signed with or against the rulers of a different faith were equally presented under a positive light as long as the general and moral ‘rules’ of friendship were respected. One reason for this may be found in the fact that, despite the extremely pragmatic and strategic goals lying behind those agreements (mainly military and political interests), they still conformed (or at least this is how the Alfonsine works presented them) to the

²⁹ *EE* 705, ‘the King was very pleased, and from that moment on there were agreement and goodwill between them’.

³⁰ *CSM* 169, lines 33-36.

fundamental attitudes, behaviours and formulae which were regarded as the *sine qua non* characteristics on which any friendly relationship should be based.

§ 3. Unequal Friendships: The Case of Vassalatic Relationships

At this point, other significant subjects to discuss are the reinterpretation of the classical concept of equality and the connection between friendship and social hierarchy. The latter is extremely significant in order to explore the characteristics of the relationships between 'unequal' parties, whose best and most common examples were probably the vassalatic bonds, which in the Alfonsine production were frequently described through the vocabulary of friendship. A number of these pacts resembled, and in some cases coincided with, ritualized fiefs, vassalatic oaths and contractual links which, according to some scholars, were the structural pillars around which medieval feudal society was built.³¹

An interesting observation was made by Althoff who, looking at the example of the Germanic region, demonstrated how in the early Middle Ages the Carolingian kings established bonds of amity with other secular lords and with the Popes exclusively since: 'just as a treaty of friendship between two rulers excluded the payment of tribute, so too a subordinate relationship excluded *amicitia*'.³² Nevertheless, a breakthrough was experienced in the ninth century when, due to the crisis of the Carolingian Empire, bonds of comradeship and treaties of friendships also began to involve members of lower social status. For the first time the subjects were directly involved in making agreements, although they were regarded as public witnesses of the pacts which their lords signed publicly rather than as official contractors themselves. After two centuries, however, this picture was modified completely: what in the ninth century had been

³¹ Numerous scholars have debated the various aspects of 'feudalism', an extremely complicated subject to analyse and even more to summarize, since the same definition had been gainsaid and rejected several times, considered by many as a late seventeenth-century label, too simplistically adapted to define a broad range of social, political and economical relationships experienced during the Middle Ages in Europe. For an introduction see: François-Luis Ganshof, *Feudalism*, trans. by Philip Grierson, 3rd edn (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964); Bloch, *Feudal Society*; 'Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes', *Revue de synthèse historique*, 46 (1928), 15-50, trans. as 'A Contribution Towards a Comparative History of European Societies', in *Land and Work in Medieval Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 44-81; Elizabeth A. R. Brown, 'The Tyranny of Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe', *American Historical Review*, 79 (1974), 1063-1088; Jean-Pierre Poly, Eric Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation, 900-1200* (New York; London: Holmes & Meier, 1991); G. Bois, *The Transformation of the Year One Thousand: The Village of Lournand from Antiquity to Feudalism*, trans. by J. Birrell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³² Althoff, 'Friendship Between States and People', p. 196.

regarded as innovative, then became a consolidated norm and friendships signed by the kings, from the twelfth century particularly, also involved bishops, nobles and magnates who had to behave according to the written provisions established by these pacts.

Exceptionally, in the Iberian Peninsula the networks of relationships involving the sovereign and the other members of the social hierarchy evolved differently to the rest of Europe.³³ A number of scholars have wondered whether those relationships might be regarded as emblematic of the peculiar Iberian feudal system. According to some of them, the kingdoms of León, Castile, Navarre and Aragon (while Catalonia experienced a completely different process) together with other Mediterranean areas, cannot be regarded as feudal states, since they only adopted some of the feudal institutions.³⁴ Hilda Grassotti demonstrated that the relationships between the sovereigns and the individuals to whom they granted lands in full property (*propriedad plena*) as a reward *pro bono et fideli servitio* were links which transcended the canonical rules of vassalage.³⁵

If defining the peculiarities of each agreement and the differences between them has always been an extremely complicated task, the duty of making war and peace either with or against the lords to whom the parties were linked represented the only incontestable feature. According to this perspective, in fact, the vassalatic connections experienced in Medieval Iberia did not differ from those detected in other areas of Europe, at least as far as obligations of defence and mutual support were concerned.³⁶ A further attempt at clarification was made by José Mattoso in his study on the history of

³³ Juan Ignacio Ruiz de la Peña, 'Feudalismo(s)', in *Tópicos y realidades de La Edad Media*, pp. 91-118.

³⁴ Pierre Toubert, 'Les fœodalités méditerranéennes: un problème d'histoire comparée', in *Les structures sociales de l'Aquitaine, du Languedoc et de l'Espagne au premier âge fœodal: Toulouse 28-31 Mars 1968*, ed. by Philippe Wolff (Paris: CNRS, 1969), pp. 1-15; Joseph Maria Salrach, 'Les fœodalités méridionales: des Alpes à la Galice', in *Les fœodalités*, ed. by Eric Bournazel and Jean-Pierre Poly (Paris: P.U.F., 1998), pp. 313-388; *Los orígenes del feudalismo en el mundo mediterráneo*, ed. by A. Malpica and T. Quesada, 2nd edn (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1998). On the specific case of the Iberian Peninsula: L. G. Valdeavellano, 'Las instituciones feudales en España', in appendix to the Spanish translation of Ganshof, *El Feudalismo*, trans. by F. Famosa (Barcelona: Ariel, 1963), and reprinted as *El feudalismo hispánico y otros estudios de historia medieval* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1981), pp. 63-162; 'Sobre la cuestión del feudalismo hispánico', in *El feudalismo hispánico*, pp. 7-62; Abilio Barbero and Marcelo Vigil, *La formación del feudalismo en la Península Ibérica* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1978); J. A. García de Cortázar, 'Espacio, sociedad y organización medievales en nuestra tradición historiográfica', in *Organización social del espacio en la España medieval: la corona de Castilla en los siglos VIII a XV*, ed. by García de Cortázar (Barcelona: Ariel, 1985), pp. 11-40; Hilda Grassotti, *Las instituciones feudo-vasalláticas*. Similarities between the Spanish and the European systems are highlighted in Barbero, *La formación del feudalismo en la península ibérica* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1978); R. Pastor de Togneri, *Resistencia y luchas campesinas en la época del crecimiento y consolidación de la formación feudal Castilla y León siglos X-XIII* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España, 1980).

³⁵ Grassotti, 'Pro Bono et Fideli Servitio' in *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 33-34 (1961), 5-55. She pointed out the existence of some royal donations to women, Jews, churchmen and entire communities – such as cities and councils – which obviously were not regarded as 'canonical' vassals.

³⁶ J. A. Maravall, 'Del regimen feudal al regimen corporativo en el pensamiento de Alfonso X', *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 157 (1965), 213-268

mentality.³⁷ Not only did Mattoso highlight the difference between the legal stipulations of the vassalatic oaths and the voluntary and informal acts of submission that subjects paid to a powerful lord in order to obtain his protection, but he went as far as to state that ‘el feudalismo hispánico, aunque en terminos jurídicos se puede considerer fluido, mal estructurado y poco coherente, ejerce una enorme influencia sobre la vida cotidiana’.³⁸ He demonstrated how the model of vassalatic relationships was founded on mutual help, loyalty, protection and defence of honour, which were the same structural characteristics of friendship.

To confirm his statement there were also semantic coincidences between the lexicon attributed to feudal-vassalatic links and that of *amicitia*. However, while Mattoso affirmed that the feudal links operated as structured models of other social connections, by contrast, this study seeks to prove that the seed from which any social bond could flourish was frequently friendship. To confirm this point it might be worth recalling Duby’s interpretation of the feudal institutions, that he considered subsequent and derived from other pre-existing social patterns, and particularly from family and amicable bonds.³⁹

The principal concern of this study will be to examine the relationships between the king and his subordinates as perceived by the Alfonsine mentality. Friendships involving individuals belonging to unequal social ranks, despite their potential equality in virtues, implied certain disparity which inevitably led the lower contractors to behave reverentially and subordinately towards their higher-positioned counterparts. A series of examples extrapolated from the Alfonsine works will be given below. A good starting point is represented by the case of Emperor Julianus given in *EE* 347. Notwithstanding the limits imposed by his own status, he is still described as a loyal friend of his subject:

E sabet que Juliano fuera cristiano et monge [...], e era omne muy bien razonado et de buena memoria; et era muy franc a sus amigos, pero no los amaua mas de quanto conuinie a sennor.⁴⁰

³⁷ José Mattoso, ‘La difusión de la mentalidad vasallatica en el lenguaje cotidiano’, *Studia Historica*, 4 (1986), 171-184.

³⁸ Mattoso, ‘La difusión de la mentalidad vasallatica’, p. 172.

³⁹ George Duby, *La société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région maçonnaise* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N, 1953, repr. 1971), pp. 94-116, 140-141, 172, 177-185, 194-195, 185, 193, 291 (reprint at pp. 93-108, 124-125, 149, 153-158, 164-165, also 158-64, 235-236).

⁴⁰ *EE* 347, ‘and you know that Julianus was a Christian and a monk [...], and he was a very wise man, endowed with a good memory; and he was loyal to his friends, but he did not love them more that it was convenient for his status’.

Despite the limitation constituted by the natural gap which separated individuals from different lineage, mutual affection and loyalty were regarded as the *sine qua non* features in order to sign any pact of friendship.

Moving chronologically forwards, the episode regarding King Sancho I of León who, after having used the services and military support provided by his friend and subordinate, Count Fernán González, ordered him to abandon his county, is significant. Before fulfilling the royal commandment, the count summoned all his vassals and all the nobles of Castile addressing them as follows:

“Amigos et parientes, yo so uestro sennor natural, et ruegoos que me consegedes assi como buenos uassallos deuen fazer a sennor.[...] Amigos et uasallos, oydo auedes ya lo que uos he mostrado, et si uos otro conseio sabedes mejor que este, ruegoos que me lo digades, casi yo errado fuere, uos en grand culpa yazedes”.

Those who were regarded as friends and vassals of their lord had the responsibility to advise him in important matters concerning both his private and public life. By considering the nature of those duties, one can better understand Fernán González’s list of qualities which were required of a good counsellor:

Et la cosa que a sennor mas cumple es buen consegero, ca mucho uale mas que aquel que bien lidia, porque en el consegero yaze bien et mal; [...] Et el buen consegero non deue auer miedo nin uerguença al sennor, mas dezirle toda la uerdad et lo que entiende que es derecho.

He also reminded his friends and relatives first of all that they had sworn an oath of vassalage to their natural lord and that they were called to fulfil their duties towards him. Secondly, that their treacherous actions would be deleterious for themselves as well as for their successors:

Et amigos, sobre todo a mester que guardedes lealdad, ca maguer que muere la carne, la maldad que omne faze nunca muere, et fincan dell sus parientes con muy mal heredamiento.⁴¹

⁴¹ *EE* 717, “‘friends and relatives, I am your natural lord, and I beg you to advise me as good vassals should do with their lord. [...] Friends and vassals, you have heard already what I showed you, and if you have better advice than this, I pray you to tell me, because if I make a mistake you will be guilty for it’”; ‘the thing that a lord needs more is a good counsellor, who is worthier than a good soldier, because there is good and evil in a counsellor [...]. And the good counsellor should have neither fear nor shame of his lord, but he should rather tell him all the truth and what he regards as the righteous thing’; ‘and friends, the most important thing is that you preserve loyalty, because even though the body will die, the evil committed by men never expires, and it is transmitted to his family as a bad inheritance’.

Not only were the subordinates obliged to provide good advice and moral teaching to their lords, but also to intervene in their physical defence and protection whenever it was necessary. Even those who were vassals of the king's friends were themselves tied to the monarch and, as such, they were contractually and morally obliged to support him. Nevertheless, alliances with royal figures could in some cases prove extremely dangerous and lead to dramatic consequences. A remarkable case is that concerning the happenings which followed the Infante García's murder, operated by the treacherous Vela family. The latter wanted to take revenge for the dishonour that the prince's father, Sancho III of Navarre, had inflicted on them by exiling the entire dynasty from Castile. The legend, which the *EE* took from Lucas de Tuy's version, tells that the thirteen-year old prince was assassinated by his godfather Roy Vela.⁴² After him, his loyal vassals and friends also suffered the same tragic end:

[...] et pues que ellos ouieron muerto ell infante, metieron mano por los otros que eran uassallos et amigos dell infante, et mataron y muchos dellos tambien de los castellanos como de los leoneses que uinien y en acorro; [...].⁴³

The analysis of such 'unequal' relationships from a linguistic perspective also shows a significant feature: the lower we descend the social ladder, the less often the appellative of *amigo* appears to address the higher figures, and it is replaced, instead, by the title of *senhor*. Contrarily, the highest figures continued to use the amicable appellation as a means of *captatio benevolentiae*. The description of the internecine rivalry between the two brothers, Sancho II of León and García of Galicia, is a case in point. Before their armies clashed on open battlefield, King García incited his host by addressing them with the following words:

“uassallos et amigos, vos uedes el grand tuerto que el rey don Sancho mio hermano me faze en quererme toller la tierra que mio padre me dio, et ruegoos que uos pese et que me ayudedes, ca uos sabedes que desde yo fuy rey, que quanto oue todo uos lo di et lo parti conuusco, auer, caualllos, armas; et guardeuos pora tal sazón et pora tal dia como este”.⁴⁴

⁴² Fernández-Ordóñez, *Versión crítica de la Estoria de España*, p. 96.

⁴³ *EE* 788, ‘[...] and once they killed the infant, they started doing the same with those who were his vassals and friends, and they killed many of them, included the Castilians and Leonese who came there to help him; [...]’.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 822, “vassals and friends, you can see the evil that King Sancho, my brother, is doing by trying to expropriate me of the land that my father gave me, and I pray you to come and help me, since you know that since I was King, I gave you all that I had and I shared my possessions with you: wealth, horses, weapons; and I counted on you for a period and a moment as such”.

The King declared openly that his generosity towards his friends and vassals was not offered out of pure love, but it was rather motivated by some pragmatic interests. Additionally, he summoned his host relying on the certainty that they would intervene on his behalf for the benefits (wealth, lands and weapons) that they had received as an anticipated reward for it.⁴⁵

At this point, the principle of the ‘inheritance of friendship’ should be examined again, since it apparently does not fit this ‘feudal-vassalatic’ pattern, according to which alliances were not transferred automatically from father to son, but they were voluntarily agreed. However, there were a few exceptions which consisted of cases in which heirs enshrined the same virtues and good will of their ancestors. Only in those circumstances, could the agreement be preserved or renewed. A case in point is *EE* 985 which narrated how the virtuous Sancho III of Castile accessed the throne after his father Alfonso VII and managed to keep the friendships that his father had personally established:

[...] et fue a demandar al rey don Garçia de Nauarra, su suegro, et al rey don Alffonso dAragon quel conosçiesen el vassallage que conosçieran a su padre ell emperador don Alffonso et gele guardarán.⁴⁶

Likewise, the kings Garcia IV of Navarre and Alfonso II of Aragon, for instance, renewed the oath that they had previously sworn to Sancho III’s father: ‘et amaron mucho sus vassallos al rey don Sancho, et fue muy temido dellos et reçevido con grand onrra’.⁴⁷

The fact that individuals pledged an oath through which they declared to be *naturales vassallos* of their lords neither implied that the relationship would necessarily last nor that it was worthy to be agreed. Moreover, if the king did not behave as a *buen sennor* such coalitions would easily dissolve. In this context, *CSM* 281 narrates the story of a French knight, a victim of bad luck which had made him lose all his wealth. The yearning for his lost fortunes made the knight bow to the devil’s request and become his vassal. The pact was stipulated according to the conventional rituals which accompanied the swearing of any vassalatic oath:

⁴⁵ *EE* 822, ‘Et ellos por amostrarle mas cueral amor llamaronle tu et dixieronle: “sennor, partistelo muy bien et fezistenos mucho dalgo, et serte a oy muy bien gualardonado si nos pudieremos”, ‘and they, in order to prove their love to him, addressed him directly and said: “lord, you shared everything righteously and you made other good things, and we are going to reward you now as much as we can”’.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 985, ‘[...] and he went to ask King García of Nauarra, his father-in-law, and King Alfonso of Aragon to confirm and preserve the vassalage that they had concede to his father, the Emperor don Alfonso’.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ‘and King Sancho was deeply loved by his vassals, and he was also feared and received with great honours by them’.

Diss' el: "Di- me que faça, | e logo cho eu farey."
 Diss' o demo: "Por vassalo | meu t'outorga, e dar-ch-ei
 mui mais ca o que perdische." | E el foy-llo outorgar.
 [...]
 Pois que beijou a mão, | diss' o demo: "Un amor
 me farás, pois meu vassalo | es: nega Nostro Sennor [...]" (Lines 26-31)

The knight blindly obeyed his liege's commandments and he bowed to his will, except for the fact that he refused to deny the Virgin Mary. He respected the prohibitions imposed by the pact, including the ban on entering a church. But one day, while he was accompanying the King of France, he witnessed a miracle. Respectful of his oath, the knight remained outside the holy place, but the statue of the Virgin Mary, from the inside, beckoned for him to come in. Although all the witnesses attested the miracle, the knight wanted to confess first, in front of the King and the crowd, his shameful commitment with the devil. After his public repentance he was able to abjure the demon and he also received apologies from the King of France who considered himself responsible for those events, since he had not rewarded his knight righteously and, consequently, he had indirectly pushed him towards his bad destiny:

Diss' enton el Rey: "Amigo, | eu fui errado, par Deus,
 de vos averdes pobreza | en meu reyn' e ontr' os meus."
 E deu-ll' enton por herdade | muy mais ca ouveran seus
 avoos, e ficou rico | com' ome do seu logar. (Lines 80-83)⁴⁸

The knight's weakness, which never brought him to commit any disloyal action against the king – for which reason he could re-gain both royal and holy favour in the end – was only one of the elements which caused his fall. In fact, the finger of guilt was pointed at the monarch, who was morally and legally obliged to reward his family, friends and all his subjects according to their merits, but in the case at hand, he had, in the beginning at least, neglected to do so.

Mutual favours, loyalty and righteous rewards were one part of the equation, but so too was the fear that the subjects felt for their own conditions if they rebelled or did

⁴⁸ CSM 281, 'he [the knight] replied: "tell me what I may do for you, and I shall do it for you at once". The devil said: "agree to be my vassal, and I shall give you much more than you lost". The man agreed to it. After the man kissed his hand, the devil said: "you shall give me proof of your loyalty, since you are my vassal. Deny your Lord [...]"; 'then the king said: "friend, I was to blame, I swear to God, for your being impoverished in my kingdom and among my subjects". He then endowed him with much more than his forebears have possessed, and the knight became rich as befits a man of his estate'.

not respect the pact signed with their lords. With regards to the latter, the alliances between the sovereigns and the whole communities as well as their connections with the *cortes* need to be brought to attention.⁴⁹ Hilda Grassotti has spoken about the vassalatic relationships between the king and the members of the *cortes* (magnates, archbishops and nobles) which might be catalogued as examples of political friendships. With regard to this aspect it is worth considering CSM 386 which reports the events concerning the great council that Alfonso X summoned in Seville (which in all likelihood mirrored the real *cortes* held there in 1281). The *cantiga* narrates that all the representatives of the towns (which Alfonso X had convened) attended the assembly, although they probably did it out of fear rather than of their own volition. As O’Callaghan has stated ‘below the surface depiction of peace and friendship in CSM 386 there is evidence of antagonism between king and Cortes that was resolved by a pact’.⁵⁰

This study does not seek to undertake an historical analysis of those political treaties. What matters most to highlight here is how the Alfonsine narrations attempted a ‘morally acceptable’ depiction of the most pragmatic and opportunistic agreements, by presenting them as instances of friendship, without omitting, however, the possible corruptions and difficulties dependent from the unequal nature of the relationships and of the characters involved.

§ 4. An Emblematic Case of Political and Personal Friendships: El Cid of the *EE*

An outstanding legendary figure, whose gestures and behaviour conformed to most of the parameters of friendship indicated above, is Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (1043-1099), widely known as ‘El Cid’.⁵¹ Still regarded as the Spanish national hero, El Cid has achieved an unsurpassed fame through the ages which he probably began to enjoy during his own lifetime, as demonstrated by the historical and poetic collections exalting his stature which appeared from the twelfth century, such as the early *Carmen Campidoctoris* (of which only 129 verses have survived).⁵² Alongside this poetic

⁴⁹ Procter, *Curia and Cortes in León and Castile, 1072-1295* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); O’Callaghan, *Alfonso X, the Cortes, and the Government*.

⁵⁰ O’Callaghan, *Alfonso X: A Poetic Biography*, p. 170.

⁵¹ In all likelihood the appellative derived from the Arabic *sayyidī* (my lord). He also acquired the Latin appellative of *Campidoctor* and the vernacular equivalent of *Campeador*.

⁵² For an introduction on the debated dating of this work see the introductory study by Francisco Rico in *Cantar de mio Cid*, ed. by Alberto Montaner Frutos (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, Círculo de Lectores, c2007).

encomium, there is a Latin prose chronicle known as *Historia Roderici*⁵³ and the vernacular epic *Poema de Mio Cid* (henceforth *PMC*), which enhanced the historical picture of the valorous knight with fictional elements exalting his personal virtues of family man and devoted defender of his lord and, above all, of his land.⁵⁴ The epic character of El Cid has also been celebrated far and wide in drama, prose, sculpture, painting and even in a Hollywood cinematographic representation made in 1961.⁵⁵

The poetic and the historical depictions of El Cid are rich with inter-textual references, models and innovative features, which it is impossible to explore in depth here. The main concern of this section, rather, is to present the image of the Cid as it emerges from the pages of the Alfonsine production, and particularly his depiction in the *EE*, where a long section is devoted to him. The Alfonsine Cid represents an emblematic summa of all the typologies of friendships discussed above: from the personal, political and vassalatic links which he established with his lord and vassals, to the alliances with the Muslim rulers.

Before undertaking this analysis, however, it would be worth remembering Diego Catalán's observations about the sources adopted to elaborate this section of the *EE*.⁵⁶ He asserted that, according to the original project of the royal scriptorium, the three main texts used as references here were the *Historia Roderici*, the narration by the Arabic author Ben Alcama and the *Poema de mio Cid*. Nonetheless, the original project was partially corrupted once it passed into the hands of the late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century compilers charged with completing the Alfonsine chronicle. While acknowledging this premise and the fact that Menéndez Pidal's *Primera Crónica*

⁵³ It is also known as *Gesta Roderici*; see the edition made by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *La España del Cid*, 7th edn (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1969), pp. 921-971 and *Historia Roderici*, ed. by Emma Falque Rey, in *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis*, LXXI (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), pp. 1-98. For an English version of the *Hist. Rod.*: Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher, *The World of El Cid*, pp. 90-147. According to Montaner-Escobar, the *Hist. Rod.* as well as the *Chronica Nainerensis* are from the late twelfth century; see Alberto Montaner and Ángel Escobar, *Carmen Campidoctoris, o, Poema latino del Campeador* (Madrid: España Nuevo Milenio, 2001).

