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Geraldine Hazbun



THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

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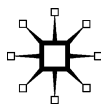
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For Saleh, Gabriel, and Madeleine Angela

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INTRODUCTION

CONQUEST AND DEFEAT: LEGACY AND LITERATURE

Iberia's rich history of conquest is aptly summarized by the thirteenth-century King Alfonso X who described his wish to record for posterity Spain's passage through many different dominions, and its harsh treatment in the process, "el fecho dEspanna, que passo por muchos senorios et fue muy mal trecha, recibiendo muertes por muy crueles lides et batallas daquellos que la conquirien" (1955, 4). He is referring here to the historical invasions of the Iberian Peninsula by the Romans, Suevi, Vandals, Alani, Visigoths, and Moors, all of which left an important, if at times brutal, legacy. Historical conquests are deemed by the king to be an important part of a shared collective memory, a viewpoint widely propagated in medieval Spanish literature where conquest plays a constitutive role in a range of narrative and lyrical contexts. It was the Islamic invasion of 711, however, which dominated the medieval Spanish imagination and, in practice, shaped lived experience, socially, culturally, and politically, for the people of Iberia for over 700 years. It was recounted in poem and prose, expressed in written and oral contexts, and altogether formed a source of both wonder and horror for the Christian population of Iberia throughout the Middle Ages and beyond.

The circumstances surrounding the invasion of Spain by the Muslims of North Africa are shrouded in mystery. The colorful, legendary version which circulated widely in chronicles and ballads in Spain, and which caught the imagination of later writers and dramatists, told of how the beautiful daughter of Count Julian, la Cava, was entrusted to the care of King Rodrigo but was raped by the king at his court.¹ In revenge, Count Julian liaised with the Moors of North Africa and enabled the invasion to take place in devastating fashion. Identities and events remain unclear, however. Julian appears in Arabic chronicles, but not early Christian

ones. He may have been a Byzantine exarch, Christian Berber, or Gothic noble (O'Callaghan 1975, 52). La Cava is at first unnamed, then referred to as Alataba or Alacaba, then la Caba, and eventually christened Florinda la Cava by Miguel de Luna in 1592 (Grieve 2009, 25–26). Rodrigo enjoys a variegated personality, seen variously as the hapless victim of beauty and betrayal, the miserable emblem of a vice-riddled polity, and the last of the illustrious Visigoths. Sex and scandal notwithstanding, historians suggest that the conquest was inevitable, for reasons like the proximity of the Muslims to the Peninsula, the rapid spread of Islam, and the conflictive internal politics of the Visigothic state in its last days (O'Callaghan 1975, 52–53).²

The Islamic conquest is traditionally partnered with the idea of a reconquest. An Asturian chronicle written in the late ninth century called the *Crónica de Alfonso III* shaped the elusive figure of Pelayo, who is first referred to in the ninth-century *Crónica albeldense* as the initiator of Asturian rebellion against the Muslims, into a character of royal blood, sword bearer of kings Witiza and Rodrigo, and leader of the Christian resistance. In the wake of the invasion, Pelayo takes refuge in the mountainous northern region of Asturias, and the cave of Covadonga, where he holds off Muslim threats led by Munuza the local ruler, and supported by Bishop Oppa of Seville. In a rout at Covadonga, where the Muslims' weapons turn around in mid-flight and fall back on them, Pelayo is victorious and so begins the myth of an unconquered green corner of the Peninsula from where the divinely sponsored recovery and restoration of all that has been lost begins. Pelayo's son-in-law Alfonso I (739–57) came to power after the short reign of his son Fávila (737–39). Alfonso managed to extend Christian dominion to include Galicia, northern Portugal, Cantabria, Álava, and La Rioja, taking advantage of the internal crisis in the Emirate of Cordoba, and of the revolt of the Berbers in 740 which saw them withdraw from the most northerly reaches of the Peninsula.³ Alfonso II (791–842) attempted to restore in Asturias the civil and ecclesiastical order of the Visigothic monarchy and may, according to Joseph O'Callaghan, also have initiated the historiographical tradition linking the Visigothic and Asturian monarchies (1975, 104), an important feature in later interpretations of the rightfulness of Christian recovery of land. Of added importance to the development of the idea of reconquest was the discovery during Alfonso II's reign of a tomb purported to belong to the Apostle Saint James the Great, near the ancient city of Iria Flavia. Américo Castro describes the popular belief that this Santiago was Saint James, called brother of Christ in St. Matthew's Gospel (13.55), as opposed to James the Greater, son of Zebedee (1971, 382). The belief in Santiago as the brother of Christ was attractive to the undoubtedly

anxious Christians in northern Spain in the eighth and ninth centuries, all the more so for the possibility that the saint might intervene at moments of difficulty. The cult of Santiago of Galicia led to the shrine of the Apostle at Santiago de Compostela becoming one of the foremost centers of pilgrimage in medieval Europe and to Santiago becoming the patron and protector of Spain. The boundaries of the Asturian-Leonese kingdom were considerably extended again in the tenth century under Alfonso III (866–910), such that the monarchs began to call themselves by a new title: *imperatores* (emperors). Ramón Menéndez Pidal links the use of the title with a greater sense of confidence in Asturias that the Islamic forces could be defeated, a spirit of “visigotismo asturiano, con ambición de próximo abatimiento del islam” (1950, 43–44).