⁵⁴ There is only one medieval codex which has been preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Ms. V^a 7-17. Numerous editions in modern Castilian have been made, among which *Poema de mio Cid*, ed. by Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid: La Lectura, 1913); *Poema de mio Cid*, ed. by Pedro M. Cátedra and Bienvenido Carlos Morros (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985); and *Cantar de mio Cid*, ed. by A. Montaner Frutos.

⁵⁵ Some examples, spanned across several genres, are the sixteenth-century comedy *Las mocedades del Cid* written by Guillén de Castro in 1681, *Le Cid* by Corneille (1636), the Catalan *Las hijas del Cid* (1908) by Marquina, the *Leyenda del Cid* (1882) by Zorrilla, which also influenced Darío and Huidobro, who composed respectively *Cosas del Cid* (1901) and *Mio Cid Campeador* (1929). In visual art El Cid was a subject for Salvador Dalí, who painted his *Cid* in 1971 and more recently (2006) for Anna Hyatt Huntington, whose canvas portrayed a sculpture of the hero.

⁵⁶ Diego Catalán, *La Estoria de España de Alfonso X: creación y evolución* (Madrid: Seminario Menéndez Pidal, Universidad Complutense de Madrid: Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1992), pp. 99-117.

General was built upon two manuscripts (Esc. Y-i-2 and Esc. X-i-4), whose second was probably based on such post-Alfonsine elaborations,⁵⁷ this section will analyse the image of the Cid extrapolated from Pidal's edition, without omitting the most obvious parallelisms and discrepancies with the other surviving manuscripts.⁵⁸ In particular, the *Crónica de veinte reyes* (henceforth *CVR*) will be used as a parameter of comparison, since it is regarded as the only post-Alfonsine re-elaboration of the *EE* which preserved faithfully the annalistic formula to which, according to the original plan, the entire work should have conformed.⁵⁹

In the *EE* the first mention of El Cid appears in Chapter 678, and in 807 he made his official entrance into the main historical frame, when King Ferdinand the Great dubbed him a knight. According to the Alfonsine version, during Rodrigo's entire life, the vassalatic relationships in which he was involved occupied a focal position. On the one hand, there were the links that he established with the kings, as well as the pledges that the Muslim rulers frequently swore to him (in the beginning as Alfonso VI's vassal, and subsequently as the self-made ruler of Valencia).⁶⁰ An example of the first case is the fact that King Sancho II proclaimed El Cid his vassal and counsellor. At that time, in order to resolve the problem of the inheritance of the reign (which was contended by his brother Alfonso VI), Sancho summoned the *cortes*:

Desi fizo el rey don Sancho sus cortes sobresto, et apartosse con sus omnes buenos et en que fiaua, et dixoles, pero mas por corte que por otra poridad, [...].

Unlike the relationships that King Sancho engaged with other members of the court, it seems that a personal, and therefore closer, link existed between him and El Cid, as the sovereign's behaviour suggests:

Desi tomo luego al Çid por la mano et sacol a parte, et dixol: «ruegouos que me consegedes uos en como faga en este fecho, et que uos uenga emiente agora de lo que mio padre uos dixo quando se querie finir:

⁵⁷ This is evident, above all, in the sections following Chapter 896 of the *PCG*. Moreover, both the manuscripts were subjected to a fourteenth-century emendation.

⁵⁸ Catalán, 'Crónicas generales y cantares de gesta: *El Mio Cid* de Alfonso X y el del pseudo Ben-Alfaray', *Hispanic Review*, 31 (1963), 195-215, 291-306 (pp. 207-215); Brian Powell, *Epic and Chronicle: The 'Poema de mio Cid' and the 'Crónica de veinte reyes'* (London: M.H.R.A., 1983); *El Mio Cid del taller alfonsí*.

⁵⁹ The edition used for this study is: *Crónica de veinte reyes*, coord. by César Hernández Alonso and Enrique del Diego Simón and Jesús María Jabato Saro (Burgos: Ayuntamiento de Burgos, 1991).

⁶⁰ Edmund de Chasca, 'The King-Vassal Relationship in *El Poema de Mio Cid*', *Hispanic Review*, 21 (1953), 183-192.

que non serie mal conseiado quien creeruos quisiessse: et por esso uos di yo un condado en mi tierra; et agora si de uos non e conseio, non le atiengo de omne en el mundo». ⁶¹

The sovereign's attitude towards his knight had also been confirmed in the pages of the *Historia Roderici*, in which it is reported how nobly the Cid was welcomed at court both as a loyal vassal and knight:

Hunc autem Rodericum Didaci Santius, rex tocius Castelle et dominator Hyspanie, diligenter nutriuit et cingulum militia eidem cinxit. (*Hist. Rod.*, Chapter 4)

Rex autem Sanctius adeo diligebat Rodericum Didaci multa dilectione et nimio amore, quod constituit eum principem super omnes militiam suam. (*Hist. Rod.*, Chapter 5) ⁶²

In the *EE* the emphasis shifted onto more sentimental and personal elements on which the relationship was based. The noble Rodrigo occupied a privileged position at court for his moral strength, rather than for his military skills (whose predominance, instead, was remarked in the earlier historical chronicles). Nonetheless, the previous statement does not undermine the importance of El Cid's intervention in supporting the sovereign's military campaigns, as proved by the enmity between Sancho II and his brother, King García, who captured the former (*EE* 822). El Cid came to rescue Sancho and for this reason he was warmly welcomed by him: “bien seades uenido, Çid et bien auenturado, ca nunca uassallo acorrio a mejor sazon a sennor, que uos agora a mi aqui” ⁶³. King Sancho II rewarded El Cid with his allegiance, much more than he had ever done with any other vassal.

Nonetheless, a shadow loomed over El Cid. Although King Sancho II never doubted Rodrigo's goodwill and values, he did not hesitate to remind him of the immense favours that his father, King Fernando, and he himself had granted him.

⁶¹ *EE* 817, ‘and so King Sancho summoned the *cortes* about this, and he met privately the good men that he trusted, and he spoke to them, as members of the *cortes* rather than as trustworthy keepers of his secret, [...]’; ‘and so he took El Cid's hand and took him aside, and he said: “I beg your counsel about how I should behave in such a situation, and I beg you to remind what my father told you before he died: that the one who believes you will not be advised malevolently; and for this reason I gave you a county in my land; and now, if I do not receive any advice from you, I would not expect it from any other man in the world’.

⁶² *Historia latina de Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar: edición facsímil del manuscrito 9/4922 (olim A-189) de la Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia*, ed. by Gonzalo Martínez Díez, José Manuel Ruiz and Irene Ruiz Albi (Burgos: [Ayuntamiento de Burgos, Instituto Municipal de Cultura : Caja de Burgos], 1999), p. 54, ‘Sancho, King of Castile and lord of Spain, brought Rodrigo Díaz up in his household and girded him with the belt of knighthood’; p. 65 ‘King Sancho valued Rodrigo Díaz so highly, with great esteem and affection, that he made him commander of his whole military following’.

⁶³ *EE* 822, “‘fortunately, my Cid, you have arrived at the right time, that never a vassal had come to succour his lord in a more appropriate time that you are doing now with me”’.

Therefore, the King appealed to his vassal's sense of duty and gratitude, rather than trusting his declared benevolence and respect. *EE* 831 is another interesting case. It narrates how Sancho II commanded El Cid to go to Zamora, ruled by his sister Urraca, in order to convince her to surrender:

“Çid, uos sabedes como uos crió mio padre en su casa muy onrradamientre et fizouos cauallero et mayoral de toda su casa en Coymbria quando la gano de moros; [...] et yo fizouos sennor et mayor de toda mi casa, et diuos de mi tierra mas que un condado. Agora quierouos rogar como a amigo et a buen uassallo leal que me uayades a Çamora [...]”.⁶⁴

El Cid had his own vassals and friends who were, subsequently and inevitably, involved in sharing his missions. In fact, his friends, family and followers had to respect the terms of the agreements that he himself had signed with other parties (above all with the King). The development of the aforementioned events confirmed it. In fact, when Urraca refused to surrender Zamora to his brother, Sancho II accused El Cid of betrayal, thinking that he had advised her to behave as such. Believing this, the King ordered Rodrigo to leave his dominions. At that point, the brave knight summoned his vassals and friends, who did not hesitate to join him.⁶⁵

The decision of the King was the first of a series of mistakes which brought about his fall and, ultimately, his death. His errors of judgement demonstrated both his lack of wisdom and of another fundamental quality: the ability to get the measure of the others and, therefore, to select those who could be allowed to access his close circle. This might be seen in his acceptance of Vellido Dolfó as his vassal, who would prove to be the evilest of the traitors, and it was he who would assassinate the sovereign. Unlike the earlier accounts of the *Historia Roderici*, in which those events are missing, in the *EE* the sovereign revealed, before expiring, that he considered those accidents the righteous punishment for his misbehaviour, and particularly for having contested his father's will regarding the division of the throne by trying to usurp his brother's and sister's possessions.⁶⁶ Moreover, his punishment also seemed to depend on the fact that

⁶⁴ *EE* 831, “Çid, you know how honourably my father raised you in his house and he dubbed you as a knight and regent of his entire house in Coimbra when he took it from the Muslims; [...] and I ordered you lord and administrator of my house, and I gave you more than one county in my realm. Now, I beg you as a good friend and a loyal vassal that you go for me to Zamora [...]”. Note that the *EE* claims that the Cid was given the belt of knighthood by Fernando I, although the earlier, and probably more reliable, *HR* attributes that action to Sancho II.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 833, ‘El Çid fuesse luego pora su tienda, et demando por sus uassallos et por sus atenedos et sus amigos [...]’; ‘then, El Cid went to his tent and summoned his vassals, followers and friends [...]’.

⁶⁶ In the *PMC* Sancho is never referred directly and he does not appear as a character.

he had mistreated his royal friend and vassal, Rodrigo Díaz, who had sworn faithfully as follows:

Et bien sabedes uos sennor que siempre uos consege yo como leal uassallo deue conseiar a sennor, et nunqua mal uos yo uos consege nin uos di mal conseio.⁶⁷

In order to repair his error, Sancho begged his vassals and friends to perpetuate the memory of the good actions performed by El Cid, so that the new king would accept him as a vassal and, therefore, ‘inherit’ his friendship (*EE* 838). The *EE* recounts that Alfonso VI welcomed his brother’s request; but it was El Cid who refused the royal honours – in the beginning at least – since he suspected Alfonso VI to be involved in Sancho’s murder. Those events signalled the beginning of a period characterized by continuous tensions between the two. The atmosphere was not eased when El Cid publicly threatened the royal authority and the sovereign’s credibility (*EE* 845).

As West has argued, contradicting Menéndez Pidal’s opinion according to which their enmity was generated by Alfonso VI’s personal jealousy and sense of inferiority,⁶⁸ the machinations at court worked against El Cid as well as against the sovereign himself.⁶⁹ In a more recent study by Andrés Gamba, Menéndez Pidal’s idea is demystified and the historical importance of the military and political actions undertaken by Alfonso VI is remarked upon.⁷⁰ However, the influence exercised by El Cid on the king is not denied: ‘la autonomía que el Cid imprime a sus empresas militares y políticas hizo de él inevitablemente un personaje inquietante o molesto para

⁶⁷ *EE* 838, ‘and you know very well, my lord, that I have always advise you as any loyal vassal should do with his lord, and that I have never given you bad and unwise advice’.

⁶⁸ R. Menéndez Pidal, ‘Adefonsus imperator toletanus, magnificus triumphator’ in his *Historia y epopeya* (Madrid: Editorial Hernando, 1934), pp. 239-262. See also ‘Cuestiones de método histórico, 2: la crítica cidiana y la historia medieval’, in R. Menéndez Pidal, *Castilla, la tradición, el idioma*, 4th edn (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966), pp. 95-139. A further discrediting image of Alfonso VI was also given in his *El imperio hispánico y los cinco reinos. Dos etapas en la estructura política de España* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1950); and Alfonso VI’s incestuous relationship with his sister Urraca was suggested in his study (in cooperation with E. Lévi-Provençal, ‘Alfonso VI y su hermana la infanta Urraca’, *Al-Andalus* 13 (1948), 157-166. Pidal’s view was also adopted by Valdeavellano, *Historia de España: de las origenes a la baja Edad Media*, 2 vols, 4th edn (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1968), II, 317, 348.

⁶⁹ Geoffrey West, ‘Medieval Historiography Misconstrued: The Exile of the Cid, Rodrigo Díaz, and The Supposed *Invidia* of Alfonso VI’, *Medium Aevum*, 52 (1983), 286-299; O’Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*, p. 214.

⁷⁰ See also the comments made by Hilda Grassotti about the chiché of the *ira regis*: ‘La ira regia en Castilla y León’, *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 41-43 (1965), 5-135; María Eugenia Lacarra, *El Poema de mio Cid: realidad histórica e ideológica* (Madrid: Ediciones Jose Porrua Turanzas, S.A., 1980), pp. 8-31; Ghislaine Fournès, ‘Un motivo cidiano en la obra de Alfonso X: la ira regia’, in *El Cid: de la materia épica a las crónicas caballerescas*, pp. 285-294.

Alfonso VI'.⁷¹ Such a dominant influence also appeared in the *EE*. In the end, an agreement was reached between the sovereign and El Cid, thanks to the latter's commitment and skills:

Pero despues estudieron en uno, a las uezes abenidos, a las uezes desabenidos, tanto quel echo de la tierra el rey; mas al cabo fueron amigos: assi lo sopo merecer el Çid.⁷²

From the narrative of the *EE* it seems that Alfonso VI decided to accept El Cid as his vassal in order to face the growing instability that, in part, the *Campeador* himself, with his behaviour, had generated. Moreover, their friendship was sealed by Rodrigo's wedding with a relative of the King, Jimena. This union was regarded as a further and powerful instrument to consolidate their military and political alliance.

Friend, ally, vassal and counsellor, El Cid also played the role of intermediary in the diplomatic operations between monarchs, and particularly between his lord Alfonso VI and the Muslim rulers of the South. The episode concerning his intervention in favour of the King of Seville al-Mutamid, in the latter's conflict with the King of Granada 'Abd Allāh, is interesting. El Cid called upon the latter and his Christian allies to stop their advance towards Seville, since its ruler was at peace with his lord, Alfonso VI. Regardless of his message, the two allies pursued their attack; therefore, El Cid was forced to intervene. In the ensuing battle, El Cid defeated his adversaries and advanced towards Seville, where he was rewarded by al-Mutamid who also paid the tribute (*paria*) that he owed to Alfonso VI as his vassal. Finally, El Cid agreed a new armistice with the Muslim ruler on behalf of his lord: 'et desi firmo con ell el Çid pazes de parte del rey don Alffonso su sennor, et tornosse con todas sus parias por Castiella'.⁷³

This mission caused envy among the members of the court who managed to persuade the King that Rodrigo was motivated by malevolent and treacherous goals. Alfonso VI, influenced by those rumours, decided to expel El Cid from his court and his dominions. Henceforth, a troubled exile was waiting for the loyal knight. However, whether or not El Cid had to pursue his exile alone is not clear. The *EE* narrates that 'El Çid enuio luego por sus parientes et sus amigos', who followed him, respecting their vassalatic oaths:

⁷¹ Andrés Gamba, 'Alfonso VI y el Cid. Reconsideración de un enigma histórico', in *Actas del Congreso Internacional El Cid, Poema e Historia, 12-16 julio, 1999*, coord. by César Fernández Alonso (Burgos: Ayuntamiento de Burgos, 2000), pp. 189-204 (p. 204).

⁷² *EE* 845, 'but then, they were together, sometimes in agreement, some others in disagreement, so much that one day the king exiled him; but in the end they made friends: since El Cid deserved it'.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 849, 'and so, El Cid signed with him a peace on behalf of his lord, Alfonso, and he came back with all the tributes (*parias*) to Castile'.

Et dixo Aluar Hannez Minnaya: “sennor, todos yremos con uusco et dexaremos Castiella, et ser uos emos uassallos leales”. [...] El Çid quando les esto oyo, gradesciogelo mucho, et dioxles que si el tiempo uiesse que gelo gualardonarie et muy bien.⁷⁴

Another version of the same facts is provided by the *Historia Roderici* in which it is explicitly stated that Rodrigo left his sorrowful friends behind and he went alone from Castile to Barcelona: ‘Ille autem, de regno Castelle exiens, Barcinonam uenit, amicis suis in tristicia relictis’ (*Hist. Rod.*, Chapter 12).⁷⁵ There are grounds for supposing that the reason behind the omission of any support received by the hero in the *Historia Roderici* might be due to the fact that, by facing his unfair banishment alone, El Cid of this chronicle emerged even more as an all-round heroic figure. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that historical circumstances also played a decisive role in forging his heroic profile. As Richard Fletcher has noted:

Rodrigo’s truly remarkable career was made possible by the distinctive circumstances of his age: the instability of the taifa principalities; the acceptability of tribute-taking as the primary mode of Christian-Islamic relationship in Spain; the ease of crossing cultural frontiers; the absence of any ideology of crusade; the availability of mercenary knights.⁷⁶

By accepting such premises one may deduce that the fact that El Cid left his friends behind probably mirrored the complicated contingencies of the time. In fact, for his vassals it would have been more deleterious to leave the kingdom to follow their lord Rodrigo, thus becoming in such a way enemies of the sovereign, rather than abandoning him. In any case the betrayal seemed to be inescapable: either they did not fulfil their duty of loyalty towards the Cid or, by following him, they would betray their most powerful lord, that is to say the king.

Remarkably, in the *EE* El Cid is presented as a model of virtues to emulate. It has to be noted, however, that a first idealization of the faithful company who joined El Cid tended to vanish progressively. The more we read about El Cid’s friends and vassals, and the more we realize that their actions were partly dictated by their yearning for material rewards, rather than by pure friendly attachment:

⁷⁴ *EE* 851, ‘the Cid called upon his relatives and friends’; ‘and Alvar Hannez Minnaya said: “my lord, we all will be with you and we will leave Castile, and we will be your loyal vassals” [...]. When the Cid heard it from them, he was very grateful, and he told them that, as soon as the situation would allow him to do it, he will reward them very well’.

⁷⁵ *Hist. Rod.*, Chapter 12, p. 57, ‘so Rodrigo, leaving his sorrowing friends behind him, departed from Castile and came to Barcelona’.

⁷⁶ Barton and Fletcher, *The World of El Cid*, p. 91.

Et fueron todas las compannas muy pagadas por que se partiera todo tan bien et dado todo su derecho a cada uno en la su guisa.⁷⁷

Et partio luego con todos los suyos la ganacia que auie fecha.⁷⁸

The number of amicable relationships involving El Cid cannot underestimate the friendships he made with individuals of other faiths – whose general pattern have been discussed in the previous section – and, particularly, with the Muslim rulers, whom he supported either against other members of their own dynasties, or against their Christian antagonists. During his first exile (1081-1087), for instance, Rodrigo entered the service of the Emir of Saragossa:

Et Çulema rey de Saragoça amo mucho a Roy Diaz, et diol todo su regno en poder et en guarda, et mando a sus uassallos que fiziessen todo lo que el mandasse.⁷⁹

The descriptions given in *EE* 860 and *CVR* X:XVII are not very dissimilar from the one presented in the *Historia Roderici* (Chapter 12).

The agreements signed with Muslim rulers were frequently accompanied by official documents which stated the terms of the coalition and that they were military pacts, rather than oaths of vassalage implying personal commitment.⁸⁰ An example is *EE* 901:

Luego que Abenrrazin fue apoderado de Muruiedro, fuesse uer con el Çid, et puso su amor con el; et ouieron ambos a dos tal postura: que Abenrrazin quel diesse compra uendida en sus castiellos et quel abundasse de conducho, et el Çid que nol fiziesses mal en sus castiellos nil guerreasse.⁸¹

⁷⁷ *EE* 856, ‘all the members of his company were satisfied for the fact that everything was so righteously shared among them and that everybody obtained the right rewards’.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 860, ‘Then he shared what he had gained with all his company’.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, ‘and Zulema, King of Saragossa, loved Rodrigo Diaz deeply, and gave him all his reign so that he could protect and administer it, and ordered his vassals to obey to El Cid’s commandments’. In *CVR* X:XVII it is said that “[...] puso el Çid su amor muy grande con Almondafar, rey de Çaragoça, et el rrey rresçibióle en la villa mucho honrradamente e fizole mucha honrra”; ‘[...] El Cid devoted his benevolence to Almondaraf, King of Saragossa, and the King received him in his realm with all the honours’.

⁸⁰ See for example M^a. J. Lacarra, ‘Dos tratatod de paz y alianza entre Sancho el de Peñalén y Moctadir de Zaragoza (1069 y 1073)’, in her *Colonización, parias, repoblación y otros estudios* (Zaragoza: Anubar, 1981), pp. 77-94.

⁸¹ *EE* 901, ‘after Albenrrazin got Murviedro, he met El Cid and he signed a peace with him; and they mutually agreed the following: that he managed the commercial affairs of his castle and that he had enough supplies, and that El Cid should neither declare war nor behave malevolently against the other’s castles’. In *CVR* X:LV: ‘El señor de Albarrazin vínose luego y apoderóse en el castillo; después fuese ver con el Çid y puso su amor con él. El Çid teniendo çercada Juballa, corrie cadal día a Valençia e rrobaua e catiuaua quanto fallaua, synon tan solamente a los que labrauan por pan que les non fazien mal ninguno’; ‘the lord Alvarazin took the castle; and then he went to see El Cid and they signed a peace. And since El

Not only were those friendships aimed at avoiding conflicts which appeared extremely damaging for both parties, but they also implied the duty of helping a friend's friend as well as fighting a friend's foe. Respectful of those commandments, El Cid always supported Alfonso VI's allies as much as he refused to provide any help to those who deliberately made attempts at the king's life and reputation. An interesting case is *EE* 890 which narrates how in 1087 Alfonso VI decided to recover the eastern areas of the Peninsula, occupied by the Muslims. In order to undertake the mission he asked El Cid to intervene on his side. His faithful vassal promptly agreed and managed to marshal a host of seven thousand soldiers with whom he advanced towards the Aragonese frontiers. The Muslim ruler was scared by the situation:

Et ell estando alli, el rey de Aluarrazin temiendose dell, enuiol dezir que se querie ueer con ell. Et pues que se uieron pusieron su amor muy grand entre si; et fue dalli adelante pechero del Çid el rey de Aluarrazin.

As one can observe, notwithstanding the widespread adoption of the lexicon related to *amor*, those agreements were dictated by fear and, indeed, aimed at obtaining protection, military resources and manpower. Another significant example is that of the King of Denia, who, once he realized that the King of Saragossa was advancing towards Valencia supported by El Cid, sent a messenger to the Valencian ruler to encourage him, but also to offer his friendship to him. The terms of this alliance were the following:

Et sobresso enuio mandado al rey de Valencia quel querie descercar et seer su amigo, et quel ayudarie con el cuerpo et con ell auer, et quel conseiaua que non diesse la villa al rey de Saragoça, nin enflaquesciesse, ca el le darie poder de omnes et auer quanto ouiesse mester. [...] Et desto fizieron sus cartas muy firmes.⁸²

To pursue the matter of inter-religious relationships further, it is worth mentioning the character of Abengalvón, ruler of Molina, depicted – at least in the *PMC* – as the

Cid had besieged Juballa (Puig de Molins), he harried every day Valencia to steal what he found and to take prisoners; the only people he did not harm were those who worked in order to earn a living'.

⁸² *EE* 890, 'since he was there and King Alvarrazin feared him, he summoned him by saying that he wanted to see him. And when they met, they swore their love to each other; and from that moment onwards King Alvarrazin was obliged to pay tributes to El Cid'; 'and about it, he sent a message to the King of Valencia, since he wanted to withdraw from besieging his territories and he wanted to be his friend, and that he would help him physically and materially, and he suggested that he should not surrender the villa to the King of Saragossa, and that he should be weak, since he would give him manpower and wealth as much as he needed. [...] And they signed their official pact about this'.

prototype of the perfect friend and ally. The *Cantar Segundo* of the epic poem narrates how El Cid sent some of his trustworthy vassals to escort his wife Jimena and his two daughters to the besieged city of Valencia, where he was waiting for them. For such a journey he relied on the help of the Muslim Abengalvón who, in the words of Rodrigo ‘mio amigo es de paz’ (*PMC* 1464). The Moorish ruler, who was asked for one hundred knights to escort the Cid’s family to Valencia, in fact provided two hundred.⁸³ The extra knights voluntarily supplied are a clear marker of generosity in their amicable relationship and in this case the rule of transmission of friendship is also respected; in fact, Abengalvón behaved amicably towards Minaya Albar Fañez and others among El Cid’s friends and vassals who were escorting the Campeador’s family.

Additionally, in cases of friendships ‘inherited’ indirectly, certain rules and formulae were respected. For example, once Abengalvón reached the place where Minaya rested, he honoured him by adopting, as the chronicle puts it, ‘the Arabic customs’.⁸⁴ After the Muslim’s demonstration of goodwill and loyalty, Minaya declares that he would celebrate Abengalvón’s deeds before his lord, El Cid: ‘¡Y[a] Ave[n]galvón, amígo!’ sodes sin falla!⁸⁵ With regard to this last point it is significant to note the fact that Minaya was depicted as a perfect counsellor, not even tempted by envy and ambition to defame the other, perhaps fearing that the latter could gain the king’s love and, therefore, usurp his own position at court.⁸⁶

This is what the *PMC* tells us, but at this point the focus will be shifted to analyze how the same events were recorded in the *EE*. In it any reference to a personal friendship between El Cid and his Muslim ally is omitted, although their relationship deserved far more attention than in *CVR* X:LXIX, for example, in which Abengalvón is completely ignored, except for the reference to his contribution to escort the three ladies. In *EE* 924 the definition given of Abengalvón is that of ‘loyal vassal’. Despite his virtues, however, his admirable actions were not particularly praised, since they were regarded as a normal outcome required by his subordinated position:

Et el Çid enbio por el moro Abencanon, et començol a gradescer mucho quanto bien et quanto onrradamente lo seruiera en onrrar a su muger et a sus fijas, en las seruir tan onrradamente commo el sabie. Et quando el moro lo oyo, respondió: «sennor Çid, esto et mas deuo yo fazer por ti, ca desde que yo en

⁸³ *PMC*, lines 1477-1479.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, lines 1517-1519.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, line 1528.

⁸⁶ See the following section about the causes generating the end of friendships.

el tu sennorio so, tu me as defendido fasta aqui». Et el Çid prometiol que assy lo farie cab adelante. Et desi el moro besol la mano, et despedios del, et tornosse pora Molina.⁸⁷

Unlike the *PMC* in which the agreement resembled a contractual link between peers, in the *EE* Abengalvón is depicted and treated according to his inferior status. Nonetheless, a thought-provoking element emerges from the apparently apologetic lines of the *PMC*, which might subvert, fully or partially, the assumption according to which the Muslim character acted out of real love and benevolence. In fact, once he reached Molina, before departing from the company, Abengalvón declared:

“Ondrar vos hemos todos ca tal es la su auze,
maguer que mal le queremos, non ge lo podremos
[fer⁸⁸

Burshatin has studied the figure of Abengalvón both as a single persona and as a symbol of his culture, together with the relationship that he established with El Cid. His study demonstrated that what in a first instance appears as a political pact based on mutuality revealed, instead, a weak connection, subjected to gnawing doubts and corruption. Abengalvón is emblematic of the submission of Muslim society to the Christian yoke, but at the same time ‘the faithful Moorish vassal is, in the end, not quite an exemplary version of virtue: this hyper-noble Moor is revealed as a conceit, its actor a set of conventional possibilities defined and circumscribed by the power of the Christian hero’.⁸⁹ All in all, it can be stated that in the *PMC* as well as in the *EE*, the definition of Abengalvón as ‘amigo de paz’ represented an ennobling appellative to define a merely military ally.⁹⁰

In the *EE* that was not an isolated case. Another interesting figure which appears in the Alfonsine source exclusively is the sultan of Persia who, despite the lack of any direct acquaintance between them, sent his messenger to entreat the Cid’s love and friendship. The messenger’s words exemplify the prototype of ‘friendship in absence’ –

⁸⁷ *EE* 924, ‘El Cid summoned the Moorish Abengalvón, and was very grateful to him for the loyal and honourable service that he performed and for honouring his wife and daughters as respectably as he knew. And when the Muslim heard it, he answered: “my lord El Cid, I should do this and even more for you, since you have always defended me for all the time I have been under your lordship, until now”. And El Cid promised him to do the same also in the future. And so, the Muslim kissed his hand, and he left and went back to Molina’.

⁸⁸ *PMC* 1524, ‘we all have to honour of you, this is our bad luck; then, even if we do not like him, we still cannot do anything against him’.

⁸⁹ Israel Burshatin, ‘The Docile Image: The Moor as a Figure of Force, Subservience, and Nobility in the *Poema de mio Cid*’, *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 31 (1984), 269-80 (p. 277).

⁹⁰ M. E. Lacarra, *El poema de Mio Cid*, p. 200; Mirrer, *Women, Jews, and Muslims*, pp. 49-50.

that is to say *amicitia* based on the knowledge of the others by means of their own fames and renowned virtues:

Mio sennor, el grant soldan de Persia, alla do esta, oyendo la muy grant fama del bien que en uos ha, uos enbia mucho saludar, et tieneuos por su amigo tanto commo el mas amigo que con el esta cada dia; et esto fizo el por los muy grandes esfuerços que de uos oyo contar, et por ende enbiauos todas las cosas que uos agora mostrare.⁹¹

Even more illuminating is the discussion between El Cid's *almoxerif* (minister operating as tax-collector) and the sultan's messenger:

et començol a dezir que tan grant fuera la nonbradia et el grant prez de armas et los muchos nobles fechos que sonaran del Çid en la tierra dUltramar, que por aquella razon se mouiera de enuiar aquel presente et de auer su amor.⁹²

It is possible to assume that El Cid accepted the Persian Sultan as his friend because of his elevated social position. In fact, as a sign of respect and acceptance of his amicable offer, and even more because he realized how powerful and wealthy the sultan was, Rodrigo:

Et entendiendo muy bien que aquel que tal presente le enbiaua era muy rico et de grant poder et muy franco de coraçon, dixo a aquel pariente del soldan que querie fazer onrra a su sennor qual nunca fiziera a ningun moro desde el dia que nasçiera; et esto era que lo querie abraçar, [...].⁹³

This declaration echoed the aforementioned statement according to which, in the *EE*, the figure of Abengalvón neither occupied a focal position in the story nor in the network of personal relationships involving El Cid. Rodrigo seemed to ignore him completely when he declared that the only Muslim to whom he would devote respect and loyalty was the Sultan of Persia (whom he also revered according to the Muslim rituals, being aware of the other's pagan practices). Moreover, El Cid welcomed the

⁹¹ *EE* 947, 'my lord, the great Sultan of Persia, from where he is, and having heard of your great fame about your good operate, he sends you his regards, and he considers you his friend as much as he regards the closest friends with whom he lives every day; and he did it because he was told of the great deeds you performed, and for this reason he sent you all the goods that I am going to show you now'. There is no reference to this episode in the *CVR* either.

⁹² *Ibid.* 948, 'and he started saying that the personal fame, the nobles actions and the military enterprises carried out by El Cid were widely known in the land of *Ultramar*, and that was the reason which prompted the Sultan to send his gifts and to ask for El Cid's love'.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 947, 'realizing that the person who sent him such a gift was very wealthy, powerful and of noble heart, he said to that relative of the Sultan's that he wanted to honour his lord as he had never done before to any other Muslim since the day he was born; and that he wanted to embrace him [...]'.

Sultan's company in the lands under his control (in Villanueva, to be precise) very amicably. One must remind oneself, however, that under the façade of a respectful friendship, there were stronger political and military interests. As demonstrated in *EE* 948, the Persian ruler, who showered his love and benevolence upon El Cid, was also attempting to secure his military protection both for his own persona and for the lands of Ultramar which were coveted by the Muslims.

Undoubtedly, in the *EE* El Cid occupied a *sui generis* position: as a knight, first, and as the self-made ruler of Valencia later, he managed to create an intricate web of political friendships around him. As an official intermediary, El Cid signed treaties of peace which could favour his own position and enhance his chances of success, but without ever betraying his lord. An example of his 'multidirectional policy' appears in *EE* 892 in which it is narrated how, after the *alcalde* of Murviedro had pledged his homage to the King of Denia in order to obtain his protection against the King of Saragossa, who was advancing towards Valencia:

En tod esto, quando el Çid Roy Diaz sopo que assi se paraua pleyto de Valencia, et que se perderie la villa, et que la aurie el sennor de Denia por aquella abenencia que fiziera con Abenlupon, dixo al rey de Valencia en poridad que por ninguna guisa non diesse la villa a ninguno; et dixo otrossi al rey de Saragoça quel seruirie et que ayudarie a ganar Valencia et que gela farie auer; et otrossi enuio sus mandaderos al sennor de Denia et esforçol quel ayudarie et que querie auer su amor con el. E sobresso enuio dezir al rey don Alffonso de Castiella et de Leon como era su uassallo, et quanto el fazie et ganaua que pora ell era [...].⁹⁴

El Cid proved to be a skilful politician, able to knit together all the available threads to create a weave whose knots were perfectly shaped around both his own figure and that of his lord. The apogee was reached with the conquest of Valencia. Significantly, despite his lack of royal origins, Rodrigo behaved exemplarily.⁹⁵ Thus, in his inaugural speech after the conquest, El Cid declared that he would listen to people's requests carefully and rule righteously by distributing lands and profits among those who deserved them, fairly:

⁹⁴ *EE* 892, 'in all this, when El Cid, Rodrigo Diaz, realized that the pact with Valencia was broken and that the city was lost, and that it would be taken by the lord of Denia thanks to the friendship that he signed with Avenlupón, he told the King of Valencia secretly that he should not surrender the villa to anybody for any reason; and he also said to the King of Saragossa that he would serve him and help him in conquering Valencia and maintain it; and he also sent his messengers to the lord of Denia and obliged him to help him and he wanted to sign a peace with him. And about all this, he sent a message to the King of Castile and León, since El Cid was his vassal, saying that whatever he did and gained was for the sovereign [...]'.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 918, "'Yo soy omne que nunca oue regnado, nin omne de mi linage non lo ouo [...]"', 'I am a man who had never reigned, neither has anybody of my lineage done so [...]'.

[...] et yo por mi quiero veer todas uuestras cosas et seeruos assy commo conpannero, et guardar uos he assy commo amigo a amigo et pariente a pariente; et yo quiero seer alcale et alguazil, et cada que alguna querella ouierdes vnos dotros yo uos lo fare luego emendar.⁹⁶

Far less detailed is the description given in the *CVR*, although his good faith and attempt to rule as a friend of his people are mentioned as well.⁹⁷

The comparison between the Alfonsine and the former historical and poetic descriptions of El Cid allows several conclusions to be drawn about the nature and characteristics of the friendships he made. Although they involved differently-ranked exponents of his social world, from the king to the magnates, the soldiers and even the believers of another faith, it would be appropriate to talk about a ‘circle of friendships’, of which he was the epicentre. In fact, the knights swore their allegiance to their masters, some of the Moorish rulers submitted to El Cid and he did the same towards his lord, Alfonso VI. Thus Rodrigo played the role of intermediary and bridge between the members of those groups and the king. His vicissitudes resembled numerous elements which fit both the general pattern of *amicitia* and that of political friendship. In fact, both their constitutive parameters were respected: from the pragmatic needs which motivated the parties to agree pacts of military defence and protection, the vassalatic chains linking equal and unequal partners, the inheritance of friendship and enmity, to the ritualized formulae and rituals adopted to make the pacts official. Additionally, the inter-religious bonds strongly affected the *Campeador*’s personal, social and political life.

Inevitably, all of these agreements were subjected to changes, above all when avarice and thirst of power undermined their stability. In fact, at the beginning of his career El Cid lost the love of his lord because of the envy of the courtiers who, through false accusations besmirched his name in the king’s eyes. Finally and skilfully, their original friendship was restored (*EE* 927) and it was possible only because the noble-hearted Rodrigo, during his entire banishment, had reputedly never committed any act of treachery against his lord. However the experience of El Cid represents an exception since, as it will be discussed in the following section, there were other and numerous

⁹⁶ *EE* 918, ‘[...] and I want to see all your things and to be your companion, and I want to protect you as a friend should do with another friend, and a relative with another relative; and I want to be judge and minister, and if any disagreement between us should arise, I will resolve it’.

⁹⁷ *CVR* X:LXV: ‘[...] prometió a los moros de les fazer mucho bien e mucha merçed, e mandóles que se entregasen de todo lo suyo’, ‘[...] he promised to the Muslims to be good and merciful with them, and he ordered them to administer all their possessions’.

cases in which friendship failed irremediably, without any possibility of being re-established.

§ 5. The End of Friendship

The final, in every sense, rule of friendship that we are going to examine here is its own ending. A survey of the possible causes appears in *SP IV:XXVII:VII*:

Natural amistad de que fecimos emiente en las leyes deste título, se desata por alguna de aquellas razones que diremos en la sexta Partida, por que puede home desheredar á los que decenden dellos: [...] La tercera manera de amistad que ha home con su amigo por bondad dél, desfallece quando el amigo que era bono se face malo, de manera que se non puede castigar, ó yerra tan gravemente contra su amigo de guisa que no puede nin quiere emendar el yerro que fizo.⁹⁸

These motivations depended on the typology of relationship itself. With regard to this, one should bear in mind that the cases at hand are forms of ‘interested friendships’, thus subjected to interference which should not destroy those catalogued as pure friendships. What the law does not specify, although it is indirectly proved by a series of practical examples, is that the two recurrent features adduced as reasons for the destruction of friendships were *cobdicia* and *envidia* (avarice and envy). In cases of political friendships, there is a strong identifiable link between avarice and the yearning for power that individuals, who agreed alliances in order to enhance their possessions and secure their positions, allegedly felt. Those coalitions were destined to expire once more advantageous agreements were stipulated or as soon as they were no longer considered useful. Numerous examples of this are also discernible in the *EE*, beginning with the Roman period, when the enmity between Caesar and Pompey exploded:

E la discordia e la mal querencia començada dantes entrellos et encubierta fasta alli, daqui se començo a descubrir, porque ouieron despues a lidiar et a contecer entrellos cuemo contaremos adelant, auiendo entre si debdo por que non deuiera seer este mal ni este desamor, sino por enuidia et soberuia que uencen todas cosas, o ellas an poder et bueluen tales fechos cuemo este.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *SP IV:XXVII:VII*, ‘natural friendship, which we referred to in the laws of this Title, dissolved for any of the causes set forth in the Sixth Partida of this book for which a man can inherit the property of his descendants [...]. The third kind of friendship which one man entertains with another by reason of his kindness is dissolved when the same friend who was good becomes bad so that he cannot be punished, or commits such grievous offence against his friend that it is not in his power to make amends from what he has done’.

⁹⁹ *EE 78*, ‘and the discord and aversion which already existed between them and had been hidden until then, from that moment became public, since later on they had to fight between them as we will narrate

Further details are added in *EE* 91 in which it is narrated how the political bond between Caesar and Pompey was reinforced by the wedding of the latter with Julia, Caesar's daughter. However, envy and thirst of power were still devouring Caesar's soul:

[...] era muy cobdicioso de sennorear [...]. E con este sabor del sennorio punnaua en puair quanto el mas sabie e podie por passar los otros cabdiellos a seer el solo por mayor en ell imperio; [...] E desto auie Julio Cesar muy grant enuidia et grand pesar en su uoluntad, et desamaua por end en so coraçon a Ponpeyo qua[n]to el podie; [...].¹⁰⁰

Those events led to open conflict and their friendship was officially broken. In order to renege on the pact, Caesar declared:

“aqui dexo yo las pazes et los derechos crebantados entre nos, e aqui finquen las posturas que eran entre mi et Ponpeyo e los otros romanos, et debdo del parentesco et las amiztades, et seguire yo la uentura; e acomiendo me yo a los fados”.¹⁰¹

It is evident that even breaking a pact of friendship implied the respect of certain norms which constituted a proper code of ‘tornarse amistad’ (revoking friendship).¹⁰² With regard to this point it is appropriate to quote the story of the Visigothic rulers Alarigo and Clodoveo, narrated in *EE* 436. Alarigo tried to kill his friend secretly, but Clodoveo discovered the plan and ‘enuiol tornar amiztad et desafiarle, et que sopiesse que non auie entrellos ningunas treguas dalli adelante, pues que ell las auie crebantadas’.¹⁰³ There was a code of honour to respect, even when declaring enmity. Those who respected it, by withdrawing officially, were still respected and regarded as loyal enemies, as much as they had been previously considered loyal allies.

later, and they did it even if they had agreed not to have such bitterness and contempt between them, but that happened because envy and haughtiness, which overcome anything, intervened, since they have the power to create things like these’.

¹⁰⁰ *EE* 91, ‘[...] he had an enormous cupidity for power [...]. And with such a desire for power he fought as much as he could and was able to, in order to overstep the other lords and be the only ruler in the entire Empire; [...]. And for this reason, Julius Caesar was very jealous and he felt pain in his will, and in his heart he hated Pompey as much as he was able to; [...]’.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 92, “‘I hereby renounce the peace and the alliances which had been broken between us, and here the pacts which existed between Pompey, the other Romans and me have expired, as well as the bonds of parentage and friendship, and I will follow the destiny; and I will trust Fate’”.

¹⁰² Carlos Heusch explored some historical cases presented in the *Fuero de Castilla* in ‘Les fondements juridiques de l’amitié’, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰³ *EE* 436, ‘he sent him the official declaration of the end of their friendship and that he challenged him, and he wanted him to know that from that moment there was no peace between them, since he had just destroyed it’.

Power, success, military and political achievements represented a Sword of Damocles hanging over the individuals who handled them, since even their friends could be corrupted by jealousy and they could betray them. *EE* 164 presents the episode of the Emperor Tiberius who commissioned Herodes Agrippa's arrest. One day a knight, travelling from Greece, reached the place where Agrippa was chained and he said to the prisoner: “sepas que saldras ayna daqui, et seras alçado en tan grand onra que te auran enuidia todos tus amigos [...]”.¹⁰⁴ In his sibylline words there was a didactic message: good luck and success were likely to produce unhappiness and disasters for those who had achieved them, since their friends would turn into enemies rather than feeling pleasure and joy for their fortunes.

Together with political and military agreements, the ‘natural friendships’ (including those between citizens sharing the same environment) were also likely to expire. An instance is offered by *EE* 96 which describes the civil war which flared up in Lérida, also condemned in *EE* 97, since it is seen as a fratricidal war generated by citizens who fought against their own brothers in order to fulfil the commandments imposed by their lords:

E en cabo mouiolos el parentesco que auien en uno, et començaron a enuiarse sus saludes por sennales mouiendo las espadas en buena manera. E tanto fue el desseo et ell amor que crecio entrellos, que les fizo crebantar las leyes et los mandamientos de sos sennores que les mandauan lidiar, et no lidiauan. E ley era estonces entre los romanos que no amasse amigo ni parient a parient mentre en huestes et en armas estidiessen unos contra otros, nil ouiesse piedat en batalla.

The situation was problematic; either by obeying the king or by respecting their blood ties, one of the pacts was inevitably going to be broken. In the case at hand, the civil parties realized that blood connections were impossible to deny, since ‘entre tan parientes aquella nemiga tan grand no se podrie fazer sin mal estança et sin quebrantamiento de lealtad [...]’. Their choices suggest that, on the one hand, love and kinship were perceived as stronger and far more conditioning than other social and political impositions; on the other hand, however, they were less powerful than other human vices in influencing people's reactions: ‘con la grand cobdicia de la ganancia oluida se a los omnes ell amor et el parentesco muchas uezes, et assi contescio aqui a los romanos’.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *EE* 164, “you have to know that you will leave this place, and you will be rewarded with so great honours that all your friends will be envious of you [...]”.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 97, ‘and in the end they were influenced by the blood ties existing between them, and they began exchanging signs by moving their swords in signal of peace. And the benevolence and love among them

The king, too, could experience the end of his friendships, either because he was corrupted by the aforementioned vices, or because other malevolent figures operated against him. Alfonso X experienced it personally. *CSM* 235 provides clues about the revolt of the nobles (1272-1274), who supported Sancho IV against his father, when the latter entrusted his kingdom to his grandsons ‘los infantes de la Cerda’. Alfonso’s will created widespread discontent. The verses of the *cantiga* remarked how treacherously Sancho and the nobles behaved towards Alfonso X, who had always loved and favoured them:

Hũa vez dos ricos-omes | que, Segundo que eu sei,
 se juraron contra ele | todos que non fosse Rey,
 seend’ os mais seus parentes, | que divid’ é natural.
 [...]
 E demais, sen tod’ aquesto, | fazendo-lles muito ben,
 o que lle pouco graçian | e non tñyan en ren; [...]. (Lines 21-29)¹⁰⁶

Not only did they betray the king, but they went as far as agreeing an alliance against him, in which loyalty and mutual support were sworn between the contractors, although with the aim of subverting the legitimate rule.

To conclude, even if the cases of political friendships presented in the Alfonsine works are clear examples of pragmatic alliances signed in order to obtain protection, military support and, in some cases, material benefits, these works engendered a wider programme of education whose didactic norms were designed to constitute a model of virtues transcending such practical needs. For this reason, and perhaps foreseeing the reception of his works, most of these pacts were defined as ‘friendships’ rather than as military alliances. Consequently, since these political relationships were described as morally based, the possibility of their destruction was frequently attributed to sporadic cases of treachery committed against a ‘friend’ rather than being ascribed exclusively to the fact that the person who committed such malevolent actions belonged to a different social, political or religious category.

increased so much, that they broke the laws and commandments of the lords who ordered them to fight, and they did not battle. And the Roman law established that there should not be any love between friends and relatives while they were fighting a war and when they belonged to the rival army, and they should not have any piety in the battlefield’; ‘such an enmity could not exist between such close relatives without behaving badly and breaking the bond of loyalty [...]’; ‘men very often forget the love and the parentage because of their immense avarice, and the same happened to the Romans’.