The historical and mythical antecedents for what would later harden as the ideology of Christian Reconquest, culminating in the fall of Granada under the Catholic Monarchs in 1492, are all present here: the valorous Pelayo resisting the Muslims from his northern vantage point, the consolidation of Asturias as a kingdom and its connection to the once illustrious Visigothic kingdom covering all of Spain and Mauritania in North Africa, the role of Santiago as a Christian patron and protector in times of distress and difficulty, and the beginnings of a sentiment of Spanish imperialism. Later versions, historical and fictional, of the conquest and reconquest of Spain would consistently draw on one or more of these elements, and the literary and historiographical works considered in this book certainly provide evidence of that. As used today by historians and scholars, however, the term reconquest usually invites a cautious approach, conscious of anachronism and generalization.⁴

The scheme of conquest and reconquest which was shaped from early chronicles onward gave medieval Spanish authors a distinctive and contrasting historical model, one that was shameful and triumphant, outward-looking and introspective, progressive and recursive, authoritative and accessible at one and the same time. What emerges from this, and is a central premise of this study, is that medieval Spain does not have a literature of conquest nor a literature of reconquest *per se* but a literature of both, where one cannot be understood without the other and are inextricable, interrelated forces within the literary text.⁵ The literary works studied here—the *Estoria de España* (1252–84) by Alfonso X, *Crónica de veinte reyes* (anon, late thirteenth century), *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* (Gonzalo de Berceo, both early thirteenth century), *Poema de Fernán González* (anon, c. 1250), and *Crónica sarracina* by Pedro de Corral (c.1430)—were all written during the period from the early twelfth century to the late fifteenth when the Christian kingdoms experienced waves of success that would eventually build to

the climax of 1492, and the fall of Granada. Looked at with historical hindsight, it is easy to trace a pattern of incremental Christian successes building to 1492 but this master narrative does not map onto the meaning of these texts. Their often enigmatic insights into what today seems like a sweeping historical process of conquest and reconquest are at times reduced in focus and, at times, extremely broad, even universal. The matter of the historical contexts in which they were written and the effect this has on their content is therefore one which demands attention to the risks of generalization and to the foreclosure of alternative readings owing to the assumption that this historical framework is somehow more “real” than the texts. I find Gabrielle M. Spiegel’s approach relevant in this regard:

All texts occupy determinate social spaces, both as products of the social world of authors and as textual agents at work in that world, with which they entertain often complex and contestatory relations. In that sense, texts both mirror and generate social realities, which they may sustain, resist, contest, or seek to transform, depending on the case at hand. (1997, 24)

A distinctively dualistic vision of history underpins all of the texts studied here, investing them with a keen sensitivity toward historical change and the reasons for it, both man-made and otherwise. The writers discussed in this study are all notably curious about the role the Moors play in shaping Spain’s historical destiny but the ways in which they demonstrate this curiosity suggest that rather than propagating triumphalist Christian propaganda, they are acutely aware of the precarious state of any polity and any single person at any given time, and so tend to look for lessons in the variegated history of Islamic polities in Spain. Predating the rise of the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth century and the eradication of the frontier between Christian Castile and Islamic Granada, these texts stand as valuable witnesses to the plural and oftentimes ambivalent attitudes toward the Islamic conquest and its legacy that define the earlier period of the Middle Ages.

The Shape and Space of Conquest

The object of this book is to look at the literary representation of Islamic conquest as it emerges from close readings of the texts listed previously, foregrounding in the process the aesthetic qualities of some of Castile’s most important early prose and poetic works. The texts have been selected for their content and quality, offering as they do substantial and understudied material on the conquest. I have also sought to achieve variety

within their types, and so the study incorporates poetry and prose; more specifically, prose historiography, and the embedding of epic material therein, clerical poetry, and the early historical novel.⁶ Primarily, however, the texts were chosen according to their experiments in narrative; each one demonstrating an innovative approach to narrative form and content. The narrative status of the works has a particularly important bearing upon their content relating to conquest, for narrative and space are inextricably linked. As Paul Zumthor reminds us, “toute prise de possession territoriale s’opère par le biais d’un récit, serait-ce celui que produit ou falsifie la preuve d’un droit” (1993, 302). Fabienne L. Michelet describes how “a narrative always grounds claims to a given land, justifies its possession, and defines the limits of the space thus occupied” (2006, 11). The narratives in question here all look back over Spain’s territorial past and attempt to contain it, relive it, and project it forward into the future with a combination of traditional and innovative techniques and forms. Alfonso X’s *Estoria de España* was the first work of historiography in Spain to be written in the vernacular, and surpasses its predecessors in its breathtaking ambition to extend from the time of Noah to the reign of Alfonso himself to further the king’s claims to be Holy Roman Emperor. Its incorporative, encyclopedic mentality combines with a clear sense of providential overview and structural integrity to produce a narrative of impressive detail and proportion, a narrative of “los fechos de Espanna” (1955, 2) whose shape and space clearly reflects the imperialist drive of its creator but whose focus on the legacy and longevity of territorial appropriation betrays deep concerns over the precarious state of these ambitions in a world of deceit and strife. The *Crónica de veinte reyes*, although related to the *Estoria*, focusses only on the reconquest and thus shapes its narrative according to a predominantly Castilian viewpoint, one governed by the key idea of *ensanchar*, to extend or widen. Fittingly, its narrative is on the capacious side too, characterized by a slow, deliberate pace, and by the inclusion of prosified versions of Spain’s epic legends, popular narratives within the historical frame, which invest it with a strong foundational appeal. Owing to the extensive use of popular, epic material, as well as a penchant for rendering historical happenings through detail and dialogue, not to mention its explicit citing of a standard of what is *verdadero* or true, the *Crónica* calls attention constantly to the meaning of truth in the historiographical narrative in a way that illustrates a moving forward of the genre.