¹⁰⁶ *CSM* 235, ‘one time some of the nobles, I know it to be true, joined in a plot against him so that he would not be king. Most of them were related to him by blood ties. Furthermore, he had been very generous with them, and they were ungrateful and scorned it as nought’.

Chapter VII

‘Other’ Friends and Friendships

§ 1. Unconventional Relationships: Typologies and Parties Involved

The main concern of this chapter will be to investigate the typologies and characteristics of friends and friendships which were respectively regarded as unconventional in the Iberian medieval mentality and were mirrored in the Alfonsine production. Any enquiry into this subject must begin by acknowledging that the word ‘other’ is capable of bearing a number of meanings. In this study, however, it has been used to indicate, in the first instance, the relationships involving individuals considered outsiders for the marginalization to which they were subjected within their own social environments; secondly, the forms of *amicitia* which did not adhere to any codified classical pattern, even if in some cases they might be defined by the traditional formulae of friendship. In the Iberian context, Muslims, Jews, heretics and women belonged to such categories, although in practice they represented a substantial and significant component at Alfonso X’s court (at least Jews and women) and, not less significantly, in the cultural and political life of his reign.

By bearing in mind these considerations, this analysis seeks to reveal the sorts of connections which representatives of these groups forged between them and with other communities, including also cases of personal agreements, such as commercial partnerships and tutorship. Such a multifarious panorama depicted by Alfonso X’s works recalls the observation made by Paul Julian Smith, according to whom Spanish culture is a ‘field of enquiry in which cultural identities are quite explicitly founded on originary differences which power seeks in vain to erase’.¹ Sidestepping the broadly debated question regarding the social interactions which were allowed or forbidden between members of those groups and the representatives of the Christian community, here the focus will be on the terminology, register and lexicon related to friendship and adopted to define at least some of those links in the Alfonsine works. This will help to bring into focus the peculiarities of the individuals involved and the aspects which characterized the connections established between them. Moreover, it will provide a

¹ Paul Julian Smith, *Representing the Other: ‘Race’, Text and Gender in Spanish and Spanish American Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 219-220. Cited also in Louise Mirrer, *Women, Jews, and Muslims*, p. 14.

locus for understanding how and to what extent those links were adjusted to the traditionally accepted and codified patterns of friendship.

‘Other’ Friends

§ 2. Muslim, Jews and Christians: What Kind of Friendship Was Possible?

The relationships between the different ethnic and religious groups living together during the reign of Alfonso X and the way in which such an historical reality was portrayed in his works will be discussed in more detail in this chapter.² Before embarking on this analysis and for the sake of conceptual clarity, it has to be presented here the much debated concept of ‘convivencia’, or peaceful co-existence, experienced in Medieval Iberia, which proves fundamental in order to understand its repercussions on the Alfonsine production.³ Such a definition has been used to describe the situation experienced by Muslims, Jews and Christians who shared the same Iberian geographical and political space for centuries, even though in practice their social interaction remained extremely limited. The *SP* also contain a section aimed at regulating the

² See *SP* VII:XXIV and XXV. See also Marjorie Ratcliffe, ‘Judíos y musulmanes en la jurisprudencia medieval española’, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 9 (1983), 423-439; Louise Mirrer, *Women, Jews, and Muslims in the Texts of Reconquest Castile* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 47-65; *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim and Jewish Sources*, ed. by Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), pp. 269-275.

³ The concept of *convivencia* was first coined by Américo Castro in his work *España en su historia: cristianos, moros y judíos*, 2nd edn (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1983), pp. 198-205. Two different interpretations of this subject were given by Sánchez Albornoz and Américo Castro; read further about the polemic generated by the two contrasting points of view in José Gómez-Martínez, *Américo Castro y el origen de los españoles: historia de una polémica* (Madrid: Gredos, 1975). For an introduction to the debated concept of ‘convivencia’ see Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: University Press, 1979). For a survey of historiography, see *Cultures in Contact in Medieval Spain: Historical and Literary Essays Presented to L.P. Harvey*, ed. by David Hook and Barry Taylor ([London]: King's College London Medieval Studies, 1989); *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain*, ed. by Vivian B. Mann, T. F. Glick and Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: George Braziller in association with the Jewish Museum, 1992); David Nirenberg, *Community of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration Before the Enlightenment*, ed. by Marcia L. Colish, John Christian Laursen and Cary J. Nederman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change*, ed. by Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English (Notre Dame, IND.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000); Cary J. Nederman, *Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Toleration, c. 1100-1550* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Alex Novikoff, ‘Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historiographic Enigma’, *Medieval Encounters*, 11 (2005), 7-36; Chris Lowney, *A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); H. Salvador Martínez, *La convivencia en la España del siglo XIII: perspectivas alfonsies* (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2006).

exchanges between those groups by prescribing behavioural norms for Jews and Muslims and specifying the kinds of relationships that they were allowed or forbidden to establish either among them or with the Christian believers (*SP VII:XXIV* and *XXV*).

It has to be noted, however, that despite the widespread belief that the Alfonsine court represented a model of tolerance and enlightenment, for the attitudes assumed towards the non-Christian groups, in fact such a statement is valid only if applied to the learned entourage; that is to say only if the phenomenon is analysed from mere artistic and literary perspectives. In fact, official documents reveal that both the king and his court showed clear signs of mistrust towards the non-Christian groups, considered as potential sources of turmoil and crisis both in the political and social fields. As Robert Burns has stated, despite the undeniable ‘phenomenon of parallel societies’ existing within the Peninsula, there was the common agreement that a constrictive legal regulation was needed in order to prevent the hosted groups from undermining a legal system which was established in order to operate, first of all, as a ‘Christian constitution’.⁴

The law was particularly harsh towards the Jews (regarded as betrayers of the ‘true faith’, although recognized as people of the Book), even though in practice they were socially respected for the administrative positions that they held. Nonetheless, such restrictions appeared rather moderate if compared with those imposed on Muslims and Mudejars, against whom unsurpassable social barriers were erected. One example will stand for many: the Muslims (particularly men) accused of having sexual intercourse with Christians were condemned to death and even regular marriages between members of the two religions were forbidden.

Nevertheless, in certain aspects this situation of co-existence was very profitable for the territories in which it was experienced, above all from an economic point of view. In fact, the social segregation of Muslims and Jews did not coincide with their economic isolation, since they were effectively one of the most prolific sources of income for the kingdoms to which they belonged and to which they paid tribute. Whilst acknowledging the historical relevance of *convivencia* and its originating factors, this study will investigate the characteristics of the inter-religious connections as presented in the Alfonsine collections under analysis in this work. The latter, in fact, give an insight into the historical, political and social context in which the royal scriptorium operated, which also affected the fictional representation of historical events. With this

⁴ Burns, ‘Jews and Moors in the *Siete Partidas*’, pp. 46-62.

in mind, we will explore the extent to which the cases depicted in the narrations elaborated under Alfonso X's patronage resembled historically recognizable events and attitudes, and which of them were, instead, mere literary, legal and didactic models which the sovereign sought to transmit.

A useful insight into this subject is given in *SP VII*, whose titles XXIV and XXV concern the regulation of duties, responsibilities and rights (the latter being relatively few if compared with the prohibitions imposed on them) regarding Jews and Muslims, obliged to follow the commandments of the law, like any other Christian subject, including the king.⁵ Much of the problem surrounding the law was that it contributed to make social integration nearly impossible to achieve, since it prescribed alienating norms aimed at highlighting differences and increasing hostility towards those groups. Thus, both Muslims and Jews were obliged by the law to wear distinctive items of clothes from Christians, in order to be identified and, therefore, recognized as 'others'. If that was not enough, the law also forbade Christians to have any close relationship (especially sexual intercourse, but also any close contact based on mutual trust and exchange of confidences) with Jews, heretics and especially with Muslims. Even so, Jews were entitled to some benefits under the law; for instance, they could have their own synagogue if a Christian sovereign allowed it. By contrast, Muslims were heavily penalized and discriminated against. For the Muslim communities, for example, building mosques on Christian soil was severely forbidden.⁶ However, all the non-Christian groups were allowed by the law to perform their own rituals, albeit with the prescription not to preach and, above all, to convert Christians to their faiths.

Similarly, the law forbade Christians to impose conversion on those groups coercively:

Por buenas palabras et convenibles predicaciones se deben trabajar los cristianos de convertir á los moros para facerles creer la nuestra fe et para adocirlos á ella, et non por fuerza nin por premia; [...].⁷

But one thing was the legal statement and another was the practice, as suggested by a careful reading of *CSM* 192. The poem narrates a miracle which happened in Consuegra, near Toledo, where a devoted Christian man was constantly arguing with his Muslim servant from Almería. The latter used to defame the Virgin's name, and all

⁵ Burns, 'Jews and Moors in the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X', pp. 423-439.

⁶ *SP VII:XXV:I*.

⁷ *Ibid. VII:XXV:II*, 'Christians should endeavor to convert the Moors by causing them to believe in our religion, and bring them into it by kind words and suitable discourses, and not by violence or compulsion; [...]'.

the attempts made by the Christian to convert him turned into failure. Not even the promise of receiving part of the Christian's wealth made the Muslim change his mind. One day the Christian placed his irreverent servant in a cave, where the Muslim fought against the devil's temptations for two nights. On the third day, the Virgin appeared to him and told him to repent and abjure his false faith. At that point the Muslim decided to convert and, when he finally went out of the cave, his master also convinced him to be baptized. At this stage, two elements should be highlighted. First, in the entire *cantiga* there is no clue which can make one affirm that the Christian tried to convert his servant driven by benevolence and affection felt towards the other. Secondly, the Christian's attempt to convert his servant would have generated some legal issues, since the law forbade religious pressure (even if, as in this case, imposed by a Christian). Nonetheless, in this *cantiga* there is no indication of how the events developed afterwards, although nothing seems to suggest that the aforementioned legal norms were indeed applied.

This example, together with others which will be examined in the following sections, suggests first, that the Alfonsine law (being a prescriptive corpus of philosophical and didactical value) did not always reflect faithfully what happened in practice; secondly, that the relationships that subjugated figures (such as Jews and Muslims) established with Christians, although they might be defined as friendships, were in fact pragmatic agreements which accentuated even more the social disparity of the contractors. However, while a high degree of social segregation experienced by those minority groups might be recognized, cases of inter-religious connections, although very rare, might take place. What this study will seek to reveal is when, under which conditions and circumstances, and to what extent those sporadic and particular cases of inter-religious connections were recognized, and ergo defined, as real bonds of friendship.

§ 3. Jewish Stereotypes and Their Individual Values: The Anti-Model of Friendship

During the reign of Alfonso X and already before him, Jews occupied important positions at the royal court, thanks to their literary and administrative skills.⁸ They participated actively in the affairs of the realm, especially by collaborating in the translation of numerous scientific and literary works, particularly in Toledo. Nevertheless, although they were respected as ‘people of the Book’, it was simultaneously believed that they had betrayed the Christian faith and, for this reason, they were considered evildoers and unreliable individuals on whom Christians should keep a close eye.⁹

The image extrapolated from the Alfonsine works reflects the same attitudes towards the Jews; an attitude which recalls the norms diffused after the IV Lateran Council of 1215.¹⁰ Even though it was believed that Jewish individuals might be endowed with some admirable individual qualities and virtues (although rare and usually related to their closeness or conversion to Christianity), they were still regarded as subjects that could not be trusted as friends and thus the law forbade any close contact with them.¹¹

A number of examples extrapolated from the Alfonsine works demonstrate that money and material profits were regarded as keywords to de-codify the Jewish mentality and way of behaving. *CSM* 25 and *CSM* 348 are interesting cases in point. To begin, the Jewish protagonist of *CSM* 25 embodies the stereotype of the false friend,

⁸ Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. by Louis Schoffman, 2 vols (Philadelphia, Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1992), I, 111-137, 186-242.

⁹ Craddock, *The Legislative Works of Alfonso X, el Sabio: A Critical Bibliography* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1986), pp. 3, 25, 27, 55-7, 123, 148-9, 355, 401, 444, 512. On the origin and development of conflict between Christians and Jews see: James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue. A Study on the Origins of Antisemitism* (New York: JPS, 1974); Emilio Mitre Fernández, *Judaísmo y Cristianismo. Raíces de un gran conflicto histórico* (Madrid: Istmo, 1980); Lelia Cracco Ruggini, ‘Pagani, ebrei e cristiani: odio sociologico e odio teologico nel mondo antico’, in *Gli Ebrei nell’Alto Medioevo, XXVI Settimana di Studi del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 1978* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 1980), pp. 15-101; Vikki Hatton and Angus MacKay, ‘Anti-Semitism in the *Cantigas de Santa María*’, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 61 (1983), 189-199; Enrique Cantera Montenegro, ‘Judíos medievales. Convivencia y persecución’, in *Tópicos y realidades de la Edad Media*, pp. 179-252.

¹⁰ David Romano, ‘Los judíos y Alfonso X’, pp. 204-205. On the ‘ideario antijudío’ see Luis Suárez Fernández, ‘Claves históricas del problema judío en la España medieval’, in *El legado material hispanojudío. VII Curso de Cultura Hispanojudía y Sefardí de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha*, coord. by Ana M. López Álvarez y Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1998), pp. 15-76 (p. 16); Lucy Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Spain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 172-173, 177-178.

¹¹ An entire title is dedicated to the Jews and their exchanges with Christians: *SP* VII:XXIV.

behaving amicably only in order to obtain material benefits. The poem tells of a Christian man who, after having spent all his resources praiseworthily, had to recur to a Jewish moneylender for a loan.¹² The Jew accepted the deal, although he asked for some security in return, planning already to make a profit from it. However, in order to achieve his goal, he needed to secure the Christian's allegiance first. Perhaps for this reason, he sought to emphasize the amicable reasons which brought him to act benevolently towards the other. He also adopted the terminology of friendship to secure the other's trust, by simulating a disinterested attitude towards the concrete benefits that he could gain from that situation:

E o judeu lle diss' enton:
 "Amig', aqesto que tu queres
 farei eu mui de coraçon
 sobre bon pennon, se mio deres". (Lines 23-26)

The Christian, forced by necessity rather than led by real trust, accepted the terms of the agreement proposed by the Jew, since it was the only chance he had to receive funds to continue his business. But the day came in which he had to discharge his debt. At that time, he was not in Byzantium (where the agreement had been signed), therefore he put the money that he owed to the moneylender in a basket and threw it in the sea, entrusting it to the Virgin, so that it would reach the expected destination. As he had hoped, the basket reached the shore, where a servant of the Jew's had been ordered to wait for it. Unfortunately, the servant failed to grasp it, but the moneylender himself, chiding him, seized the basket and hid the treasure from everybody:

[...]. E mui bien
 se guardou de seus conpanheiros
 que non ll' ouvessen d'entender
 de como os el ascondia; [...]. (Lines 124-127).¹³

¹² The activity of moneylending was stereotypically associated with Jews. Julio Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (Madrid: Istmo, 1978), I, 104; Joseph Shatzmiller, *Shylock Reconsidered. Jews, Moneylending and Medieval Society* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1990).

¹³ *CSM* 25, 'the Jew then told him: "My friend, I shall gladly do what you wish if you will give me some good security"'; 'he kept it a secret from his friends so that they would not know how he hid the money from them'.

His behaviour in that situation contradicts one of the fundamental principles of friendship: the pleasure achieved in sharing goods and benefits with friends. Even the *SP* comments on the value of sharing, considered fundamental for the existence of any community and regarded as the root of individual happiness (*SP* IV:XXVII:II). By accepting this proposition, it is not unreasonable to assert that the stereotyped Jewish protagonist of *CSM* 25, who hid his wealth even from his friends, embodied the anti-model of any good friend. Significantly, in the narrative of *CSM* 25 it seems that the general warnings against Jews (a clear expression of the widespread religious prejudices towards them) contributed, along with the Virgin Mary's intervention, to save the Christian merchant. The latter, in fact, being probably influenced by the intolerant atmosphere generated around the non-Christian groups, never trusted the Jew completely and he rather called for the Virgin's aid. What demonstrates this is that throughout the entire *cantiga*, the Christian's attitude towards the Jewish moneylender appears extremely detached; for instance, he never used the title *amigo* to address him, while the other adopted this term abundantly, although (as proved by the events) hypocritically.

A similar case-study which will be discussed is *CSM* 348, whose protagonist is Alfonso X himself. The poem describes the King's attitudes towards the Jewish community living under his dominion and it represents an interesting source of comparison with the relationships that the same sovereign established with his Muslim subordinates (whose analysis will be developed in the next section). *CSM* 348 recounts that the Virgin Mary appeared to Alfonso X in a dream, revealing him where a great treasure had been buried by its Jewish owners and telling him how he could find and use those riches. The King sought to find those resources because they could help him to finance his military campaigns. Therefore, he sent a messenger to find the treasure, but the mission was unsuccessful. One year later, during his campaign against Granada, Alfonso X discovered the hidden treasure personally. It is interesting to note the description given of the Jewish owners, which reads as follows:

e mostrou-lle d'outra parte | a Virgen grandes tesouros
[...]

De prata, d'our' e de pedras | mui ricas e mui preçadas,
e panos muitos de seda | e çitaras ben lavradas
e outras dōas mui nobres | de prata, todas douradas,

dos judeos, seus êemigos, | a que quer peor ca mouros. (Lines 44-48)¹⁴

Admittedly, it recalls the statement of the *SP*, according to which, for certain aspects, Jews were considered worse than Muslims, since they had betrayed the Divine Law. Moreover, they were feared more than Muslims because they were far more influential from an economic, social and cultural point of view.

These didactic warnings conveyed through the Alfonsine works were the result of a widespread belief according to which betrayal was the worst sin that a man might commit. Consequently, no individual virtue could redeem a Jewish betrayer, whose only chance of salvation was conversion. In trying to explore this issue in more depth, *CSM* 107 provides an interesting case in point. The miracle concerns a Jewish woman, named Marisaltos, who was thrown from a cliff by the other Jewish members of her community because she was accused of a crime of which there is no explicit reference in the poem although it was, in all likelihood, of a sexual nature. In the end, the beautiful Jewess was saved by the Virgin Mary, who responded to her appeals for help. Interestingly, despite the fact that Marisaltos was both a woman and a Jew, she was still portrayed in a positive light and the only possible explanation for this is that she had converted.¹⁵

To conclude this brief overview of the examples of relationships involving Jewish characters which were defined through the vocabulary of friendship, it might be stated that the images created in the Alfonsine production reflected the widespread beliefs and deep-rooted stereotypes which developed, even more powerfully, in the thirteenth century.¹⁶ Additionally, as Julio Caro Baroja has asserted, there were four main elements according to which Jews were recognized, classified and, consequently treated: religious, psychological, economic and physical factors.¹⁷ In the Alfonsine production two of these discriminating features predominated. First, the religious motif; Jews were considered guilty of deicide and condemnable for the cruelties that, under the façade of rituality, they committed against Christians and all those who had abjured their faith. Secondly, the Alfonsine narrations pointed out some psychological characteristics which were considered common to any Jewish person; particularly

¹⁴ *CSM* 348, 'the Virgin showed him in another place great treasures of silver, gold, rich and precious stones, much cloth of silk, beautifully worked tapestries, and other very noble objects of gilded silver which belonged to the Jews, Her enemies, whom She hates worse than the Moors'.

¹⁵ Louise Mirrer, *Women, Jews, and Muslims*, pp. 31-44.

¹⁶ Bagby, 'Alfonso X, el sabio compara moros y judíos', pp. 578-583; 'The Jews in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso el Sabio', *Speculum* 46 (1971), 670-688.

¹⁷ Baroja, *Los judíos en España*, I, 104.

soberbia (sense of pride), avarice and disloyalty towards others, including those that they fraudulently dubbed as *amigos*.

§ 4. Relationships With and Between Muslim Subjects: Areas of Integration and Segregation

Alongside the Jewish presence there was also a significant Muslim social component. In the previous chapter political alliances between Muslim and Christians have been discussed and we have seen that the connections between rulers, who used to sign pacts of friendship, were, in fact, military coalitions aimed at obtaining mutual protection and military support. Considering the fact that there were differences in the degree to which those agreements were stipulated as well as in the conditions that they implied (they were usually vassalatic oaths that subordinated contractors swore to their superiors), in this section the relationships involving representatives of different faiths, who were not only political or military allies, but also and simply individuals belonging to the lowest ranks, will be taken into account.¹⁸

Special attention will be devoted to the ‘historical’ portrait of this ethnic and religious group given in the *EE*. Interestingly, a clear dichotomy emerges from the Alfonsine chronicles, since the Muslims were either depicted as political allies or as treacherous enemies. In the first case, they are described as endowed with honourable values, which they adopted to respect the terms established by the truces that they had agreed, as well as to support their Christian allies on the battlefield. Such a proposition, regarding the martial value of those relationships, is reinforced by Mirrer’s observation, according to which the title *amigo*, when referred to a Muslim person, did not imply any personal link other than a mere military alliance. In fact, Mirrer (like Burshatin before her)¹⁹ has argued that Muslim ‘friendly’ attitudes towards Christians, whereas existent,

¹⁸ About the legislative norms concerning both Muslims and Jews see M. Ratcliffe, ‘Judíos y Musulmanes en la jurisprudencia medieval española’, pp. 423-439; Robert A. MacDonald, ‘Law and Politics: Alfonso’s Program of Political Reform’, in *The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned and James the Conqueror: Intellect and Force in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Robert I. Burns S.J. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 180-199; John Boswell, *The Royal Treasure: Muslim Communities Under the Crown of Aragon in the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 107-164, 259-322; O’Callaghan, ‘The Mudejars of Castile and Portugal in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries’, in *Muslims Under Latin Rule, 1100-1300*, ed. by James M. Powell (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 11-56; Burns, ‘Muslims in the Thirteenth-Century Realms of Aragon: Interaction and Reaction’, in *Muslims Under Latin Rule*, pp. 57-102; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*; ‘Muslims in Christian Iberia, 1000-1526: Varieties of Mudejar Experience’, in *The Medieval World*, ed. by P. Linehan and J. Nelson (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 60-76.

¹⁹ Israel Burshatin, ‘The Docile Image: The Moor as a Figure of Force’, pp. 269-80.

were merely proof of their weakness, rather than signs of their amicability. For this reason Mirrer went as far as defining them as ‘feminized’ more than friendly.²⁰ By adopting his parameters of classification, one may note that a very similar idea of weakness – in certain aspects comparable with female fragility – is also echoed in some of the descriptions present in the Alfonsine chronicles.

An example of a positive Muslim character appears in *EE* 871 which narrates how the Archbishop Bernardo, supported by Queen Constance of Burgundy, ordered a company of Christian knights to enter the Muslim mosque in Toledo and destroy ‘las suziedades de la ley de Mahomat’ (‘the dirtiness of Mohamed’s law’). The *EE* recounts that the monarch in power at that time, Alfonso VI, was furious about their initiative, above all given that he had signed an armistice with the Muslims of Toledo, promising that he would allow them to keep their *mezquita* as their place of worship. The Queen and the Archbishop’s decision weakened and threatened Alfonso’s authority, since it could have been perceived as a sign of the King’s volte-face. If the sovereign had supported the Queen’s decision indeed, he would have been accused of treachery by the Muslims for not having respected the terms of their previous agreement. This situation led the King to decide to punish the archbishop and the Queen in order to demonstrate that he had had nothing to do with what they had planned and thus he would prove his goodwill. Nevertheless, the Muslim community begged him mercifully to forgive the two responsible ‘onde te besamos las manos et los pies et te pedimos que los perdones, et nos todos de muy buenas voluntades te soltamos el pleyto que nos fiziste de la yura de la mezquita’.²¹

The Muslims’ magnanimity suggested that ‘[...] los alaraues eran omnes entendudos et sabios’,²² although in fact they played a double role. On the one hand, since they were Alfonso VI’s subjects, they submitted to his power, performing actions which recalled the traditional vassalatic rituals, such as bowing in front of him and kissing his hands and feet. On the other hand, by forgiving the Queen and the Archbishop for the offences brought to their community, the Muslims stand as models of moral virtues and outstanding wisdom. Their admirable behaviour also relieved the King, who was embarrassed by the fact that, although indirectly, his promises had been broken. Nonetheless, a shadow loomed over the relationship between him and the Muslim population of Toledo. In fact, behind the friendly words that the Muslims

²⁰ Mirrer, *Women, Jews, and Muslims*, p. 4.

²¹ *EE* 871, ‘then, we kiss your hands and your feet and we beg you to forgive them, and all of us with all our goodwill free you from the pact by which you swore to leave us the mosque’.

²² *Ibid.*, ‘[...] the Muslims were judicious and wise men’.

adopted to proclaim their unconditional love and respect for the Christian king, there were other and more pragmatic reasons. They implored Alfonso VI not to kill the two responsible characters, even if they had been recognized as guilty of that misdeed, for fear of the possible repercussions that the intervention of the Queen's and the archbishop's followers and allies could have caused. Last but not least, the Muslims had probably foreseen that Alfonso VI would reward them and compensate their mercy, as the *EE* reports: '[...] et gradescio mucho a los moros las buenas razones quel auien dicho, prometiendoles que les farie mucho bien et mucha merced por ello'.²³

At the same time, Alfonso VI's gratitude towards the Muslims was, in all likelihood, a strategic measure aimed at preserving his own image and reputation, rather than being a sign of real trust and benevolence towards them. This is proved by the fact that, except for the cases of political agreements, in which the lexicon of friendship was adopted conventionally, in none of the other types of relationships involving Muslim characters, were the latter explicitly dubbed *amigos*. By contrast, the most ennobling title they could get from the sovereign (at least in the Alfonsine chronicles) was that of 'uos omnes buenos' (denomination also used to address the Muslim governing elite).²⁴ Such a title obviously implied a positive characterization, although it lacked any personal and emotional involvement.

There are, however, numerous examples presenting a negative characterization of Muslim figures, depicted as evildoers, corrupted by their false beliefs and, for this reason, banned as friends. The *CSM* abound with cases confirming such a proposition. To begin, *CSM* 328 narrates Alfonso X's stay in Alcanate (near Jerez) during his campaign aimed at conquering Salé. The naval attack that he led was successful and provided a wealth of booty. In the meantime, his Christian army started calling Alcanate with the new name of 'Santa Maria do Porto' (Santa María del Puerto), causing great irritation among the Muslim population of the place. Disturbed by those events, a Muslim constable from Jerez went to see the king to complain. However, the situation appeared difficult to control and the sovereign feared that turmoil would break out. In the attempt to avoid such a disaster, the King ordered his soldiers to stop using the Christian name to call the city, hoping that this would prevent any further friction. But he was powerless, since the adoption of that toponym had already turned into a habit. Only a miracle, performed by the Virgin Mary, saved the precarious situation from irreversible collapse. In fact, the Virgin Mary inspired the Muslim constable to offer the

²³ *EE* 871, '[...] and he was very thankful to the Muslims for all the good reasons that they had adduced, and he promised to reward them very well and to be generous for what they had done'.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 952, 'you, honourable men'.

city of Alcanate to Alfonso X, and that sorted the problematic situation out. It is significant to note that, despite the position occupied by the Muslim constable, which allowed him to confer with the monarch face to face, he was not trusted immediately, as demonstrated by Alfonso X's initial hesitation. The King, probably guided by wisdom and widespread prejudices, was reluctant to trust Muslim individuals, above all when their goodwill had not been explicitly and previously proved. In fact, in the case of *CSM* 328, despite the fact that the deal offered by the constable had been inspired by the Holy Will through the intervention of the Virgin Mary, the Muslim's proposal was accepted by the monarch only after the Muslim's proof of loyalty and his assurance that his aim was that of keeping peace exclusively.

Reduced to its simplest terms, it may be plausibly stated that the Muslims were generally regarded as individuals that should not be trusted completely, being treacherous and malevolent characters. In particular, such warnings were addressed to the sovereign, who had to adopt some preventive measures in order to protect his position and power. To this extent, an analysis of *CSM* 345 is interesting. The poem tells us that, after having conquered Jerez, Alfonso X repopulated the city with Christians, although he allowed the Muslim population to continue living in the region. The events to come showed that his magnanimous action became his major mistake. In fact, trusting the Muslim inhabitants and their false signs of reverence and friendship, the King gave them a breathing space to organize a violent insurrection against him:

Ca os mouros espreitaron | quando el Rei ben seguro
 estava deles, e toste | foron fazer outro muro
 ontr'o castel' e a vila, | muit' ancho e fort' e duro;
 e daly os do castelo | fillaron-s' a combater (lines 21-24).²⁵

The Muslims had waited peacefully until Alfonso X believed in their goodwill and only at that point had they counterattacked, by building a new wall within the city and launching from there a new attack against the Christian outposts. Evidently, their declaration of submission and the fact that they had proclaimed to be 'friends of their lord' were mere rhetorical strategies aimed at reassuring the monarch and pursuing their real plans.

²⁵ *CSM* 345, 'the Moors lay in wait until the king was sure of them, then quickly built another wall between the castle and the city, very wide and strong and hard, and from there they began to attack those in the castle'.

All the examples outlined above reflect a situation of permanent conflict between the different social groups and particularly between Christians and the members of the other religious communities. The areas in which social interaction was allowed was extremely circumscribed, as *CSM* 358 highlights. The poem recounts the building of the Church of Santa María del Puerto, whose works were coordinated by the master builder Ali who, ‘emperor que x’era mouro’ (line 25, ‘although he was a Muslim’), was the person who witnessed the miracle performed by the Virgin, since he had personally found the cave of perfect stones which should be used to built the church dedicated to her. The Muslim acknowledged the miracle and praised the Virgin for it. The poem does not specify, though, whether the builders that Ali directed were all Muslims or, if there were also individuals of different religious origins. The only specification given is that, like Ali, all of them were Alfonso X’s subjects.

CSM 358 shows a situation which was not unusual; that is to say that masters of the Islamic style were in charge of artistic works commissioned by Christians.²⁶ This confirms that cultural and artistic exchanges were frequent between the two groups; something which was not reflected into the social and political fields. In fact, in the latter, Muslims were regarded as enemies, with whom the only face-to-face contact allowed could take place on the battlefield. *CSM* 344 illustrates this point clearly in the narration of a miracle which happened in Tudia, during the period in which Seville was under Muslim control. The two enemy armies, Christian and Muslim respectively, camped side by side overnight, unaware of each other’s presence. Miraculously, neither saw or heard the other. Only at dawn did they realize what had happened and, acknowledging the miracle, they signed a truce and departed in peace. Nothing is said in the *cantiga* which might suggest that some kind of amicable feeling arose between them, not even after the Holy intervention. Moreover, the truce itself represented an unexpected achievement, although it also proved that their relationship was based on a rigid mentality of war, according to which one could, in certain circumstances, pay respect to a Muslim adversary, but this would not imply any further personal engagement. In fact, in the entire poem there is no reference to the lexicon of friendship which, as proved before, was used either in the agreements signed between political

²⁶ It is possible to recognize the interactions of Muslim, Jews and Christian elements in the so-termed Mudejar style, whose examples abound in the entire peninsular territory. To quote only some of these cases: the Church of San Tirso in Sahagún, the monastery of Santa Clara in Tordesillas and the Cathedral of Teruel. See Manuel Valdés Fernández, *Arquitectura mudéjar en León y Castilla* (León: Universidad de León, 1984); Teresa Pérez Higuera, *Arquitectura mudéjar en Castilla y León* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, 1993); Robert Ousterhout and D. Fairchild Ruggles, ‘Encounters with Islam: The Medieval Mediterranean Experience: Art, Material Culture, and Cultural Interchange’, *Gesta*, 43 (2004), 83-85.

leaders (in those cases the title *amigo* was adopted as part of the standard formulae used to sign treaties of peace), or in the sporadic cases in which the Muslim contractors had converted to Christianity.

Together with the warnings about the perils which might originate from personal contacts with non-Christian individuals and the presentation of moral and pragmatic justifications for their social and political segregation, another significant element is that the same prohibition was sometimes imposed between the members of the same Muslim community. With regard to this point, *CSM 167* deserves some attention. It recounts the miracle which happened at the Virgin's shrine in Salas, where a Muslim woman carried her dead child, praying to the Virgin Mary to bring him back to life. The Muslim woman stands out for her devoutness to the Holy Lady, which made her scornful of the threats to which she was subjected, when the other women of her community tried to dissuade her from making the pilgrimage to the Christian shrine. Despite the psychological pressure that the other Muslim women placed on the devoted mother, she continued addressing them as *amigas*. Obviously they were not behaving as such, but the denomination was used conventionally, being a standard formula adopted to define all the people linked by 'natural friendship', that is to say the link between individuals who shared the same geographical and social life-space:

[...] mais ela lles diss': "Amigas, | se Deus me de mal defenda,
a mia esperança creio | que vossa perfia vença. (Lines 17-18)²⁷

Like the Muslim woman protagonist of *CMS 167*, there are other examples which prove that the denomination of friend did not always coincide with a strong personal link, but it was rather used as a conventional label to catalogue people from the same social, religious or ethnic backgrounds. An instance is *CSM 329*, which recounts the miracle which happened during the conquest of the lands around Tudia, carried out by the Muslim forces. On that occasion the Muslim soldiers collected a great deal of booty, but they donated part of it to the Virgin Mary, by depositing it on her altar. As soon as they left the church, one of them lingered inside and stole the offerings. Divine punishment was inflicted on him and he was suddenly blinded and paralysed. What deserves some attention are the reactions of the other Muslim companions of his. In the beginning they intervened on his side, believing that he had been captured by the

²⁷ *CSM 167*, '[...], but she told them: "Friends, if God protects me from harm, I believe that my hope will overcome your objections"'.

Christians. However, once they discovered his involvement in the robbery, not only did they refuse to protect the betrayer, but they even began spreading the word of what had happened, making both the original offence and the following miracle acknowledged among the Christians. These events proved that, even amidst Muslim companions, the *sine qua non* conditions which could guarantee certain solidarity were either the threat imposed by external enemies (which would generate the so-termed friendships in arms), or the loyalty which was required to any individual who wanted to be entitled as 'friend'.

Therefore, there was no spirit of community which could protect or rescue individuals if they did not respect these fundamental rules of friendship and, most of all, if they lacked personal virtues. In other words, common religious and ethnic roots could not by themselves guarantee the existence and survival of any real friendship. The Muslim soldiers protagonists of *CSM* 329 behaved according to these rules and in fact, once they discovered the misdeed committed by their companion, they did not hesitate to reveal it to everybody. The reasons behind their gesture are clear enough: they sought Holy favours and tried to avoid any kind of supernatural punishment. Overall, the message conveyed by the narration was that neither religious nor communitarian brotherhoods constituted safe shelters for those accused of treachery and bad will, above all if they had misbehaved towards the king.

§ 5. The Case of the Heretics and Other Considerations

Another category of individuals with whom any personal and social relationship was forbidden was that of the heretics, commonly judged as cruel, malicious and worthless persons. Unlike the Muslim and Jewish cases examined before (among which there might be 'positive' cases, at least from certain points of view), no sign of sympathy was addressed to heretics. There are no cases, in fact, in the poetic, historical and legal collections at hand that might suggest the contrary. Take the case of *CSM* 175, which recounts the case of a young boy, falsely accused by the heretic owner of the inn where he was staying together with his father, during their pilgrimage to Santiago. At the beginning, the pilgrims were unaware of the fact that the inn was owned by a heretic, but as soon as they discovered it, they planned to leave. At that point the heretic decided to take revenge on them by hiding a silver cup among the boy's possessions, leaving him to be accused and hanged for the supposed robbery. This was something expected since:

O erege, que muit'era | chèo de mal e d' engano
e que muitas falssidades | fazia sempre cad' ano (lines 20-21).²⁸

As confirmed by this case study, heretics were regarded as individuals to condemn, avoid and segregate, with whom no contact should be entertained.

For them there was no space for redemption, not even when they converted by abjuring their false beliefs. There are a few cases in the *CSM* in which they repented in front of the entire Christian community; although not even the fact that they had witnessed a miracle implied that they were consequently trusted as loyal friends. An instance of this is *CSM* 208, which recounts the miracle which occurred to a heretic who, after hiding a consecrated host in his mouth and then spitting it into his orchard, witnessed the miracle performed by the Holy Mary who transformed the hive of bees into a chapel containing an altar and a statue dedicated to her. Having witnessed such a wondrous event, the heretic went to the bishop, confessed his sins and begged for Divine pardon, but nothing is said about the fact that he was subsequently welcomed by the rest of the Christian community.

The *SP* also deal with this subject. In fact, *SP* VII:XXVI, after an introductory definition of heresy and heretics, continues by issuing punishments and penalties to which they were subjected, as well as those imposed on any other person who helped, sustained or sheltered them, since:

Et de los hereges de qualquier manera que sean viene muy grant daño á la tierra; ca se trabajan siempre de corromper las voluntades de los homes et de meterlos en yerro.²⁹

It is interesting to note that, those who did not respect the legislative norms and helped a heretic or listened to their false preaching risked accusation, loss of their titles, personal riches and inheritance and, in some cases, excommunication and banishment (*SP* VII:XXV:V-VI). That was the result for having been corrupted and for the fact that, by helping the heretics to survive, they had behaved as betrayers of the Christian faith themselves.

Heretics, Muslims and Jews were subjected to strong practical and moral restrictions and similarly, even Christians were not exonerated from respecting the same rules of behaviour. In trying to delineate a complete overview of the descriptions of the

²⁸ *CSM* 175, 'the heretic, who was full of malice and deceit and committed many treacherous acts each year'.

²⁹ *SP* VII:XXVI:I, 'great injury results to a country from heretics of every description, for they constantly endeavor to corrupt the minds of men and cause them to err'.

different religious groups represented in the Alfonsine works, and in order to demystify the stereotypes of evil Moors, Jews and heretics, the controversial picture given of certain Christian characters also deserves some attention. The example of *CSM 379* is illuminating. Not only did the Muslim protagonists behave honestly and loyally, but they were in some cases victims of Christian evildoers. In this case, as the poem recounts, a crew of Catalan pirates attacked the ships of merchants directed to Santa María del Puerto, where they had been invited and reassured of protection by Alfonso X. The Catalan pirates attacked, among others, one of the ships belonging to some Muslim merchants, stealing all their goods and capturing some of the crew members. By behaving in this way, the pirates showed their total lack of respect for any traveller (whatever their ethnic or religious origins) and for the Virgin Mary, who was entitled to protect the sea. This example clearly shows that, if on the one hand, Jews and Muslims were generally depicted as evildoers, on the other hand Christians who did not respect the rules of friendship were not exemplary models either. Moreover, not even their faith constituted a sufficient guarantee of their personal reliability and honesty. In the specific case of *CSM 379*, the Catalan pirates did not show any sign of companionship or friendship towards the other Christian merchants sailing there, and not even among the other sailors enlisted in their own crew. Reading between the lines, one might suspect that such a deceitful picture of the Catalan pirates was due to the fact that they represented the branch of a real political competitor for Castile – the kingdom of Aragon – which represented an antagonistic force, despite the alliances signed between them (sometimes through wedding agreements, like in the case of Alfonso X himself who married Jaime I's daughter, Violante).

To conclude the discussion on the inter-religious relationships and the characteristics required to the characters involved a few more considerations should be addressed. In the Alfonsine narrations there is a total lack of examples referring to pure and disinterested friendships between members of different religious groups and sometimes even among those belonging to the same faction. The absence of such examples might be considered the logical outcome of the rigid prohibitions imposed by the law. However, it also mirrored the widespread belief according to which pure amicable relationships between them were nearly impossible to establish. By assuming so, one should also note that the language of friendship represented a further proof of this, since it was essentially used to indicate pragmatic alliances, rather than emotional and personal links. As previously demonstrated, friendships between members of different religious groups could be forged only in terms of political and military

agreements. This proposition will explain why, in Alfonso X's works, Muslims were frequently portrayed in a positive light, since they might represent a source of manpower, employed to take part in the Christian military enterprises. However, a similar ambivalent representation was not applied to heretics, who were religiously and socially beyond the pale, and especially to Jews who were militarily irrelevant, but financially crucial for the life of the reign and extremely influential (and therefore dangerous if not kept under control) in the economic and intellectual spheres.

§ 6. *Amistad*, Sex and Gender: Parallelism and Dissimilarities

Another aspect of 'otherness' that will be examined here is the influence played by sexuality and gender on the relationships conventionally defined as friendships.³⁰ The main concern of this section will be to investigate whether or not in the Alfonsine production there are examples of friendships between subjects of the opposite sexes, and to what extent those links were socially, legally and morally accepted. Subsequently, the focus will move to discuss the possibility of establishing bonds of friendship between women, and to discuss their specific duties.

To begin, a linguistic premise might be useful. For a long time the terminology adopted to define both love and friendship coincided, as the term 'love' indicated both the relationships between individuals of the opposite sexes as well as those between people of the same gender. Poetry contributed to differentiate them, by creating an independent concept for male-female love, which began to differ progressively from the original and general denomination which also included friendship.³¹ In the Iberian poetic context, the *cantigas de amor* and *cantigas de amigo* followed a similar pattern. While in the beginning the titles *amigo/a* were used to address and define individuals experiencing any form of affection,³² from the twelfth century the language of friendship assumed more specific connotations and the idea itself acquired sentimental hues which it lacked before.³³

³⁰ Cristina Segura Graiño defined the two categories as follow: '[...] sexo, que viene dato por naturaleza y solo señala diferencias naturales, no debe confundirse con género que es una construcción cultural que impone a hombres y a mujeres unas diferentes formas de comportamiento y actuación', in 'Participación de las mujeres en el poder político', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 25 (1995), 449-462 (p. 450). See also R. Pastor de Togneri, 'Sombras y luces en la historia de las mujeres medievales', in *Tópicos y realidades de la Edad Media*, pp. 179-229 (pp.180-181).

³¹ A number of scholars attributed to William IX of Aquitaine (1071-1127) the paternity of such a secular definition of male-female love. Oschema, 'Reflection on Love', p. 52.

³² Paden, 'Principles of Generic Classifications', pp. 91-97.

³³ Rüdiger Schnell, *Sexualität und Emotionalität in der vormodernen Ehe* (Cologne, Vienna and Weimar: Böhlau, 2002), p. 471, cited by Oschema, 'Reflections on Love', p. 52.

Among the relationships between representatives of the opposite sexes, marriage was also, in some cases, defined through the lexicon of friendship. It is well known that the debate about marriage has ancestral origins, being one of the first bonds appearing in the Bible, with the union of Adam and Eve. As the Holy Scriptures assert, the reason why the two were created together was that they were destined to be companions. Later, other theories were elaborated, among which was Ambrose's Christian justification of marital relations as bonds sought by God in order to join men and women both physically and spiritually.³⁴ Now, the fact that the language of friendship was adopted for a long time to define marital agreements, was probably due to the fact that marriage was originally considered a link based on 'love', glossed as *dilectio* and respect, rather than a union based on sensual elements exclusively. In fact, the latter would change the 'hierarchical balance' existing between the couple, and the woman would be reverentially submitted to the power of her master-husband.³⁵

During the Middle Ages, when marriage strategies also regulated dynastic and social structures, women were generally regarded as mere instruments through which men could entrench solid familial and political connections. In fact, through a worthy marriage men could even gain helpful political allies. It is worth underlining two of the most important functions attributed to marriage. First of all, it was often perceived as a further guarantee for the pre-existent bond between the two contractors' families. Secondly, it was regarded as a necessary step that women had to make in order to be accepted and respected in society. At this stage, a few comments about the position of women should be added. It is essential to remember that the works examined in this study were admittedly the product of a learned entourage which operated within a broader misogynous environment, in which women were excluded from most spheres of social life and widely regarded as malevolent and sinful creatures. In that context, the only way for a respectable woman to escape such a biologically cursed destiny, as Pérez de Tudela y Velasco has asserted, consisted of establishing her identity either within the cloister or in marriage.³⁶ This would explain why those who remained widows, for instance, were married off by their families or by their lords to powerful men (possibly their own vassals), so that the reputation of the lady would be safeguarded and those

³⁴ Ambrose's idea is compared with Cicero's and the Stoics' doctrine, but also with Aristotle's idea of benevolence, which was in fact antithetic to the Stoic point of view. See Eoin G. Cassidy, "He Who Has Friends Can Have No Friend", pp. 45-67.

³⁵ Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, see in particular 'Towards a History of Woman in France and Spain', pp. 95-101.

³⁶ M. Pérez de Tudela y Velasco, 'Las mujeres medievales', '[...] el Medioevo considera que la mujer realiza el papel que le corresponde como miembro del cuerpo social dentro del matrimonio', p. 70.

who arranged her new marriage would establish useful friendships and obtain concrete profits from them.