In the case of the poetic works, Berceo’s *Vidas* belong to the innovative category of thirteenth-century vernacular poetry known as *mester de clerecía*, constituting monorhymed quatrains of 14-syllable Alexandrine verse written by clerics in Old Castile. The verse form, combined with

assonantal rhyme, encourages narrative flow and linear progression yet equally allows for the separation of ideas, as each quatrain forms an important narrative unit in its own right, a spatial entity which stands out of the page for its neatness and completeness, and would have had a similar, arguably more effectively mnemonic, role when performed orally, like a cell for reflection.⁷ As Mary Carruthers reminds us:

The emphasis upon the need for human beings to “see” their thoughts in their minds as organized schemata of images, or “pictures,” and then to use these for further thinking, is a striking and continuous feature of medieval monastic rhetoric, with significant interest even for our own contemporary understanding of the role of images in thinking. And the monk’s “mixed” use of verbal and visual media, their often synaesthetic literature and architecture, is a quality of medieval aesthetic practice that was also given a major impetus by the tools of monastic memory work. (1998, 3)

This poetic form is eminently suitable for the local and protonational visions of space Berceo projects. The recounting of the saints’ lives permits decidedly introspective and indigenous views of space, as these holy men emerge from local and parochial contexts, yet their sainthood is fully realized in the context of frontier warfare, and even blurs the boundaries of physical and abstract space in the form of heavenly appearances and interventions. The *mester* form can rise to even this spatial challenge, providing as it does a technically flawless, or inherently holy medium, or perhaps a combination of the two; a “*mester sin pecado*,” according to the second stanza of the *Libro de Alexandre* (Cañas Murillo 2003). The *Poema de Fernán González* is also written in the *mester* form, yet its character is notably hybrid, incorporating features of juglaresque song, biblical narrative, historiography, and even romance.⁸ Scholars have tended to see it as either part of the *mester de clerecía* or as a work best interpreted as epic, yet the narrative starts with a historical introduction that would not be out of place in a chronicle, a universal framework which places the life and deeds of the hero Fernán, all of which are in service of Castile, in the context of the Visigothic past. Moreover, the narrative consistently subordinates the traditional material of epic to concerns about the shape, space, and status of Castile, to the extent that there is some competition for the audience’s attention, as Alan Deyermond rightly observed: “emotion tends to be divided between Castile and Fernán González, whereas in most epics it is concentrated on the hero as an embodiment of his country” (1971, 38). The final work, the *Crónica sarracina*, shares the quality of narrative innovation with the earlier texts and, indeed, stands out

for its generic complexity. Pedro de Corral's teasing title might seem to indicate a work of plain historiography but it is far from that, being rather a fictional chronicle that aims to flaunt its fictionality, a work steeped in the chivalric, courtly, and novelesque atmosphere of the later Middle Ages but simultaneously critical and questioning of the very codes that underpin it. Its fictitious chroniclers Eleastras and Alanzuri, ostensibly commissioned by King Rodrigo, preside over an account of territorial conquest that is governed by motifs of strife and schism, providing a vision of space that looks inward and is, at the same time, self-consciously fictive.

While their common aim of reflecting on the experience of conquest and drawing from it lessons that may be applied to their own time is a recognizable historical and ethical model in each work, each one of them sees fit to attempt something new, to redefine narrative in a way that cannot help but draw attention to the very shape and form in which their material is cast. This conscious reconfiguration of their own narrative spaces provides a compelling vehicle with which to consider the reshaping of space more generally, priming the reader to think about questions of authority and control, not to mention representation, both in the textual context and beyond, in the physical world they mirror. Underpinning the novelty of these narratives is the relationship between history and fiction. This is called into question in all of the works but it is in the context of historiography that we are reminded most literally of the porous boundary between the two in the Middle Ages, where terms like *Estoria* and *Crónica* announce a subject matter that is historical, but not necessarily empirically so. As Colin Smith puts it, "*history* and *story* are simply the same word, the first a learned revival, the other popular. No distinction seems to have existed between them in the medieval mind" (1982, 55). We see this in evidence in the *mester de clerecía* too, where authoritative written sources pertaining to Spain's past are given a decidedly popular revival through their reincarnation in a poetic vernacular which consciously propagates traits from oral culture.

While the authors of these works are connected to the royal court and clerical milieux, the rich oral heritage of Spain's first written texts, and the determination of these authors to involve it, means that popular legends, songs, sayings, and viewpoints are certainly not excised from these written contexts, but rather welcomed in a spirit of comprehensiveness and inclusivity. In other words, while they are the product of powerful centers of academic activity, courts and monasteries alike, theirs is not an exclusively nor wholly official perspective.⁹ In fact, in the context of the thirteenth-century material, the use of the vernacular marks a deliberate attempt to reach out to new and wider audiences, instructing them

about their nation's past, and the catalogue of human successes and failures that precede them. The coexistence of the established and the new, and of official and unofficial discourse in these texts, connects them with other literary contexts in which the European vision of Islam is negotiated, and where the location of truth and authority are problematic. Norman Daniel's study of the *Chansons de geste* is a helpful correlative to the idea that unofficial attitudes to Islam and the Arabs are evident in early medieval poetic texts; he reasons that "people may accept an established authority quite willingly, and still live their own lives and think their own thoughts" (1984, 1). Barbara Fuchs's study of Islam in the context of early modern Spanish literature also looks at the problem of truth in a literary context where mimesis is able to "confound the homogenizing, exclusionist goals of the state in texts that ostensibly align themselves with that state" (2001, 12). She discusses the caution which surrounded chivalric romances, which were deemed to represent "the beguiling treacherousness of the *verisimilar*—the careful imitation of the true" and thus constituted "powerful displays of artistic prowess, inspiring models, and potential weapons of subversion" (13).

The novelty and inclusivity of the works studied here provides a wide range of perspectives on the 711 conquest; some of a more official nature which reflect the political ambitions of the center, and others which are more nuanced, and often surprisingly empathetic and idiosyncratic in their representation of Moorish-Christian relations. While the texts are written during what looks today like an unstoppable trajectory toward Christian triumph in 1492, the perspectives these texts offer can be much more confined, more uncertain, and more human than the picture painted by facts and dates. By the same token, the rose-tinted rhetoric of more universal and more politicized perspectives is there too, offering a different kind of literary idiom, one that is intrinsically connected with the issue of finding a language of nationhood, of talking in proud, collective terms about the past. This breadth of vision may in part be due to the range of the material but it certainly speaks for the distinctive ability of early Castilian literature to present, even in the most ostensibly official settings such as the royal chronicle, an open perspective on the past. It also illustrates that attitudes toward the conquest and to the presence of the Muslims in Spain were not uniform, nor were they static, an approach I share with Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran Cruz who describes how "medieval views of Islam . . . mixed popular and learned views, intermingled the realistic with the marvellous and the legendary, modulated over time and ran the gamut from the murderous to the empathic" (1999, 55). Spiegel's description of historiography could also be said to apply to the range of texts studied here inasmuch as "suppressed meanings and voices

always threaten to break through, to reopen the contest and overcome the silences that history inevitably imposes" (1997, 211).