Despite its pragmatic value as a concrete link between two families and, in some cases, even between dynasties, marriage also embodied multifarious aspects of ‘love’: from the companionship in sharing the difficulties and pleasures of life, to marital affection and mutual trust. The overlapping fields of marriage, friendship and companionship, which were described – at least in the Alfonsine works – through the same terminology referring to friendship, constitute an intricate network that this section seeks to disentangle. *SP* IV:II:I is a significant starting point, since it develops the idea of *amicitia* as the foundation of marriage, by specifying that men and women ‘fuesen uno quanto en amor, de manera que non se podiesen departir guardando lealtad uno a otro’.³⁷ The *SP* present marriage as a sacrament instituted by God in order to preserve man from lust and assure his descendants; in fact, man and woman:

así como eran de cuerpos departidos segunt natura, que fuesen uno quanto en amor, de manera que non se podiesen departir guardando lealtad uno á otro: et otrosí que de aquella amistad saliese linage de que el mundo fuese poblado, et él loado et servido.³⁸

The law presented marriage as a moral, social, institutional and personal link regulating male-female relationships. However, the same legislation distinguished between marriage *de bendicion*, *de yuras* and the *barraganía*.³⁹ Particularly interesting was the legitimization given to the latter during the Middle Ages, as Martínez Marina has asserted: ‘la barraganía no era un enlace vago, indeterminado y arbitrario; se fundaba en un contrato de amistad y compañía, cuyas principales condiciones eran la permanencia y fidelidad [...]’.⁴⁰ As with any other form of friendship, the fundamental requirement to guarantee the duration of these links and to confirm their authenticity was loyalty. Women especially had to prove it, since that was the only way they had to preserve their honour and to be sure of the legitimacy of their offspring, without which material and dynastic inheritance would not be possible to transmit. Marriage was considered fundamental in order to acquire such warranties:

³⁷ *SP* IV:II:I, ‘they were united in love, so that they could not separate by keeping faithful to each other’.

³⁸ *Ibid.* IV, preamble, ‘they were divided by nature, but one in love and faithful to each other; and from their union the lineage which would populate, protect and serve the world was born’.

³⁹ Ruth Lansing, ‘The Thirteenth Century Legal Attitude Toward Woman in Spain’, *PMLA*, 36 (1921), 492-507. These three typologies (which were also recognized by the customary law) were respectively the official marriage; the legitimate marriage which was kept secret; and an indefinite bond which was not strengthened by any official ritual, although the involved parties remained faithful to one another.

⁴⁰ Martínez Marina, *Ensayo Historico-Crítico*, I:VI, pp. 262-263.

De esta manera el matrimonio, permitía controlar la paternidad de los hijos, su legitimidad, y, al mismo tiempo forzaba, en esa sociedad fuertemente masculinizada, a la heterosexualidad, que fue otro de los grandes principios que sostuvo la Iglesia.⁴¹

As reported in the *SP*, beyond marriage, other forms of concubinage were legally and socially accepted. However, also in such cases, women's honour had to be protected because any offence against them would be revealed as an indirect attack against their husbands' or lords' honour.

Such a general overview of the conception and regulation of marriage is only a premise for the discussion to come, which will explore the adoption of the polysemous term of *amiga* in the Alfonsine lexicon. In fact, the term could bear either the meaning of loyal and wise wife or, contrarily, assume the deceptive connotation of 'illegitimate' lover, adopted to dub both mistresses and concubines. This discussion will pave the way to a more detailed analysis which will be undertaken in the following sections and which will focus on the relationships in which the protagonists, either males or females, were mutually dubbed as 'friends'. Additionally, other forms of male-female links will be examined, including those which lacked any explicit lexical reference to friendship, though it is still possible to accommodate them within this category.

§ 7. Male-Female Connections: The Law, the Literature and the Facts

A closer look at the connections established between male and female characters as presented in the Alfonsine works, shows that, apart from marriage and concubinage, the only relationships permitted or accepted between representatives of the opposite sexes were blood ties and links based on a certain grade of familiarity, since those were indispensable parameters to prevent any risk of sexual intercourse between the parties involved. It is interesting to note that, despite the adoption of the lexicon of friendship to define some of those links, in fact the definition was also adopted in other ambiguous circumstances. For instance, female characters related to their male counterparts by natural and familial links, such as mothers, sisters or, very rarely, wives, might be denominated with the same title. However, in those cases a certain grade of diffidence may also be envisaged, due to the fact that women were generally regarded as extremely dangerous figures. With regard to this point it is significant to recall the description outlined in the *Historia Compostellana*, emblematic of the pre-existent misogynous

⁴¹ Pastor de Togneri, 'Sombras y luces', pp. 179-229, at pp. 193.

attitudes, later reflected in the Alfonsine mentality: '*animus mulieris infirmus est et instabilis et cito exorbitant, ut scriptum est: Melior est iniquitas uiri quam benefaciens mulier*'.⁴²

The following examples from the *EE* will illustrate such connections between members of the opposite sexes. For example, *EE* 172 recounts the events generated by Emperor Nero's dissolute behaviour. The Alfonsine chronicle tells that Nero felt physically attracted towards his own mother and, for this reason, he chose a woman who resembled her features as a concubine: '[...] et una mugier del segle de que trayen por toda tierra, que semeiaua mucho a su madre, tomola por amiga, et fizo la equal de todas las otras que tenie'.⁴³ It is evident that, in this case, the definition of *amiga* refers to Nero's mistress, a woman to whom he was linked by a mere sensual chain rather than by any other sentimental link. Similarly, *EE* 181 recounts how Vitellius grew up among the Emperor Tiberius's courtesans and how that 'womanly' environment corrupted him deeply:

[...] este Vitellio, mentre fue ninno et mancebiello, siempre uiuio entre las amigas de Tiberio; et desque llego a mayor edat, fue lleno de todos males.⁴⁴

At this stage, two further observations should be added: in the first instance, Tiberius's *amigas* were obviously his concubines; secondly, it emerges clearly that the malevolent influence that women might have on young creatures in their childhood and adolescence (irrespective of their gender), was feared as a powerful instrument of corruption which might threaten the 'right' development of their personalities. What happened to the young Vitellius is a case in point: because of the wicked teachings delivered by those *amigas* (playing here the role of tutors) he became as vicious and corrupted as they were.

It has to be admitted, though, that the perception and representation of women varied according to their social status.⁴⁵ Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that, in

⁴² *Historia Compostelana*, ed. by Emma Falque (Turnholti: Brepolis Editores Pontificii, 1988), I: CVII, p. 181.

⁴³ *EE* 172, '[...] and it was a mistress, one of those who are brought from place to place, who looked like his mother, that he took as concubine and he made her equal to all the others that he had already got'.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 181, '[...] this Vitellius, during his childhood and adolescence, always lived among Tiberius' women; so, as soon as he grew up, he was endowed with many vices'.

⁴⁵ This is also the view of Reyna Pastor de Togneri, even though in her paper she focuses more on the 'mujeres populares', see 'Para una historia social de la mujer hispano-medieval. Problemática y puntos de vista', in *La condición de la mujer en la Edad Media, actas del coloquio celebrado en la Casa Velázquez, 5-7 noviembre 1984*, ed. by Yves-René Fonquerne and Alfonso Esteban (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, Universidad Complutense, 1986), pp. 187-214. For an interesting comparison see Isabel Beceiro Pita, 'La

the Alfonsine works, the only examples of female friends involved in a non-sexual relationship, based on mutual help and advice, were noble ladies, usually linked by blood ties to their male companions. Sometimes mothers, daughters or sisters were allowed to play such a role and they were the only few and isolated cases in which a woman might be chosen as a trustworthy friend and counsellor, for the wisdom, intelligence and moral education with which she was endowed. *EE* 10 demonstrates it. The chapter narrates the colonization of the Iberian Peninsula by the Greeks, while King Hispanus, Hercules's supposed nephew, was in power:

Este rey Espan auie una fija hermosa, que auie nombre Liberia, y era much entenduda e sabidor destrolomia, ca la ensennara el que era ende el mas sabidor que auie en Espanna a essa sazón, [...]; e por end ouo con ella su acuerdo de poblar Caliz.

The case of the young Liberia, Hispanus' daughter, suggests certain tolerant attitudes towards women, as proved by the fact that she also received education. What has to be remarked, though, is that Liberia represents an exception, since she was a princess; ergo, she belonged to the highest social rank, which also was the sphere within which certain privileges were circumscribed. *EE* 10 continues narrating that King Hispanus:

ouo conseio con su fija en que manera podrie poblar aquel logar. Ella dixol quel darie conseio, sol quel otorgasse que no la casasse si no con qui ella quisiesse; y el fiandosse en ella e por que tenie que lo dizie por su pro, otorgogelo.⁴⁶

Thanks to her wisdom and sense of justice, the young princess gained her father's confidence and trust. Additionally, her recognized virtues allowed her to make decisions about her own life, including the selection of the person that she would marry. Reduced to its simplest terms, her virtues made her mistress of her own destiny. This represented an extraordinary event, even for a woman of her rank. Furthermore, by her talents and through the close relationship which linked her to the sovereign, she held the characteristics required of any good counsellor, above all loyalty and wisdom.

mujer noble en la Baja Edad Media', *ibid.*, pp. 289-314; José Enrique Ruiz Domenech, 'La mujer en la sociedad aristocrática de los siglos XII y XIII', *ibid.*, pp. 379-402.

⁴⁶ *EE* 10, 'this King Hispanus had got a beautiful daughter, named Liberia, who was wise and well learned in astronomy, since the most learned man in Spain at that time educated her on this subject, [...]; and for her wisdom the King agreed with her to colonize Cadiz'; '[the King] discussed with his daughter about the way in which he could populate that place. She replied that she would give him her advice, but in return he should allow her to decide whom she wanted to marry; and he trusted her, since he knew that she spoke for his sake, and he agreed'.

Another example of a woman depicted as an excellent model of counsellor and friend, although her position was subjected to similar familial restrictions, appears in *EE* 845, in which Alfonso VI's sister Urraca is presented as follows: 'assi como dizen las estorias era muy entenduda duenna'.⁴⁷ For her qualities, his brother trusted her blindly. In fact, she acted as both a counsellor and tutor for him. Although the question about the official title that she finally gained remains open (there is not enough historical documentation to assert that she received the title of 'reyna'), it is certain that she occupied a central position in the management of royal power. In fact, since she was far more experienced than her brother in administering the realm, she helped him in managing both political and military situations.

She is presented, in both historical and fictional accounts, as a strong character, who had already proved her strategic and manipulative skills by obtaining the *infantazgo* over Zamora, when her father had originally excluded her from the inheritance of his lands. Also, she had been able to use her female status cleverly, by promising a marriage (that was never concluded) to Bellido Dolfos in order to obtain his support in the defence of Zamora, when it was attacked by her brother Sancho II.⁴⁸ For her political skills and ability to control the development of certain events, she is also presented as a wise and astute character. Her portrayal, however, has been partially adumbrated by the rumours concerning her incestuous relationship with her brother, Alfonso VI. Probably, this suspicion had arisen already at the time in which the *EE* was composed and this might explain why, without discrediting her fame as a wise counsellor, she was not explicitly defined as *amiga*. If that be so, the suspicious about her morality would have prevented the narrator from dubbing her *amiga*, since any real friendship, in order to be defined as such, had to be deprived of any form of sexual interaction. Additionally, Urraca could not be defined as *amiga* in terms of concubinage either, since her conjectured relationship with her brother certainly could not be proved and, even less, legitimized.

Other examples of women allowed by their royal positions to entertain close relationships with men can be seen in *EE* 701 and *EE* 1026. The first case narrates of Ramiro II, King of León, who behaved mercifully 'por conseio de su muggier la reyna

⁴⁷ *EE* 845, 'according to what is told by history, she was a very wise woman'. A similar description is given also in other historical and literary sources which focused on both the historical and legendary aspects attributed to Urraca Fernández. For example, the *Historia Silense*, the *Crónica Najarense*, the *Historia de rebus Hispaniae*, the *Romancero de Zamora* and the *Crónica de Veinte Reyes*.

⁴⁸ Fernando Luis Corral, 'La infanta Urraca Fernández, prolis imperatoris fredenandi et soror regis', in *La Península en la Edad Media: treinta años después: estudios dedicados a José-Luis Martín*, ed. by José María Mínguez Fernández, Gregorio del Ser Quijano (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2006), pp. 201-217.

donna Teresa'.⁴⁹ This is one of the few examples in which, not only is a wife regarded as a peer, but she is even so powerful to influence his husband's decisions, even when her consort is a king. The second instance is envisaged in *EE* 1026, whose protagonist is Queen Berenguela, King Henry I of Castile's sister. The chronicle tells that she was surrounded by loyal and trustworthy men of the reign, who worked at her court as loyal counsellors and served her as their 'sennora natural'.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, it has to be remembered that the possibility to establish such close connections and the fact that, as a woman, she was allowed to have male 'friends' – namely, counsellors and vassals – were privileges restricted to a privileged elite.

Another example regarding the same Queen Berenguela of Castile is *EE* 1047. She is exalted for her noble origins, qualities and stature;⁵¹ and she is also represented as the wise counsellor and principal educator of her offspring:

Et esa noble reyna donna Berenguella muy alegre por aquello que su fijo el rey don Ferrando auie conquerida la çipdat de Cordoua, asi commo ella pensaua de su fijo el rey por conseio et por ayuda de quantas cosas ella auie que a el conpliesen,[...]. Ca esta muy noble reyna donna Berengella, asi commo cuenta la estoria, asi enderesço et crio a este fijo don Fernando en buenas costunbres et en buenas obras sienpre [...], et con tetas llenas de virtudes le dio su leche de guisa que, maguer que el rey don Fernando era ya varon fecho et firmado en edat de su fuerça conplida, ssu madre la reyna donna Berenguella non quedo nin quedaua de dezirle et ensennarle acuosamente las cosas que plazen a Dios et a los omnes [...] et nuncal mostro las costunbres nin las cosas que perteneçien a mugeres, mas lo que fazie a grandez de coraçon et a grandes fechos.⁵²

Queen Berenguela embodied the perfect balance between a mother, a queen and a woman. She had the power and the ability to influence her son, Ferdinand III's decisions and, simultaneously, to behave as if she were submitted to his lordship. The *EE* tells that she intervened in the affairs of the reign and even in the management of

⁴⁹ *EE* 701, 'following his wife, Teresa's, advice'.

⁵⁰ Segura Graiño, 'Participación de las mujeres en el poder político', pp. 449-462.

⁵¹ Pérez de Tudela y Velaso, 'La mujer castellano-leonesa del pleno medioevo. Perfiles literarios, estatutos jurídico y situación económica', in *Las mujeres medievales y su ámbito jurídico: actas de las II Jornadas de Investigación Interdisciplinaria*, ed. by Segura Graiño (Madrid : Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1983), pp. 59-77.

⁵² *EE* 1047, 'and that noble Queen Berenguela, very pleased for the fact that her son, King Ferdinand, had conquered the city of Córdoba as she had thought, since he had followed her advice and her teachings,[...]. This noble Queen Berenguela, as the history tells us, raised and educated her son Ferdinand, always teaching him good deeds and manners [...], and with her breast full of virtues, she breastfed him and, although the King Ferdinand turned into a young man in all his strength, his mother, Queen Berenguela, very wisely, did not stop telling and teaching him all the things which are appreciated by God and by men [...] and she never showed to have habits and manners that belong to women, but she rather performed good deeds mercifully'.

war; however, she never claimed authority and prestige openly, and that was probably the best strategy to preserve her power.⁵³

Two other case studies may help to clarify this matter further. As Isabel Pérez de Tudela has already discussed, the figures of Jimena, El Cid's wife, and Sancha of Navarre, Fernán González's pragmatic and dynamic consort, represent two significant, and at the same time opposite, female models which came down to us through history, literature and legend.⁵⁴ In the context of this study, attention will be devoted to the descriptions given of them in the *EE*. Jimena, who is not presented as an active character, at least while her husband was alive, began speaking only after his death, although it was just to give dispositions about how to bury her beloved consort. Up to that point she had been presented only indirectly, either through her husband's words or through the chronicler's perspective. Reading the description given of her, one can affirm with no hesitation that Jimena embodied all the characteristics required of a good wife; in fact, she was supportive and, above all, submissive and obedient. This would explain why the Alfonsine Cid seemed to trust her completely. *EE* 951, about the conversion of the Muslim *alfaqui* (master of law) of Valencia, successively named Gil Díaz, provides an example of this. Once the Muslim abjured his false beliefs and expressed his desire to convert to Christianity:

Quando esto oyo el Çid Ruy Diaz, ouo tan grant plazer, que començo a reyr; et mando llamar a donna Ximena, et dixol: «hermana, vedes aqui el mio alcayde que quiere seer cristiano et seer nuestro hermano en la ley de Jhesus Cristo; agora ruegouos que uos plega et mandades guysar todas las cosas que son mester pora esto». Quando esto oyo donna Ximena, ouo muy grant plazer, et guysolo todo muy noblemente.⁵⁵

Significantly, in the Alfonsine chronicle, Jimena is addressed as *hermana*. In this context it assumed a religious meaning, since both El Cid and his wife were Christians; ergo, brothers in the law of God. Moreover, it replaced the appellation of *amiga* which, although it might refer to women with whom regular marital unions were established,

⁵³ Reyna Pastor de Togneri, 'Mujeres y la guerra feudal: reinas, señoras y villanas: León, Galicia, Castilla (siglos XII y XIII)', in *Las mujeres y las guerras: el papel de las mujeres en las guerras de la edad antigua a la contemporánea*, ed. by Mary Nash and Susanna Tavera (Barcelona: Icaria, 2003), pp. 52-72 (pp. 61-66).

⁵⁴ Pérez de Tudela y Velaso, 'La mujer castellano-leonesa', pp. 63-66.

⁵⁵ *EE* 951, 'when El Cid Rodrigo Diaz heard it, he was so pleased that he started laughing; and he summoned Jimena and told her: "sister, look, my governor wants to convert to Christianity and he wants to be our brother in the law of Jesus Christ; now, I ask your help to arrange all the things that we need to make it possible". When Jimena heard it, she was very pleased and organized everything nobly'.

might still bear sexual implications which, in the case of El Cid and Jimena, are omitted and overwhelmed by the central role occupied by their honourable and noble feelings.

Unlike Jimena, the Countess Sancha of Navarre is depicted as an active woman, who knitted the threads of an elaborate plot to rescue her beloved. In fact, she asked permission to see her jailed lover and, as soon as she saw him in chains, she did not hesitate to mention in front of the sovereign the fact that they could not have any intimacy if the Count was not freed from the chains:

La condesa enuio luego dezir al rey quel rogaua mucho, como a sennor bueno et mesurado, que mandasse sacar al conde de los fierros, diziendol que el cauallo trauado nunqua bien podie fazer fijos.⁵⁶

Emphasis is put on the sexual attraction between her and the Count, which allowed him to address her as *amiga* or *sennora*, but never with the chaste (at least semantically) title of *hermana*.⁵⁷

Looking at this brief survey of the Alfonsine chronicles one may confirm that women who were regarded as trustworthy friends usually belonged to the same family or to the closest circles of the men to whom they were linked. Nonetheless, what cannot be confirmed is that such a rule was always valid. In other words, being a mother or a sister did not necessarily make a woman an excellent candidate to be a loyal friend or a wise advisor. An example is provided by *EE* 4, which tells of Jupiter, who was malevolently advised by ‘su mugger donna Juno’ (‘his wife Juno’) whose advice was corrupted by her evil intentions against her foster son. She even gave her love to a neighbouring ruler, Euristeo, to whom she donated part of the land that he had claimed, with the promise that he would raise Hercules, her foster son, in return. In this case, the fact that Juno belonged to the highest elite did not make her a reliable character automatically, since she had not adopted her noble authority to achieve any admirable purpose.

Another useful case to demonstrate that blood ties were not always guarantees for the development of a real and personal friendship can be seen in *EE* 764 in which it is narrated how Count Sancho Garcia of Castile’s mother tried to kill her own son to marry, afterwards, the Muslim King Almanzor.⁵⁸ As her malevolent plot suggests, not

⁵⁶ *EE* 718, ‘the countess sent a message to the king, praying him as a good and wise lord, to allow the count to be freed from the chains, telling him that a restrained horse cannot generate children’.

⁵⁷ The case of Sancha will be examined again in the following section about the lexicon of friendship.

⁵⁸ Francisco Bautista, ‘Pseudo-historia y leyenda en la historiografía medieval: la Condesa Traidora’, in *El relato historiográfico: textos y tradiciones en la España medieval*, ed. by Francisco Bautista (London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2006), pp. 59-101.

even maternal love⁵⁹ could calm her implacable thirst for power. By contrast, the same chapter of the *EE* recounts that another woman, who was just a servant, behaved loyally towards the King by revealing him the Queen's plan of poisoning her son. Unfortunately the exemplarity of this character is only apparent, since the servant's own motivation was the devotion she nurtured for one of the King's squires. Therefore, she did not betray her lady inspired by a strong sense of moral justice, but rather because she was pursuing a personal goal: namely, conquering the squire's love. In the end, 'el escudero dixolo al conde su sennor, et conseiol commo se guardase de aquella traycion'.⁶⁰ The only person who behaved as a proper friend towards his lord seems to be the squire, who was a loyal subject and, above all, a man.

Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to suspect that even the loyalty that the squire demonstrated towards his lord was dictated by his personal ambitions, further prompted by the fact that those who proved to be loyal collaborators of their lords were materially rewarded for their righteous behaviour. Several examples in the Alfonsine chronicles confirm this principle, which was also stated by the law, for example *EE* 764:

Et deste escudero uienen los monteros dEspinosa que guardan el palacio de los reyes de Castiella; et esta guarda fue dada por el aperçebimiento que este escudero fizo a su sennor.⁶¹

Such customary and legal processes represented another 'limit' for women. First of all, because in Medieval Spain, even if they were allowed to inherit and keep their own possessions, which were administered by their fathers first and by their husbands later, the same right of inheritance was not valid for honorific titles and fiefs.⁶² Secondly, royal rewards were usually proportionate to the military support and services that the beneficiaries could directly provide to the king and, evidently, women were unable to satisfy these kinds of military requests. Moreover, not only were women not allowed to claim official positions, obtain booty and inherit an estate in toto, but there were

⁵⁹ It was celebrated especially in the *CSM*, in which the Virgin Mary was taken as an exemplary model of maternal love. Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, 'Imágenes de la mujer en las cantigas de Santa María', in *La imagen de la mujer en el arte español: actas de las terceras Jornadas de Investigación Interdisciplinaria (Madrid, 1983)*, ed. by María Angeles Durán (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1990), pp. 29-42; Pérez de Tudela y Velasco, 'El tratamiento de la mujer en las *Cantigas de Santa María*', in *La condición de la mujer*, pp. 51-74.

⁶⁰ *EE* 764, 'the squire referred it to his lord, the Count, and he advised him how to protect himself from such a treachery'.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 'and from this squire came the guardians of Espinoza, in charge of the vigilance of the royal palace of the Kings of Castile; and this role was given for the warning that the squire gave to his lord'.

⁶² Heath Dillard, *Daughters of the Reconquest: Women in Castilian Town Society, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Barton, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile*, pp. 38-46.

circumstances in which they were themselves offered as rewards to certain allies or as part of the booty donated to the enemies. *EE* 605 explores one of those cases, by narrating how Mauregato gave the young ‘donzellas fijas dalgo’ to the Muslims that he wanted to keep as allies, leaving the girls at their mercy, as if they were part of the booty.

Except for a few cases, in which female figures are presented in a positive light, above all when their noble lineage allowed them to establish friendly interactions with their male counterparts, in most cases women were portrayed as sinful and corrupted creatures, constantly tempting men’s virtues. In general, most of the female protagonists of the Alfonsine works were either catalogued as malevolent and wicked characters or, contrarily, as fragile individuals, politically powerless, sometimes too naïve and malleable to be trusted as friends or guardians of someone else’s secrets.

To conclude, it is interesting to mention *EE* 612, which recounts that King Alfonso II, ‘the Chaste’, well-known for his wisdom, decided not to have any female company during his entire life: ‘[...] e seyendo omne de grand uertud et de castidad et de piedad, nunqua quiso en toda su uida auer companna nin allegança con mugier; [...]’.⁶³ The same negative attitudes, reinforcing Alfonso X’s didactic message, were supplemented by the law which stated that:

Et si acaesciese que la esposa feciese don á su esposo, que es cosa que pocas vegadas aviene, porque son las mugeres naturalmente cobdiciosas et avariciosas [...].⁶⁴

The aforementioned examples suggest that Alfonso X supported the diffusion of a moral code according to which women could be accepted as friends very rarely and only under certain established conditions. Moreover, this obviously shows that not even the sovereign’s ‘enlightened mind’ escaped the widespread misogynous influence which characterized his era.

⁶³ *EE* 612, ‘[...] and since he was a man endowed with exceptional virtues, chastity and pity, in his entire life he never wanted any women as a companion or intimate to him; [...]’.

⁶⁴ *SP* IV:XI:III, ‘where the wife made a gift to her husband, which is something that rarely happens, because women are naturally greedy and avaricious [...]’.

§ 8. Friendships Between Women

In order to pursue further the discussion about the variants of friendships presented in the Alfonsine production, the relationships between female characters – although very few indeed – will be examined in this section. Considering the restricted chances that women had to establish ‘non-marital’ relationships with men, one might consequently be induced to think that contacts between women were more likely to happen. But that was not exactly true, since the social circles that women were allowed to access were extremely limited, above all for those who did not belong to the upper classes. Additionally, in the few cases in which female *compannas* (groups) were allowed, they had to take place in a separate context from those in which men were joined together, with the very few exceptions of the companies of pilgrims and the meetings at the royal court. Examples of these are the companies of maidens shown at the Virgin’s side in heaven (*CSM* 79), or while carrying out their pilgrimages to the Holy shrines; while *CSM* 136 is an interesting case in point to describe the case of the royal setting:

[...] de ssa conpanna jogavan ant’ a Majestade
dados omees e molleres, com’ é usança (lines 20-21).⁶⁵

Following the same line of thought a few more cases will be analysed in this section. First of all, *CSM* 383, about the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem that a lady from Sigüenza undertook together with her daughter:

[...] foy-sse logo sa carreya
e levou sigo sa filla | por que non fosse senlleya,
ca achar non poderia | pera ssi tal companneira. (Lines 21-23)⁶⁶

This *cantiga* is emblematic of a more general condition in which familial bonds were regarded as the most reliable links that a person could establish, above all if that person was a woman. In a society in which women were generally subjected to male authority, family represented the only secure shelter and source of reliable affects on which they could rely.

⁶⁵ *CSM* 136, ‘men and women of his company were playing dice before the holy statue, as is their custom’.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 383 ‘[...] the woman set out on her way and took her daughter with her so that she would not be alone, for she could not find a better companion’.

Alongside familial bonds, religion played a fundamental role and it sometimes constituted a cohesive element, which might also favour the formation of female military companies, which in some cases operated as proper armies. The case of the Moorish female army which led their attack against the city of Valencia, recounted in *EE* 956, is interesting to mention: ‘et ella fue la primera que caualgo, et con ella las otras çient moras sus companneras, et fizieron yaquanto danno en la companna del Çid; [...]’.⁶⁷ The Moorish women fought side by side in the name of their common faith and they strengthened a real friendship in arms, which resembled all the peculiarities of the military agreements between men. Nevertheless, this is merely an assumption inferred from the elements emerging from the narration, since no further specific details are given about it.

It might be interesting to compare the evens narrated in *EE* 956 with *EE* 1054. The latter recounts the story of Alvar Pérez’s wife, who was left alone with her household while her husband went to Toledo to meet King Ferdinand III, offering his aid on the frontier. Taking advantage of that situation, Ibn Ahmar, King of Arjona, and successively King of Granada, threatened the countess in Martos. The lady reacted heroically, defending herself and her company, supported also by the other women who were at her service. In fact, she incited them to abandon their female attitudes and customs to embrace the weapons and defend their lives and land:

La condesa mando a sus duennas que se destocasen et se parassen en cabellos, et que tomasen armas en las manos, et que se parassen en el andamio; et ellas fezieronlo asi.⁶⁸

Just as with the female Muslim army of *EE* 956, so too in this case the female company relies on a bond of loyalty signed among them; as well as between them, the lord and the land of which they were naturals. The main difference, though, between the two

⁶⁷ *EE* 956, ‘and she was the first one to ride, and went with her one hundred Moorish women, companions of hers, and they harmed the company of El Cid; [...]’. Elena Lourie, ‘Black Women Warriors in the Muslim Army Besieging Valencia and the Cid’s Victory: A Problem of Interpretation’ *Traditio*, 55 (2000), 181-209; Josemi Lorenzo Arribas, ‘Tampoco acariciaron banderas: Apuntes críticos sobre las mujeres y la guerra medieval’, in *Las mujeres y las guerras*, pp. 83- 95. By reporting the legendary case of the women which saved the city of Toledo and queen Berenguela from the Moorish attack by playing music which enchanted the Moors and stopped them, Arribas marked the fact that those women did not use any violence or coercive means, but they rather adopted a typical female skill, that is to say the ability to mediate between the parties (ability symbolized by the musical instruments). Moreover, Arribas has remarked: ‘[...] el caracter colectivo de las acciones que las mujeres realizan; ellas suelen actuar en amplios grupos, compuestos sólo de mujeres, ya que no hay referencias a la participación masculina, proceder que puede parecer anómalo por sus menores posibilidades de asociación’, pp. 93-94. This episode is also recounted in Book II of the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, ed. by A. Mayasánchez, in *Corpus Christianorum*, LXXI, pp. 109-248.

⁶⁸ *EE* 1054, ‘the Countess ordered them to separate and stand up, and to embrace the weapons, and to position themselves in the walkways; and so they did’.

cases consists of the fact that the association of Christian women reacted to defend themselves from an external attack, while the Muslim warriors of *EE* 956 were driven by an aggressive purpose.

At this point, it is important to remark that, except for the associations between women established in the name of their common national and religious identities, there are no instances of personal friendships involving female characters in the entire Alfonsine production examined here. Perhaps, that was due to the fact that women were considered extremely dangerous to trust in a peer and direct relationship, where there were no third parties involved who could monitor and safeguard them. Once again, the only few exceptions were those cases in which honourable women found themselves linked to other noble female figures, who were usually their own family members.

§ 9. Friendship and Sexual Relationships: A Question of Lexicon

In this section attention will be devoted to the lexicon of friendship and the different meanings that *amicitia* bears when referred to male-female relationships. It would be useful to re-examine the case of Countess Sancha and Count Fernán González, quoted already in the previous section. In recounting their story the *EE* remarks that Sancha was a powerful woman, both for her character and for her privileged social position. In particular, *EE* 710 narrates that she received the embassy of the Count of Lombardy, who told her about the imprisonment of Fernán González and advised her of the necessity to free him, since his imprisonment would favour Muslim attacks against the Christian territories. After having meditated on the Count of Lombardy's words, Sancha sent one of her maidens to check Fernán González's situation. In addressing her servant, Sancha adopted the appellation of *amiga*, a title which seems to be legitimized by the fact that the maiden was defending an important secret as a personal service to the Countess. Nevertheless, as their social disparity implied, the maiden replied reverentially by addressing the Countess as *sennora*.

The story went further by narrating how, after the first expedition undertaken by the servant to the castle where Fernán González was detained, Sancha herself went there:

“Sennor, dixo ella, esto faze fazer el grand amor, ca esta es la cosa del mundo que mas tuelle a las duennas paura et uerguença de quantas cosas son; ca por los amigos tambien la mugier como el uaron

oluida los padres et los parientes et a todas las cosas del mundo, ca de lo que se omne paga esso tiene por mejor”.⁶⁹

As her words suggest, Sancha was perfectly aware of the fact that sensual love could cause dangerous situations, as both men and women could be overwhelmed by passion to the point of considering it far more important than their own families, relatives and any other thing in their lives. Evidently, the *amigos* to whom Sancha refers in her speech are all those who are subjected to such passionate love, a feeling against which she expressed her warnings.

In the narration of the event, up to this point, passion between the two protagonists has not reached its apogee yet; for this reason they still address each other according to the formulae of courtly love, by using denominations of undeniable vassalatic reminiscence, such as *senhor/a*:

[...] quiero que me fagades pleyto et omenage en la mi mano que me tomedes por mugier et que caseades conmigo et non me dexedes por otra duenna ninguna.⁷⁰

Sancha behaved as a female-liege and, in such a position, she also asked for an ‘oath of love’, which had to be respected by the Count if he did not want to incur dishonour or, in the worst case, even death. Fernán González swore his love and loyalty with the awareness that, if he did not fulfil the terms of that agreement, he would be irremediably accused of disloyalty and treachery, paying the inevitable consequences.

Another useful case which might help to disclose further semantic combinations of the adopted language of love and friendship is *EE 731*. It recounts the story of Count Garcí Fernández and his unfortunate marriage with Argentina, a French countess who abandoned him to follow, instead, a nobleman who had come from France to make the pilgrimage to Santiago. Overwhelmed by those humiliating events, Garcí Fernández decided to go to the shrine of the Virgin of Rocamadour, dressed up as a mendicant and accompanied by one of his squires. At the shrine there was also Sancha, daughter of the man who had taken Argentina as his wife. The girl was extremely disconcerted by her step-mother Argentina’s behaviour and she revealed her frustration to one of her maidens (whom she addressed as *amiga*), expressing her desire to talk to one of the

⁶⁹ *EE 710*, “my lord, she said, this is what love produces, since this is the only thing in the world that can deprive women of fear and embarrassment; since for a lover, women as well as men forget their parents, families and all the things in the world, since what the other gives is considered better”.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, ‘I want you to swear an oath of homage, that you take me as your lover, and that you will marry me and that you will never leave me for any other woman’.

poor who had come to her door, since she wanted to receive honest and disinterested advice. Among the crowd, the maiden noticed the beggar, who was indeed Count Garcí Fernández, whose bearing had attracted the woman, as he showed some kind of inner nobility. The Count, under his false identity, was introduced to Sancha and, once he revealed who he was, they married and joined forces in order to take revenge over both the French Count and Argentina.

What is significant in this account from the *EE* is the peculiar use of the terms *amiga/o* and the way in which they were adopted differently according to the social status of the interlocutors who employed or were addressed by them. When the Count was hidden under his pilgrim's clothes, the maiden had dubbed him *amigo*; a customary way of addressing people of equal conditions with whom one may feel somehow linked (in this case the servant thought that they shared the same social background). However, as soon as the condition of equality disappeared, the register changed as well.

Once the 'pilgrim' met lady Sancha he adopted the title of *sennora* for two main reasons: first, because, due to his pretended poor conditions, he had to follow a reverential code of behaviour which also implied the adoption of certain formulae to address a lady from a higher social class; secondly, since he was a noble indeed, he was still conventionally committed to adopt such courtly register and manners. If that was not enough, another incontrovertible proof of the influence that social identities played on the use of a particular register is given by the fact that Sancha began by addressing him as *amigo* when she thought that he was only a poor man, but she substituted it with *sennor* as soon as Garcí Fernández revealed his true identity. Unlike the formulae exchanged between individuals from the lowest ranks (such as the maiden and the man that she believed to be a humble pilgrim), in the cases of relationships between noblewomen and noblemen, albeit arbitrarily classified as links between peers, the appellation of *amigo* was used only in specific circumstances; namely, as a formula associated with courtly love or in cases of male-female relationships between family members or, as will be discussed later, when one of the parties behaved as a tutor.

To be more specific, the term *amiga* assumed a positive meaning only when marriage had been celebrated or any other regular union established. Only at that point, and if they behaved well, women and wives could be addressed as friends. This is also what happened to the protagonists of *EE* 732. When Sancha married Garcí Fernández:

Et esta condessa donna Sancha començo de primero a seer buena et atenerse con Dios et a seer amiga de so marido et fazer muchas buenas obras [...].⁷¹

Nevertheless, their harmonious marital-friendship did not last very long, since Sancha's amorous feelings towards her husband suddenly turned into hatred. It is recounted that after a while her malevolent female nature emerged violently and brought her to betray her husband. If, on the one hand, this example confirms that the vocabulary of friendship was used according to the social ranks to which the involved characters belonged, on the other hand, it also provides a further proof of the fact that diffidence felt towards women was predominant also at the Alfonsine court.

Other examples extrapolated from the Alfonsine chronicles prove that the term *amigalo* frequently conveyed explicit or implicit sexual connotations. A significant case is *EE* 746 which described the familial life of King Vermudo II. The Alfonsine chronicle reports that 'este don Vermudo ouo por amigas dos duennas de muy grand guisa [...]' and that he also had children by them, while at the same time 'otrossi este rey don Vermudo ouo dos mugeres a bendicion: [...]'.⁷² The fact that a king could have sons from his mistresses, with whom he was legally allowed to have relationships, might justify the fact that those female figures were defined *amigas* in the historical and literary narrations as well as in the legal corpus.

A similar example may be glimpsed in *EE* 847 which narrates that Alfonso VI 'ovo este rey don Alffonso v mugieres a bendiciones et dos amigas, segunt cuenta la estoria'.⁷³ Those two *amigas* – namely Jimena Muñoz and lady Elvira, the latter being Count Raymond de Saint Gille's wife – were honourable women of high lineage and respected at court. Together with them, also his third *amiga*, Zaida, who was said to be the daughter of Abenhabet King of Seville, was depicted with similarly ennobling words: 'mas esta, como quier que lo digan algunos, non fue barragana del rey, mas mugier uelada; [...]'.⁷⁴

To continue, it is worth quoting *EE* 968. The chapter is about Count Henry of Portugal, who married Teresa, King Alfonso VI's illegitimate daughter. The latter was herself the issue of an extra-marital relationship that the king had had with an

⁷¹ *EE* 732, 'and this Countess Sancha, in the beginning behaved correctly and respected God and acted as a good friend of her husband and she did many good things [...]'.
⁷² *Ibid.* 746, 'King Vermudo had two women of high lineage as mistresses'; 'and this King Vermudo had two legitimate wives:[...]'.
⁷³ *Ibid.* 847, 'this King Alfonso V had legitimate wives and two mistresses, as the history tells'.
⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 'but this woman, as somebody has stated, was not the King's mistress, but his secret wife;[...]'.

On the figure of the 'Mora Zaida', see E. Lévi-Provençal, 'La "Mora Zaida" femme d'Alphonse VI et leur fils l'Infant Don Sancho', *Hésperis*, 18 (1934), 1-8.

honourable woman of his court: ‘[...] fija de aquel rey don Alffonso, la que este rey don Alffonso fiziera en donna Xemena Munnoz su amiga, duenna de alta guisa’.⁷⁵ All these examples make it reasonable to assert that, except for the aforementioned exceptional cases of mothers, sisters and sometimes wives, who collaborated as wise counsellors of the men that they supported, most of the female figures who were close to the king and the highest members of his court were, in fact, involved in relationships characterized by sexual implications.

There is also evidence to illustrate that the sexual connotations which the terms *amiga/o* bore with them, were not exclusively limited to describe the protagonists of the relationships involving the king and the other members of the royal court. *Amigo/a* was the title commonly used to indicate any lover. The formula probably entered the common register as a legacy of the widespread poetic clichés, which abound also in the Alfonsine *cantigas* (for example: *CSM* 94, 104, 285). Taking into account the Marian collection, one may notice that the same title implied two substantially different meanings. First, the term was adopted to define the protagonists of immoral or illegitimate relationships. *CSM* 55, which described the dissolute relationship of a nun, who was taken by an abbot as his paramour, is a case in point:

[...], que sse foi con un abade,
que a por amiga teve | un mui gran tenp’ en Lisbõa. (Lines 17-18)⁷⁶

Secondly and contrarily, the definition also appeared to designate the protagonists of any legitimate marital relationship, and above all to address the two parties once their mutual loyalty had been proved to each other. With regard to this second corollary *CMS* 64 deserves a mention. The poem tells of a nobleman’s wife, who was left alone by her husband when he was called to military service. During the time that she spent alone, a knight, who had fallen in love with her, tried to seduce her, but she resisted, aided and protected by the Virgin Mary. For her proven loyalty and nobility of soul, she deserved the benevolent title of *amiga* (alternated with the courtly one of *dona*), that her husband used to address her benevolently.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *EE* 969, ‘[...] King Alfonso’s daughter, that the King had with Jimena Munoz, his mistress, and woman of high status’.

⁷⁶ *CSM* 55, ‘[...] she run away with an abbot, who kept her as his paramour for a long time in Lisbon’.

⁷⁷ Interestingly, the English translation by Kulp-Hill replaces the alternating terms with either ‘my lady’ or ‘my dear’, remarking in such a way the fact that, in the modern perception and vocabulary, the title of friend has partially lost the multifarious range of meanings which it conveyed in the Middle Ages.

To reinforce this point, another example is *CSM* 344. The protagonist of the poem is a malevolent and treacherous lady who tried to poison her husband. If the aforementioned findings about the peculiar adoption of the lexicon of friendship are correct, it may be expected here that the lady should not be defined *amiga*, since she was neither a paramour, linked to her partner by a sensual relationship, nor a loyal and trustworthy advisor. In fact, throughout the entire *cantiga* the appellation adopted to define her is *compaña*. The reasons for this might be found in the fact that she was not a concubine (in fact, she occupied a legitimate position at her husband's side) but, at the same time, she did not possess any of the moral virtues which could have made her a loyal and trustworthy friend.

There are, admittedly, numerous and sometimes antithetic meanings that the words *amigo/a* bore with them in the context of the Alfonsine production. Except for the purest sentimental link between two people, the term also indicated a spiritual lover, such as the Virgin Mary (defined Christ's and her believers' friend); a legitimate consort; as well as any paramour or partner, with whom one was legitimately linked. It is important to remark, though, that the fact that the same lexicon was adopted to define all those different typologies does not mean that there was a real homologation among them. Contrarily, as this study has tried to highlight, the fact that the same terminology was adopted to define multiform cases of love and friendship should be regarded as the legacy of a widespread literary tradition which made separated fields and relationships converge into the same (at least linguistically) melting-pot.

‘Other’ Friendships

§ 10. The Case of Tutors

After having presented the range of characters considered as ‘others’ according to the traditional parameters of friendship, the focus will now be drawn to the typologies of relationships which, although different from the widely-recognized cases of pure friendship, were still defined as such. In particular, in this concluding section tutorship will be discussed, followed by an analysis of the pragmatic and lexical coincidences and differences existing between friendship and companionship.

To begin, attention will be devoted to the examples of tutors presented in the Alfonsine works, which were usually perceived, and therefore defined, as proper friends of both those who entitled them with the tutorial duties and those who received their didactic, pastoral and practical support. A series of cases from the *EE* may serve to illustrate this point. One of them is *EE* 361, which narrates the story of the Eastern Emperor Arcadius, who chose a tutor for his child Theodosius, since he was only eight years old. The Alfonsine chronicle (drawing on the Chronicle by Sigebert of Gembloux) tells us that the tutor who was chosen to fulfil this role was Yazdegerd I, King of Persia, who ‘recibio la guarda del ninno bien cuemo leal amigo, et puso sus pazes muy firmes con los romanos et ayudol a mantener ell imperio.’⁷⁸ By accepting the role of tutor, the King of Persia also agreed, indirectly, a pact of friendship with the Roman Emperor, who had appointed him. Just as with other bonds (such as marriages), so too might tutorship engender strong links between families and groups, which also implied political and military commitments. In the specific case of *EE* 361, the tutor Yazdegerd was defined as a good friend of both Arcadius and the young Theodosius, who was under his direction, since he endowed with moral virtues and strength which make him an exemplary case that the young child should emulate. According to the chronicle, since Yazdegerd was not corrupted by personal ambitions and thirst for power, he was able to behave honestly towards his pupil as well as towards the imperial family who had entrusted him with such an appointment.

Another interesting example is *EE* 784, recounting the story of Sancho García, son of Count García Fernández of Castile and his wife Urraca. Since he was orphaned

⁷⁸ *EE* 361, ‘he received the commitment of the tutorship of the child as a loyal friend, and he allied with the Roman and he helped them to maintain the empire’.

after the murder of both his parents during a Muslim attack, Sancho recurred to the protection of a man who behaved as his tutor: ‘como era omne poderoso et sesudo, conseiaual siempre que punnasse en fazer grandes fechos, et ayudaua el en ello quando podie a guisa de omne leal’.⁷⁹ Wise counsellors who behaved as loyal guides of their younger friends and pupils were characterized by certain peculiarities, some of which are envisaged also in *EE* 804, concerning the conflict between King Ferdinand I and his brother García Sánchez III of Pamplona. According to the Alfonsine chronicle, the latter did not respect the good norms that any respectable lord should have followed; in fact, he did not grant any of the expected rewards to his knights causing, in this way, their rebellion and disloyalty. García Sánchez’s tutor, as a wise counsellor, intervened by advising him loyally and honestly:

El ayo que criara al rey don Graçia de Nauarra era omne muy bueno et leal et sabidor et fiel, et quando uio la cosa assi mal parada, conseio al rey don Garci su sennor, llorando muy fuerte [...].⁸⁰

As with any other kind of friendship, in cases of tutorship corruption and vices could undermine the stability of these links, above all when material benefits were at stake; for instance, when the tutor himself was named inheritor of all the goods belonging to his pupil, in case the latter died. *EE* 178 speaks for itself: ‘[...] una uez auino que un omne bueno a su muerte dexo su fijo pequenno en guarda de un so amigo’ who would have inherited all the child’s patrimony in case he died. The trust and loyalty that the father had for the tutor was not mutually exchanged, since the tutor was ‘omne malo, con cobdicia de heredar lo suyo, matolo a pozon’.⁸¹ Jealousy and avarice could destroy also relationships of tutorship, by making the tutors forget loyalty and trust towards their pupils as well as towards those who had charged them with such a high responsibility.