Collective identity is often expressed in and through landscape and space in these texts, a factor which I have taken close account of in this study, considering how their narratives, which are spatial entities in their own right, represent the physical spaces of conquest and unlock their deeper symbolic potential. There is much material depicting physical or topographical space in literal terms—hills, valleys, towns, courts, plains, battlefields and so forth—but these spaces are never without a symbolic and imaginative appeal in their immediate contexts which contributes to the sense that the texts use space to extend rather than to narrow their range of meaning. Some physical spaces, particularly enclosed or secret ones like prisons, hermitages, caves, gardens, and architectural structures more generally, seem particularly to encapsulate an important symbolic component in their foregrounding of the dynamic of inside/outside or accessible/inaccessible, one which necessarily draws attention to the fact that they host a boundary of some sort, be that spiritual, political, ethnic, sexual, economic, or otherwise. All of the analyses which follow pay close attention to boundaries and frontiers and, by extension, the relationship between the center and the margins. The focus on limits and liminality in the texts fits the historical context, where in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, there was a renewed interest in property and rural space, evident in "an increased preoccupation with boundaries and landmarks" (Ruiz 2004, 67). Michelet describes how "historically speaking, frontiers grow in importance in the course of the early Middle Ages" (2006, 22) citing W. G. Hoskins assessment of Anglo-Saxon England wherein "as the countryside fills up it becomes increasingly necessary to define territorial bounds, for it is no longer sufficient to associate them with natural features in an untamed landscape" (23). This of course has political consequences in a context in which the land was regarded as the foundation and site of the imagined territorial community, the *patria* (Ruiz 2004, 86).¹⁰ As Ariel Guance observes, "at least until the thirteenth century...the land...in its many meanings—local territory, land of birth, paternal legacy—is the authentically "national" factor of the community and its visible sign of integration" (1998, 324, 331).

The particular frontier with Islamic al-Andalus is naturally a focal point in all of the texts. While I deal with the frontier substantially in chapter 4, in connection with the *mester de clerecía*, it ought to be stated here that the very notion of the medieval frontier was invented in Spain. The term *frontera* was first documented in the will of Ramiro I of Aragon in 1059, in which he refers to "castros de fronteras de mauros qui sunt pro facere" (Buresi 2001, 54). As Lucy K. Pick observes, this early reference

to the frontier “refers exclusively to the border between Christians and Muslims. It separates groups according to the religious polities of which they are members and is not used, for instance, to refer to boundaries between Christian kingdoms” (2004, 25). It is on the basis of the Spanish precedent that the term is used to describe similar phenomena on other European frontiers (Pick 2004, 25). While numerous studies have attempted to explain and define the concept of the medieval frontier, sometimes to exasperating effect, it is the literary expression of the frontier and its constitution in narrative contexts that interest me here.¹¹ Bearing in mind its exclusively Spanish genesis, and indeed its remarkably factual meaning if we take Ramiro’s will at its word, it is especially interesting to see what the *frontera* can mean when invested with the full weight of literary imagination, and what symbolic connotations it takes on board in the hands of these innovative authors. I aim here to avoid the trap of allowing the frontier to mean just about anything, of making its definition too pliable, but in such a visual culture as the medieval one, and one so predisposed to making the transition between the literal and the symbolic, and between earthly and spiritual matters, it does seem important to recognize that the finite can also be infinite and to look for that in the literary output of the time.¹² One need look no further than a well-known text of medieval Spain, the *Libro de Alexandre* (c.1200), with its protagonist Alexander constantly pushing at the boundaries of the known world, physical and metaphysical, to see this in evidence.

Images of Islam

I have given some indication of the historical context and textual corpus of this study, and turn now to the theme of the Islamic conquest of 711. I am deeply conscious as I write that the presence and role of Islam in today’s world is a topic of deep and pressing political and social relevance. It is important to be clear, therefore, that I am not seeking to find in medieval Spain the roots of, or solutions to, any present-day circumstances, nor to engage in a politicized reading of the works in question, nor to present any kind of overview of western attitudes toward Islam.¹³ What inspired me to write about this topic was the impression that there is much that has been overlooked about Castile’s literary portrayals of the Islamic conquest, particularly in the earlier period, and that rich seams of irony, empathy, humanity, and humor underpin these representations. I was struck by how the catch-all term “reconquest” seems to encourage generalization about medieval Spain and its literature post 711, rather than the pursuit of difference and detail. Moreover, recent attempts by scholars to identify a culture of mutual tolerance in medieval Iberia, often

linked to the notion of *convivencia* or coexistence, have proved fruitful but offer what look like quite different overviews of the matter of Christian–Muslim relations and representations. María Rosa Menocal writes, for example:

The very heart of culture as a series of contraries lay in al-Andalus... It was there that the profoundly Arabized Jews rediscovered and reinvented Hebrew; there that the Christians embraced nearly every aspect of Arabic style... not only while living in Islamic dominions but especially after wresting political control from them; there that men of unshakeable faith, like Abelard and Maimonides and Averroes, saw no contradiction in pursuing the truth, whether philosophical or scientific or religious, across confessional lines. (2002, 11)¹⁴

Compare this with Roger Collins' description of the invasion:

The Arab conquest created the conditions for a state of almost permanent warfare in the Iberian Peninsula that put especial emphasis upon destruction and the display of dead enemies, with a lively slave trade as an additional incentive... Even in Córdoba at its cultural apogee it will have been hard to escape the reek of decomposing flesh from the decapitated heads displayed on the gates and the bodies of those publically crucified, left to rot in front of the palace. (2014, 1–2)

I am persuaded by the balanced view put forward by historians that there were serious military, political, ideological, and economic confrontations between the Christians and Moors, often focussed at the frontier, but that there were also intervals of peace, truces, and cultural interchanges, and that contact between the two civilizations existed in this dual manner. Angus MacKay refers to this as “the general pattern of official periods of war or peace” (1976, 20). It seems important not to let this dualism translate into a reductive swing between identifying antipathy toward Islam on the one hand and sympathy on the other, but rather to recognize that the two attitudes need not be mutually exclusive. I find support for this view more broadly in Thomas Glick's observation that “Historians' views of cultural contact frequently conceal two ideological modes or sets of preconceptions: one that emphasizes conflict and one that, while recognizing the reality of conflict, stresses cultural congruence and creative interaction” (1992, 7). Rodríguez Molina is typical of a more balanced perspective, “La última frontera de la España medieval cristiana con el Islam granadino fue espacio de conflictividad; pero también de transculturación entre dos civilizaciones” (2007, 21). Margarita López Gómez sees the image of Islam by western Christians

from the eighth and ninth centuries onward as “heavily laden with ideology” but usefully identifies the main modes of communication between these civilizations in conflict, including the transmission of oral versions of Arab stories and poems, trade relations and diplomatic embassies, the acquisition and translation of Arabic scientific works in the *scriptoria* of monasteries in the Peninsula in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the schools of translation that were established in Toledo in the thirteenth century (1992, 1060). Glick indicates that even the word *convivencia*, “carries connotations of mutual interpretation and creative influence, even as it also embraces the phenomena of mutual friction, rivalry, and suspicion” (1992, 1). Even here, however, there is room for caution. As Burns puts it, “transcendental abstractions cannot serve . . . Each juncture of time and place in medieval Spanish history was so unique that its measure of contact and conflict was qualitatively different from that of conditions a generation before or a province away” (1979, 244). Caution is also needed as regards seeing what is not there; David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto warn of trying to “tease out hints of tolerance and mutual respect” of searching for similarities “so that we can allay our fears, much in the same way as our predecessors emphasized difference in order to allay theirs” (1999, 7–8).

It has, therefore, been without expectation of finding a clear overview of the Christian representation of Islamic conquest, and with great caution about adopting polarized or forced perspectives, that I have approached the literary texts in question. Instead I have welcomed incongruity, contradiction, and multiplicity in these works. The result is, I hope, faithful to the historical backdrop where conflict and peace, enmities and friendships, respect and bitter hatred existed in tandem, but predominantly reflective of a fascinating creative process whereby history and fiction, official discourse and popular material meet, shaping new genres and even, in the thirteenth century, a new literary language with plenty of space for imaginative interpretation. Although it is specifically the 711 Islamic conquest, not Islam in general, which is my theme, it is useful to situate this study in the broader context of more general studies on images of Islam and the Orient in literary texts of medieval Europe, as well as work on the Spanish context.¹⁵ One of the earliest accounts of the Moor in a literary context in medieval Spain comes from Harry Austin Deferrari, who examines the type of the sentimental Moor before 1600. Despite dedicating a chapter to the period from the eighth century to 1492, Deferrari provides scant literary analysis of the earlier period, merely overview of content pertaining to this literary type in a number of mainly later medieval texts, leading to the statements that “Other than the epic and historical material, very little is found in Spanish literature

before 1492 with any degree of value for our study" (31) and "Previous to the fall of Granada, the Moors were presented in Spanish literature in the unfavourable way which one would expect of their enemies" (83). Otherwise, studies of the Moor in Spanish literature often start at a later point, such as María Soledad Carrasco Urgoiti's *El moro de Granada en la literatura* (del siglo xv al xx) (1956) which begins with the fifteenth century in recognition of fallow literary material before this: "los españoles no hallaron placer estético en describir la vida y las costumbres de los moros hasta bien entrado el siglo xv" (21).¹⁶ This is a shame, given that one of her broader premises is very good: "vemos que los contrastes, y al mismo tiempo una cierta proximidad moral entre moros y cristianos, fueron factores inseparables en la vida de la frontera, y gracias a esa dualidad resultó posible la visión poética del moro" (26).¹⁷ Her later publication *Vidas fronterizas en las letras españolas* (2005) also centers on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁸ Another significant early study, of "maurophilie littéraire," comes from Georges Cirot, who notes "certain engouement pour le genre de vie, les mœurs, le costume des musulmans" (1944, 21) but this too begins at a later period, the sixteenth century.¹⁹

Those who have looked at the earlier period include Bernard Richard (1971), who provides a useful sweep of the attitudes of Castilian chroniclers to Islam and the Muslims, including the *Estoria de España* in the six works he looks at. His general proposal that the chronicles are not instruments of knowledge of Islam but "instruments de lutte" (131) seems, however, to overlook the individual personalities and nuances of some of the works he studies. Similarly, summarizing attitudes to Islam he observes that "l'Islam est une religion que nos chroniqueurs nous apprennent à mépriser et à fuir, non pas à connaître" (1971, 116), calling their vision of Islam "étonnamment simpliste" (117). Regarding the Muslims, although Richard does refer to a certain admiration among the chroniclers, despite their hostile positions (124), he concludes that their portrayal of the Muslim is essentially that of a stereotypical enemy of Christianity (126). Ron Barkai studies the relationship between Christians and Moors in medieval Spain as reflected in the chronicle tradition; his third section pertaining to the thirteenth century includes the *Estoria de España* but as part of a historical overview. His assessment is of great interest to this study as he acknowledges that while the chronicle has "fundamentos con intención polémica antimusulmana," largely stemming from Alfonso's source, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, there is an abundance of information and detail pertaining to Islam, much of it grounded in reality; moreover, many phenomena are explained through analogy with the Christian context (2007, 230). He writes, "asombra encontrar en la 'Primera Crónica General de España' tan gran cantidad de información

sobre el Islam, su fe, sus tradiciones, su historia en general, y en particular la española” (230). His diachronic summary distinguishes the chronicles from the last quarter of the thirteenth century by Jaime I and Alfonso X as “open” and “complex” texts evincing more than one position with regard to Christian–Moorish relations: “En ambas vuelven a aparecer las imágenes ‘abiertas’ y ‘complejas’, aun cuando también mantengan posiciones extremistas” (238).