Now, in order to present an exhaustive picture of the characteristics of these tutorial relationships and the characters involved, the issue of gender should be taken into account. In the Alfonsine narrations, only a few female figures occupied this role and, among them, only a few were described positively. An instance is *EE* 1047, whose protagonist is Queen Berenguela, Ferdinand III’s mother, portrayed as her son’s

⁷⁹ *EE* 784, ‘since he was a strong and wise man, he always advised him to put his effort in trying to do great things, and he personally helped him to achieve it, as a loyal friend’.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 804, ‘the tutor who raised King García of Navarre was a very good, loyal and honourable man, and when he realized how the situation would evolve, he advised King García, his lord, crying loud [...]’.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 178, ‘[...] it happened once that a good man, before he died, left his young son under the tutorship of a friend of his’; ‘the evil man, who wanted to inherit the other’s patrimony, pushed by his avarice, poisoned him’.

trustworthy guide, tutor and wise counsellor. It is extremely important to note that Berenguela, described as an exemplary figure of female tutor, was related by blood ties to the child that she supervised. This also reflects the pragmatic effect of the law which banned any woman from being guardian of a child, except when they were the tutees' mothers or grandmothers. Another condition imposed by the law was that the female figures selected to assume such pastoral duties had to prove their virtues and loyalties, and they were obliged to respect other rigid parameters which the law explicitly stated. For example, they were not allowed to marry anyone while they were in charge of a child (*SP VI:XVI:IV*); and for the same reason widows were not allowed to be appointed as guardian for their own children (*SP VI:XVI:VI*). Generally, however, the law forbade any female tutorship:⁸² 'muger deximos en la ley ante desta que no puede entrar fiador por otri'.⁸³

For numerous aspects the relationships of tutorship respected the same canons of friendship, at least where duties and moral requirements were concerned. For this reason, warnings and prohibitions directed to both tutors and friends were mainly the same. In particular, they were both taught by the law and the didactic collections to avoid the dangers which might derive either from human vices or from trusting individuals who had not given proof of their loyalty and virtues. In fact, only when those common parameters were respected and the individuals involved possessed the moral qualities required, was the language of friendship applied. Once again, the linguistic exploration of the sources is crucial in order to clarify points of convergence and structural differences which were sometimes shaded by the adoption of a semantically similar lexicon.

⁸² Magdalena Rodríguez Gil, 'Las posibilidades de actuación jurídico-privadas de la mujer soltera medieval', in *La condición de la mujer*, pp. 107-120.

⁸³ *SP V:XII:III*, 'as stated in the previous law, women cannot be tutors of other persons?'; *SP V:XVI:I*.

§ 11. Companionship and Friendship: Lexical Similarities and Practical Differences

There are plentiful indications to prove that there were specific cases of relationships in which the vocabulary of friendship was replaced by similar, but not identical, definitions, among which was ‘companionship’. The variety of connections accommodated within the latter included communities of individuals of the same social status; associations of people working together, sharing activities and responsibility in the same fields; affiliations based on commercial and economic agreements and, no less importantly, members of the same familial groups, including their household.

In this section, examples of friendly agreements defined as *compannas* and characterized by commercial and economic interests, will be discussed. First of all, *CSM* 116, presents a merchant with his commercial partner as follow:

[...] un mercadeiro
 que aa feira mercer
 con un seu conpanheiro
 se Salamanca fora,
 como an de costume. (Lines 9-13)⁸⁴

With regard to this point the *SP* provide a clarifying definition. Those who associated in a commercial activity were named companions both legitimately and customarily, and their commitments consisted of sharing the benefits and responsibilities generated by their lucrative activities. Additionally, the law forbade them to be witnesses for each other in a trial, since their testimony would be influenced (and probably corrupted) by the interests that they shared and that they would naturally seek to preserve. In particular, *SP* III:XVI:XXI reads as follow:

Compañeros seyendo algunos en mercadoria ó en otra cosa, si hobiesen pleyto en juicio sobre aquella cosa en que han la compañía, non debe seer rescebido el testimonio del uno por el otro, porque la ganancia ó la pérdida de tal pleyto pertenesce á cada uno dellos por su parte: mas en otro pleyto que non tangiese comunalmente á todos bien podrie testiguar el uno por el otro, como quier que fuese compañeros et amigos.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ *CSM* 116, ‘a merchant who went with a companion of his to trade at the fair of Salamanca, as is the custom’.

⁸⁵ *SP* III:XVI:XXI, ‘when those who are partners in trade or in any other transaction, have a suit in court concerning the business in which they are associated, the testimony of either in behalf of the other shall

However, the norms regulating these companionships based on pragmatic interests recall to mind the same moral norms on which any other form of friendship had to be entrenched; above all loyalty and sharing. *SP III:XVIII:LXXVIII* speaks for itself:

Compañias facen los homes unos con otros para ganar algo de so uno [...]; en la qual compañia metió cada uno dellos mill maravedis alfonsis, con los quales prometieron entre sí el uno al otro de facer esta mercadoria bien et lealmente, et de compartir entre sí toda ganancia, ó daño ó pérdida que hobiese por razon desta mercadoria.⁸⁶

Furthermore, the rules we have already examined concerning the inheritance of friendship seem to be reflected partially in the norms regulating economic and financial agreements. When it comes to the latter, the law declares that patrimonies should be shared between those who had established the partnership (*SP III:XXII:XXI*), but also between their respective heirs, to whom their duties and privileges had been transmitted.

Overall, it is not unreasonable to state that the abstract principles ruling personal friendships were embodied and had their practical development in those commercial partnerships. In other words, while the former were links built on a nobler and more abstract idea of sharing the same soul, the latter implied the concrete co-participation in acquiring goods and bearing duties:

Otrosi decimos que quando facen los homes compañias entre sí poniendo que todos los bienes que han ó ganaren dende adelante que sean comunalmiente de todos los compañeros, que luego que tal compañia hayan fecha, et firmada et otorgada entre sí, que pasa el señorío de todas las cosas que cada uno de ellos ha á los otros, tambien como si unos á otros se hobiesen apoderado en todos los bienes que hobiesen corporalmente.⁸⁷

Moreover, in these cases of commercial cooperation, as for any other form of friendship, before the relationship started, the process of selection of the adequate

not be admitted, for the reason that the gain or loss of said case interests each one of them according to the amount of his share. However, in any other suit which does not concern them all in common, one can testify on behalf of another, although they may be partners and friends’.

⁸⁶ *SP III:XVIII:LXXVIII*, ‘men form partnership with one another for mutual profit [...]; and into the said partnership each of them has put one thousand Alfonsine maravedis, with which each one promises the other to conduct said business well and faithfully, and to divide with one another all profit, injury, or loss, which they may have by reason of said business; [...]’.

⁸⁷ *Ibid. III:XXVIII: XLVII*, ‘we also decree that when men form partnership with one another, by agreeing that all the property which they have now, or may afterwards acquire, shall belong in common to all the partners; and as soon as such partnership has been formed, concluded, and agreed upon among them, the ownership of all the property which each of them has passes to the others, just as if some of them had placed the others actually in possession of everything which they owned’.

candidates should take place and it constituted a crucial stage in which the fundamental requirements of loyalty and honesty had to be tested carefully.

With regard to this aspect, *SP V*, which deals with maritime law specifically, categorises the same legal and moral commandments affecting the norms of co-participation as debts and loss which characterized commercial companies. In this case, the association of merchants is defined as ‘confradía de consuno que se ayuden unos á otros [...]’⁸⁸ although it has to be remembered that these apparently ennobling titles were still referred to relationships forged ‘por razon de ganancia’.⁸⁹ As the Alfonsine law stated:

Compañia es ayuntamiento de dos homes ó de mas que es fecha con entencion de ganar de so uno, ayuntándose los unos á los otros, et nasce ende grant pro quando se face entre homes bonos et leales; ca se ayudan et se acorren los unos á los otros, bien asi como si fuesen hermanos.⁹⁰

It is worth pointing out that personal virtues, respect of the terms of the agreements and, above all, mutual loyalty were considered indispensable conditions for establishing those lucrative agreements, as much as they were in generating any personal and purest friendship. In fact, as long as the aforementioned requirements were fulfilled, even commercial partnerships assumed strong moral connotations to the point of being compared (at least by definition) with brotherhoods.

Apart from the economic connotation attributed to the definition of *compaña*, in the Alfonsine collections the term was also adopted to define other groups, such as pilgrims sharing the same faith and beliefs, who joined to go to the shrines of Saints, the Virgin or to the Holy Land.⁹¹ Particularly interesting is *CSM 355* which narrates the story of a lady who was rejected by the knight that she loved, since he preferred to devote himself to the Virgin Mary. In an attempt to convince him, the lady also proposed to join him on his pilgrimage to Villasirga. As her words suggest, she probably offered him both her sexual favours (*amor*) and her company as a pilgrim:

Eles yndo per camin[n]o | ambos per hũa montanna,
rogou-ll’ ela que quisesse | seu amor e sa conpañna. (Lines 40-41)⁹²

⁸⁸ *SP V*:VII:II, ‘brotherhood for the purpose of aiding one another’.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* V:X, ‘in order to obtain a profit’.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* V:X:I ‘a partnership is the association of two or more men formed with the intention of common profit by the union of all parties. Great advantages arise from it when it is formed between good and faithful men, for they aid one another as if they were brothers’.

⁹¹ *CSM* 26, 49, 57, 224, 217, 268, 302, 311, 319 are just a few examples.

⁹² *Ibid.* 355, ‘he was climbing the mountain when she begged him to accept her love and company’.

Alongside these two first typologies of relationships described as *compannas*, there is also the case in which the protagonists joined in order to commit some misdeeds or illegal actions. In these cases the definition of ‘friendship’ never appears, at least where the Alfonsine works are concerned. By contrast, the term adopted is companionship, conventionally used to indicate relationships based on material profits, therefore prone to dissolve as soon as the bonding pragmatic interests linking the parties disappeared. If the typologies and aims of these relationships were one part of the equation, so too were the characteristics required of the individuals who established them. In fact, since the companions who collaborated in committing malevolent actions were usually guided by avarice and lust, and corrupted by other vices, they could not be regarded, and therefore titled, as ‘friends’. Take, for example, *CSM* 106, whose protagonists are two squires who attempted a robbery, before being discovered and imprisoned. The thieves’ relationship was based neither on admirable feelings, nor on mutual love, but it rather developed as a form of complicity in committing a crime. For this reason they never addressed each other as friends, but rather as *compannon*. The same appellation is used in *EE* 183, where a group of thieves are catalogued as *companna de ladrones*.

Equally revealing is *CSM* 194, recounting the miracle of a minstrel, whose clothes and donkey made the knight, who owned the lands that the minstrel was crossing, greedy and jealous. The poem reports that the knight ordered one of his men to go and catch the minstrel. So the evil man did ‘e dessa natura mesma | levou sig’ un companheiro’ (line 20).⁹³ According to the poem, the wicked man took a companion (the poem does not say a ‘friend’) with him to carry out such a criminal action. This lexical choice might be explained by the lack of any feeling of loyalty, love and respect between the two collaborators, whose union was based on their selfish attempts at obtaining the material rewards which the knight would pay for their illicit services.

Another example of men collaborating on the basis of lucrative and immoral desires is *CSM* 245. The poem is about the miracle which happened in São Salvador da Torre, where ‘o alcaid’ enton de Nevia | con su companna vil [...]’ (line 120)⁹⁴ imprisoned and tormented a traveller from whom they wanted to steal money and goods, mistaking him for a rich man. What is striking is that not only did the evil *companna* seek to pursue their project of robbery, but they misbehaved intentionally in

⁹³ *CSM* 194, ‘he took a companion of the same ilk with him’.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 245, ‘the castellan of Neiva with his vile company [...]’.

order to defend their reputations as evildoers, which they wanted to maintain in the eyes of the other corrupted men of Portugal.

CSM 125 narrates the story of a priest who fell in love with a young woman, but she refused his shameful love, protected by the Holy Virgin. Driven by despair and passion, the priest summoned the devil and asked for his aid in order to conquer the woman. In fact, in the entire collection of the *CSM*, as well as in the other Alfonsine works, any connection with the devil was defined as the worst company that a man might have (*CSM* 201, 411), since the devil represented the ‘enemigo de todo bien’ (*EE* 517). Moreover, through his insidious plots, he could cause the end of any friendship, alliance or agreement:

‘el Diablo [...] sembro la su mala semient et negra en el regno de Espanna, e metio en los poderosos soberuia, e en los religiosos pereza et negligencia, e entre los que auien paz et amor discordia [...]’.⁹⁵

This digression helps in the analysis of the aforementioned *CSM* 125, where the priest addresses the devil as ‘amigo meu’ (line 50). This might appear contradictory to what has been theorized up to this point, since an evildoer could not be addressed as a friend, for the reasons explored above. Nevertheless, the adoption of such an epithet might have two possible explanations. In the first case – which seems a more plausible interpretation – the priest might have used the epithet as a mere formula of *captatio benevolentiae* (similarly to those adopted in several other contexts; for example, by the rulers who summoned their armies). Moreover, from a syntactical perspective, the term *compannon* always appears in discourses formulated in the third person singular, while in the case of *CSM* 125, it is used in the priest’s speech – reported in first-direct speech – to address the devil directly. Therefore, the rhetorical values assumed by the appellation of *amigo* seem more likely. An alternative, though more fragile, explanation is that the priest was honestly unaware of the malevolent implications of his love and, consequently, he truly believed that the devil, as the only one willing to help him, was entitled to be dubbed as ‘friend’.

Finally, two more examples from the *EE* will be discussed in order to draw a sharp-line between the adopted definitions and conceptions of companionship and friendship. To begin, *EE* 777, which describes how, at the time of Alfonso V of León, the Muslim King of Seville moved to Córdoba, where he had to face the turmoil

⁹⁵ *EE* 551, ‘the devil [...] sowed his bad and black seeds in the kingdom of Spain, and he put arrogance in those who were powerful, laziness and negligence in the clergymen, and put enmity between those who lived in love and peace [...]’.

generated by the inhabitants of the city, who marshalled their forces against him, as a consequence of the fact that he had been unable to stop the raids that his own host of Berbers had committed over those territories. The inhabitants of Córdoba banned the Muslim ruler from their territories, as was confirmed to the King by his own sons: ‘los fijos salieron estonces a ell con unos pocos de sus amigos, et dixeronle todo el fecho de los de la çibdad’.⁹⁶ The question which might arise here is why the military host surrounding the King’s sons are indicated as *amigos* rather than – as expected for a military group – as *companna*. Admittedly, the so-termed *amigos* belonged to a very restricted group and they were called as such mainly because of their political and social positions. In fact, as normally happened in the highest social circles, only nobles and vassals were allowed to be named ‘friends’.

Last but not least, *EE* 4 should not be forgotten. In this chapter the etymological origin of the name of the Persian city Phoenix is given. According to the chronicle, the toponym was related to the bird’s name and it was justified by the fact that both the city and the bird were regarded as unique: ‘ell ave fenix que es sola e no a compannera’.⁹⁷ Focusing on the linguistic side of this quotation, an interesting point emerges. In *EE* 4 the affirmation that the bird has no *compannera* signifies that it is not comparable to any other animal and that none of them may be considered as equal in value. Although lacking any direct connection to the sphere of human relationships, this example adds further support to my argument, at least from a merely linguistic point of view. In fact, in all the examples detectable in the Alfonsine production, the term *compannero* always refers to individuals sharing peer conditions, similar attitudes and equal social or economic status. By contrast, every time that the terminology of friendship is adopted, an abstract and more complicated concept of equality is implied, which is enhanced to include equality in virtues and, as promoted by the influent Christian doctrine, a form of equality which might be achieved in the name of, and love for, God.

Driven by all these considerations and by examining the subject from thematic, semantic and linguistic points of view, this study has tried to disentangle the threads of the complicated network of relationships which appeared in the analysed works. By illustrating the kaleidoscope of meanings that the vocabulary of friendship might assume in the numerous and multifarious cases explored, both contacts and divergences between those categories have been mapped out.

⁹⁶ *EE* 777, ‘his sons came to him with a few friends, and told him what was happening in the city’.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 4, ‘the bird phoenix that is unique and with no companions (equals)’.

Conclusions

The above pages have been devoted to exploring the idea of friendship as it was perceived in thirteenth-century Iberia and, in particular, through the major works of one of its most acclaimed spokesmen: Alfonso X of Castile. Following a comparative pattern of analysis, first the idea of friendship in the pre-Alfonsine context has been outlined; secondly, the same parameters have been adopted to investigate the works produced in the Alfonsine scriptorium, and the numerous categories emerging from such an analysis have been discussed. According to such a line of analysis, friendship assumes the connotation of a 'living entity' born between certain individuals and under certain circumstances, which also needed specific characteristics in order to develop and to be preserved. Moreover, it was destined to fail as soon as the original motivations binding the involved parties expired. It has not been an easy task to reconstruct a single idea of friendship from the Alfonsine corpus under examination; however, through the different categorizations which have been outlined some common features and, even more significantly, some unique elements have emerged.

Indeed, despite the similarities with the contemporary European perspective on this subject and the common roots shared with classical philosophical thought, the Alfonsine interpretations of friendship presented some original aspects. First of all, the undisputed superiority of relationships based on blood ties and kinship (argued by some of the ancient Greek and Near Eastern thinkers) was subverted by the Alfonsine perspective, according to which blood ties did not represent a guarantee of loyalty and respect, at least not as much as a proof of real friendship represented. Interestingly, there were some common elements between all the typologies emerging from the Alfonsine works, as well as between them and other European interpretations of friendship. Loyalty, respect, ability to keep the other's secrets and, last but not least, mutuality in sharing love and responsibilities (including the defence and protection of the other's person, fame and respectability) are the undisputed basis on which any typology of friendship had to be forged. To confirm this, it might be worth quoting the examples of 'spiritual friendships' which connected divine, and therefore perfect, figures in the name of a shared devotion. However, they still had to conform to the same rules of friendship as any other human being, and they had to earn the believers' respect by behaving exemplarily and loving them mutually. The Virgin Mary, for example, acquired the title of 'perfect friend' because she proved her virtues and, through them,

her love and loyalty towards God and her devotees, and she also acted as intermediary between them.

Another interesting discussion concerns the idea of equality between the parties involved in an amicable relationship. Although friendships between representatives of different social status were extremely rare and they generally implied the submission of one of the parties, it has to be noted that the gap existing between them might be overcome if certain equality in virtues was experienced or if individuals regarded themselves as 'equals' in the name of a shared love for God. Nonetheless, in all these cases a restriction was applied: even the higher-positioned figures had to earn their subordinates' love, by loving and respecting them mutually.

Whilst not denying completely the possibility of exchanging mutual favours and love between individuals of unequal social status endowed with noble virtues, it has to be admitted that most of those relationships, although defined as friendships, resembled in fact vassalatic bonds. As attested by literary and historical sources, social disparity could neither be completely ignored nor overcome. Even in the cases of religious friendships, for example, where the links were established on the basis of a shared love for the Father, a pyramidal structure oriented those connections, allowing only certain contacts and presenting others as mere paternalistic links. In such cases, those who acted as intermediaries between differently positioned figures were also catalogued as friends.

Additionally, it has to be stressed that most of the relationships ennobled with the appellation of friendship were in fact aimed at achieving some pragmatic goals. Cases in point were the political alliances, treaties and pacts of peace based on loyalty and trust, but actually established in order to obtain protection, military and material support or defence from enemies. The king was usually at the centre of these connections and probably for this reason most of the warnings given in the examined works were didactic norms addressed to the sovereigns directly. In particular, the monarch was taught not to trust a person as a friend before having proved his loyalty, so that he could discern those who might be considered his trustworthy counsellors and those who had to be removed from his closest circle. Among the latter, there were the members of other religious groups, especially Muslims and Jews. The law was explicit about the behaviour which they had to follow and how the other social parties were obliged to interact with them. However, whenever the contractors were rulers or members of the highest elite, a few exceptions were allowed. In fact, not only were 'friendships' with Muslim rulers signed, but in some cases they even proved to be more

trustworthy that those established with other Christian monarchs. In such cases the aforementioned 'rules' of friendship had to be proved and respected; especially loyalty, which in these cases consisted of the defence of the other party and the respect of the norms established by their agreement.

Even if pragmatic reasons might lead to the establishment of certain types of friendship, these connections were still promoted as examples of excellent moral behaviour and for this reason their destruction was usually attributed to the disloyalty committed against a 'friend'. Betrayal being the worst sin that a person could commit, there was no chance for those who committed it to re-establish a previous friendship or to be still trusted as friends. This highlights one of the differences between classical and Alfonsine thought; according to the former, any real friendship was based on the 'good', that is to say it could flourish every time that two noble souls met, independently from external factors (such as age or class distinction). In the Alfonsine perspective, virtues are also regarded as fundamental parameters, while human vices are considered the causes leading to the end of any friendship; however, since it was believed that some categories were genetically encoded with those vices (such as the Jewish people), no relationship was possible between them *a priori*. Therefore, those who were stereotypically defined as evildoers and traitors were inevitably banned as friends. This was also the case of female figures, rarely accepted as companions and friends, except when they were related by familial ties to the counterpart or when they proved their goodwill.

The choice of the lexicon adopted to define those links proved it: the terms *amigo* or *compannero* alternated whenever certain ranking was experienced between the contractors, in contrast to the vocabulary related to brotherhood which was adopted, instead, in the presence of wholly equal conditions. The careful adoption of the vocabulary of friendship in the Alfonsine works confirms that there was a clear idea of friendship which emerged not just from the legal statements, but also from the literary and historical production. Despite the general comparison between friendship and companionship given before, it has to be highlighted that they presented some differences, since the former implied a series of characteristics related to the spiritual and moral sides of the individuals involved in the relationships, while the latter was used to indicate links motivated by pragmatic needs, and sometimes even generated in order to carry out certain malevolent plans.

Together with this major distinction, it has to be remembered that in the Alfonsine texts the vocabulary of friendship was also used to designate lovers, paramours and

legitimate partners. This has been explained as the result of a literary and ideological process according to which the concepts of love and friendship coincided for a long time, a process which still influenced the thirteenth-century production. Nonetheless, a new awareness appears in Alfonso X's works. In fact, even in cases of concubinage or sexual bonds, the words *amigo/a* were used only if and when the partners behaved loyally to each other or when the relationship between them was legitimized either through secular or religious laws.

The Learned King also adopted the title of friends as a demagogic tool to address his fellows and army, on the condition that they were behaving honestly, loyally and respectfully towards him, as he was obliged to do towards them. It is interesting at this point to recall the pre-Alfonsine statement appearing in the *Flores de Filosofía*, according to which:

El seso es amigo cansado e la voluntad es enemiga
e fuerte seguidor. E por ende deue
ome obedecer al seso como a verdadero amigo.¹

Wisdom had to prevail over feelings and emotions, above all in the process of selection of a friend, since the absence of a test of the other's goodwill and honesty could generate the end of the relationship itself, and sometimes it could even lead to more dramatic consequences.

This study has sought to demonstrate that the interpretations of friendship in the Alfonsine works are not univocal, but that does not mean that they are not clearly defined. In fact, even if categories and typologies frequently overlapped, such as the figures of friends, counsellors and companions, or cases of religious, political or military friendships, their constitutive elements remained the same as well as the threats which could undermine them. Friendship is presented as indispensable for both personal and social life, and even though it underwent a number of important changes during its temporal and geographical evolution, its value and interpretation did not vanish, but it rather transmorphed into something which adapted to the different ideological, political and social contexts in which it was inserted and which Alfonso X's projects contributed partially to re-shape and promulgate.

¹ *Flores de Filosofía*, ed. cit., p. 9, cap. XIX.

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