Taking into account the wider European context, John Tolan’s study of Islam in the medieval European imagination (2002) identifies Spain’s particular role in shaping European visions of Islam, describing how “Spanish Christians from the eighth century on had known enough of Islam not to present it as idolatry; other Western writers, using knowledge of Islam gleaned from Spanish and Eastern sources, will increasingly portray it as a variant, heretical version of Christianity” (134). His discussion of thirteenth-century Spanish material identifies themes of mendacity, heresy, and slyness in accounts of the life of the Prophet Mohammed, which he connects with a broader European ideology: “As Christians got to know Islam better... they portrayed the rival faith as a Christological heresy, a wordly religion cleverly crafted by the cunning heresiarch Muhammed to dupe an uncouth and lascivious people into following him” (2002, 276). Suzanne Conklin Akbari has recently created a “synoptic picture of Western Christian views of Islam and the Orient” (2009, 2) linking medieval and modern discourses concerning Islam and the Orient in order to unearth the roots of modern Orientalism. Her study acknowledges the allure of the “beautiful and dangerous” Orient (2009, 5) to premodern writers and explores the particular image of the Saracen but Spain is not part of the picture and her focus on the Orient and Orientalism differs somewhat from the geographical and cultural perspectives found in the Castilian texts. The very notion of Orientalism, in the tradition of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* from 1978, is not one which I espouse in this study, because its tendency to encourage a perspective on the Middle Ages that relates directly to postcolonial and postimperial theories of later periods can obscure the complexity, contradiction, and geographical or historical particularity of some of the perspectives illustrated herein. I find Şizen Yiăcoup’s assessment of Orientalism in the context of frontier balladry a useful encouragement to focus on representations of the conquest at a more local and more individual level:

The application of Orientalist theory to the frontier ballads thus risks invalidating and excluding the memory of Hispano-Muslims’ involvement in the development of Spanish culture... The *romances fronterizos* are

narratives in which Muslim protagonists struggle to define their existence against a disappearing frontier world, yet which do not commit the audience to antipathy towards Islamic Granada. With their myriad historical and aesthetic perspectives, their nuanced and ever-evolving content, the frontier ballads are not morally static: they reflect overlapping identities in conflict, rather than pitting intrinsically conflicting identities against one another. (2013, 11)

Blanks also makes the more general point that “while it is true that some medieval ideas have seeped into the present, the process of osmosis was slow and diffuse. It is nearly impossible to trace direct lines of transmission, especially outside the realms of intellectual and literary history... Attitudes toward Islam were diverse in medieval and Renaissance Europe” (1999, 14).

It seems improper to venture introductory generalizations about a collective image of Islam and the conquest of Spain in the literary context, not least because we cannot generalize about the historical situation on the Granadan frontier, except to note the variety of behaviors and attitudes expressed there. That said, what does come out of this study by way of overview is the way that, if we look for it, we can find evidence in support of the fact that Christian writers in medieval Spain regard and write about Islam and the conquest with recurrent, seemingly hostile words, words which together form a kind of homogenized master language, formed of such descriptions and emotive trigger words as *secta*, *diablo*, *enganno*, *descomulgado*, *crebanto*, *canes*, *uil gente*, *peccado*, *falsedat*, *ereges*, *coita*, *renegados*, *suciedumne*, *llanto*, and *maldito*. However, they do not do this to the exclusivity of all else, but combine this language with imagery and descriptions that are altogether more nuanced. In so doing, they recall Burns’ powerful description of historical practice:

Each society nourished a posture of public hostility toward the other—expressed in its laws, religion, refusals, exclusive communities, attitudes, and sense of superiority. Still, much of this tropism was conventionalized, even impersonal, freeing individuals to act humanly across the social boundaries and to share significant psychological elements, values, and mentalities. This was not tolerance... but it was a *modus vivendi*, an experience not without its human warmth and practical respect for irreconcilable difference. (1979, 252)

Not taking language like this, formed of tropes and stereotypes, at face value, nor accepting it as evidence of limited, intolerant attitudes, is an important feature of this study: “Perception, understanding, and representation are all obliged to use stereotypes. Stereotypes are not

falsehoods, but simplified models which are necessary if we are to cope with the multiplicity of experience," writes Urs Bitterli (1970, quoted in Blanks and Frassetto 1999, 40). It is also useful to recall Henri Lefebvre's description of dominated space as "essentially deceptive . . . readily occupiable by pretences such as those of civic peace, consensus, or the reign of non-violence" (1991, 358). This language of public consensus inevitably betrays contradictions and conflicts within the space it represents.

I have found, moreover, that the degree of nuance exhibited in these texts reveals a concern with themes that far surpass the physical and historical reality of conquest, themes such as the transference of power, the everpresence of strife and civil discord, the variability of fortune, memory, and legacy. It is as if in the corners, and around the edges, of official discourse, superficial stereotype, and strident rhetoric come profounder reflections, perhaps the more genuine anxieties of these authors, about the human condition. The dual pattern of conquest and reconquest that characterizes medieval Spanish texts foment a sense of precariousness and challenges trust in time-old institutions, and in those straight lines of time, destiny, and providence. It also seems, as a result, to foster a certain open-endedness of perspective, form, and language in the literary context, a creative kind of disruption, that uncovers a deep sensitivity to the power of representation and the boundary between truth and fiction, and uncovers surprising affiliations between ostensibly opposing entities.

CHAPTER 1

DOMINION AND DYNASTY IN THE *ESTORIA DE ESPAÑA*

The Islamic invasion of 711 was recorded and relived in Iberian chronicles from the years immediately afterward to the end of the Middle Ages and beyond.¹ It was given particular prominence in the rich historiographical tradition of thirteenth-century Spain, headed by Bishop Lucas de Tuy's *Chronicon mundi* (1236), and Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *De rebus Hispaniae* (1243) and *Historia Arabum* (1245).² The work of these historians shaped the chronicle that was to play a starring role in the second half of the thirteenth century: Alfonso X of Castile's history of Spain, the *Estoria de España* (1252–84).³ The *Estoria* was conceived as a general history of Spain and differed from its precursors in two main respects: it was the first historiographical work in Spain to be composed in the vernacular, and it was a project closely connected to the personal and political ambitions of its overseer, King Alfonso, ambitions that reached further than the broad Christian-Classical context in which Lucas de Tuy and Jiménez de Rada sought to place Spain. Alfonso designed his chronicle to extend from the time of Noah to his own reign, and used his project to further his efforts to become Holy Roman Emperor, as a means of showcasing his credentials for the role. Alfonso's challenge in this regard was how to represent the Islamic conquest. The invasion marked the demise of the Visigothic kingdom and would change the ethnic, religious, and cultural constitution of the Peninsula forever. However, Alfonso regarded himself as part of an unbroken Gothic line, heir to the qualities and deeds of that race which included loyalty, courage, nobility, and conversion to Christianity. The king chose to represent the invasion as a temporary nadir in a Gothic

history whose continuity was never truly broken. This much is evident from his prologue:

et por mostrar la nobleza de los godos et como fueron uiniendo de tierra en tierra, uenciendo muchas batallas et conquiriendo muchas tierras, fasta que llegaron a Espanna, et echaron ende a todas las otras yentes, et fueron ellos sennores della... et como por el desacuerdo que ouieron los godos con so sennor el rey Rodrigo et por la traycion que urdio el conde do Yllan et ell arçobispo Oppa, passaron los d'Affrica et ganaron todo lo mas d'Espanna; et como fueron los cristianos despues cobrando la tierra. (4)

More challenging still was the matter of who to blame for the invasion taking place. Enshrined in both Arabic and Christian historical sources was the dramatic story of King Rodrigo, his vassal Count Julian, and Julian's daughter La Cava.⁴ The *Estoria* is unusual in not heaping opprobrium upon the king; it narrates the rape of La Cava in the sparsest possible terms, with a surprising degree of vagueness about its sources, the characters involved, and the ties between them:

tomol el rey Rodrigo aca la fija por fuerça, et yogol con ella; e ante desto fuera ya fablado que auie el de casar con ella, mas non casara aun. Algunos dizen que fue la muger et que ge la forço; mas pero destas dos qualquier que fuesse, desto se leuanto destroymiento de Espanna et de la Gallia Gothica. (307–08)⁵

Downplaying the culpability of Rodrigo meant that the explanation for the invasion had to lie elsewhere. Instead of vilifying the Visigothic king, whose personal culpability was to form the imaginative substance of many later medieval ballads, Alfonso presents a more considered and politicized account of the relationship between the Goths and the conquering Islamic peoples.⁶ Alfonso does not reject the providential overview of earlier chroniclers, such as Isidore of Seville and Jiménez de Rada, who had described a death and rebirth of Visigothic Spain; it forms a significant part of the chronicle's ethos. However, Alfonso offers a more politicized vision of the historical past, in which he seeks to examine the passage of political rule as a theme in its own right, and in terms that are more general. The before and after diptych is present and the 711 invasion does form a dramatic pinnacle in the structure of the chronicle, but Alfonso's vision of Spain encompasses many historical occupations in which are enshrined the lessons of history for his people to learn.

This chapter illustrates Alfonso's careful attention to the Islamic peoples who conquered Spain and the way in which this representation invests his chronicle with a level of political interest and literary sophistication

that far exceeds, in both detail and quality, the narratives of earlier historiographical works. I demonstrate for the first time that the history of Islamic polities is methodically interwoven with that of the Goths from its very origins. This opens a new vista on the linear, teleological narrative of Christian success, one that highlights cohesion and interconnection at the political level between Christian and Islamic experiences of the passage of power and vicissitudes of rule. I hope, therefore, to go some way in addressing Alfonso's somewhat unfair reputation as one of the chief proponents of anti-Islamic views, based on the idea that some of his rhetorical and somewhat stereotypical description of the loss of Spain, most notably his statement that it was prompted by the Devil, can be taken wholly at face value, and as representative of his wider political views.⁷

Alfonso's vision of historical transferral of rule is connected with the medieval concept of *translatio imperii*, or transference of empire, itself rooted in a biblical model:

The Bible furnished medieval historical thought with yet another theological substantiation for the replacement of one empire by another: "*Regnum a gente in gentem transfertur propter injustitias et contumelias et diversos dolos*" (Ecclesiasticus 10:8). "Because of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is transferred from one people to another." The word *transfertur* (is transferred) gives rise to the concept of *translatio* (transference) which is basic for medieval historical theory. (Curtius 1990 28–29)

The concept of *translatio imperii* implied that the transference of rule from one empire to another was the result of sinful mismanagement of that dominion. This idea is central to Alfonso's interpretation of the fall of Spain to the Moors, in which he traces Rodrigo's actions backward to find corruption in the Gothic line of kings that stems from Witiza:

Todos los omnes del mundo se forman et se assemeian a manera de su rey, e por ende los que fueron en tiempo del rey Vitiza et del rey Rodrigo, que fue el postrimero rey de los godos, et de los otros reys que fueron ante dellos et de quales algunos fueron alçados reyes por aleue... non guardando la uerdad nin el derecho que deuieran y guardar por quexa de ganar el senorio mal et torticieramente como non deuien, por ende los otros omnes que fueron otrossi en sus tiempos dellos formaron se con ellos et semeiaron les en los peccados. (314)

Throughout the chronicle, Alfonso is equally attentive to the reasons for the loss of power among the Islamic dynasties, focusing on betrayal,

infighting, division, and discord.⁸ Traditionally, the *translatio imperii* model encouraged a distinction between Christian civilization and its non-Christian counterparts; it shifted the “centre of gravity of the world ever westwards from the east” allowing medieval theologians and historians to believe in the rise of the West (Le Goff 1988, 171–72). This important interrelationship of history and geography, space and time, was emphasized by Hugh of St. Victor (c.1096–1141): “*Loca simul et tempora, ubi et quando gestae sunt, considerare oportet*,” (It is necessary to consider together the places and the times where and when events have happened) (cited in Le Goff 1988, 172). It seems apt, in these terms, to associate Alfonso’s interest in the reasons for the transference of empire with his own political project to become Holy Roman Emperor. After all, he had envisaged the chronicle culminating teleologically with his own reign as king of Castile and Holy Roman Emperor. The *Estoria* was intended to unify the people under Alfonso’s kingship while at the same time enabling his political reach to expand and encompass the Holy Roman Empire. This western shift creates an interesting link with Alfonso’s attempt to connect Spain to the Holy Roman Empire through the historiographical narrative, itself an inherent conjunction of space and time. Although Alfonso depends upon the Islamic material to embed key political themes that are later echoed and continued in the Visigothic history, creating a comparative, analogic mode of historical discourse, this is always designed to defer to a master narrative of the transference of power from Islam to Christianity.

King and Chronicle

Begun in 1252 upon his accession to the throne, and compiled by teams of anonymous translators and compilers under his direction, the *Estoria* was unfinished on the king’s death in 1284.⁹ The chronicle existed in different versions but was intended to have a clear ideological purpose, a political philosophy centered around absolute governance, a shared sentiment of nationhood, and expansionist ambitions for Castile. The king was technically close to his project, giving it literary and ideological coherence. Alfonso’s interest in the art of recording history is revealed in the prologue to the *Estoria* where he describes language as a storehouse of knowledge:

fallaron (los entendidos) las figuras de las letras; et ayuntando las, fizieron dellas sillabas, et de sillabas ayuntadas fizieron dellas partes; e ayuntando otrossi las partes, fizieron razon, et por la razon que uiniessen a entender los saberes et se sopiessen ayudar dellos, et saber tan bien contar lo que fuera en los tiempos dantes cuemo si fuesse en la su sazón. (3)

On a practical level, Alfonso was interested in both the particulars of language and the organizational capabilities of structure. As is evident in this comment from the *General estoria*, the king may not have written the chronicle with his own hands but he was deeply involved in its mode of composition and content, amending it and ordering it:

El rey faze un libro no por quel él escriva con sus manos, mas por que compone las razones d'él, e las emienda o yegua e enderesça e muestra la manera de cómo se deven fazer; e desi escrívelas qui él manda; pero dezimos por esta razón que el rey faze el libro. (Solalinde 1915, 286)

Ramón Menéndez Pidal refers to Alfonso's direct intervention in the writing of the chronicle: "una vez compuesta la obra, añade lo que juzga de interés, suprime razones y pasajes que considera superfluos, y finalmente enmienda por sí mismo el lenguaje" (Alfonso el Sabio 1955, xvi). Moreover, critics recognize in the *Estoria* a specific kind of prose writing, often associated with concision and clarity (Menéndez Pidal in Alfonso el Sabio 1955, l-lii; Martin 2000, 14). Don Juan Manuel, Alfonso's nephew, gives us perhaps the best evidence of this: "ordenó muy complidamente la *Crónica d'Espanna*, puso lo todo conplido e por muy apuestas razones, e en las menos palabras que se podia poner" (1982–83, 576).

Under the king's direction, and with his direct input in both language and structure, his compilers worked toward a common ideological enterprise. Leonardo Funes describes how medieval chroniclers were agents of a manuscript culture involved in the ongoing, collective task of giving meaning to individual conduct and social custom in relation to a wider worldview (2004, 85). Funes states that their basic aim was to underline agreements and hide disagreement in order to cast contradiction, friction, dissidence within the frame of a set of basic global agreements: "subrayar los acuerdos y ocultar las diferencias, de modo que las contradicciones, fricciones, y disidencias se dan siempre en el marco de un conjunto de acuerdos básicos globales" (85). This appears to be a deeply ideological position, if one takes the definition of ideology to include a creative management of contradiction: "Ideology is one crucial way in which the human subject strives to 'suture' contradictions which rive it in its very being, constitute it to its core" (Eagleton 2007, 198). In the case of the Alfonsine chroniclers, the predominant "suturing" is a careful bridging of a moral and structural abyss—the fall of Spain to the Muslims—with the restorative narrative of the Christian polity. Moreover, this connective technique is also evident in the interlacing of Islamic and Christian history, both structurally and in terms of language and imagery, as this chapter demonstrates.

The *Estoria de España* existed in different versions and has an array of manuscripts. At least two versions were composed during the king's lifetime, both of which appear to derive independently from an earlier prototype of the work (de la Campa 2000, 88). They are the *Versión primitiva*, the first redaction dating before 1274 which extends from the beginning of the chronicle to the reign of Alfonso VII and exists in several families of manuscripts, and the *Versión crítica* stretching from the history of the Goths to the death of Fernando II, which was composed between 1282 and 1284. The *Versión crítica* was intended to be an alternative redaction to the *Versión primitiva*; composed late in the king's life, and during a difficult personal and political phase, to bring his work up-to-date and to perfect it (de la Campa 2000, 106). Its alterations are structural, stylistic, and ideological (Catalán 1997, 468). The *Versión primitiva* has two main families of manuscripts, known as the *Versión regia* and the *Versión vulgar*. The *Versión regia* consists of the manuscript from the royal *scriptorium*, E₁ (*orig*)¹⁰ on which Menéndez Pidal based his edition of the chronicle, and which ends rather abruptly, while the manuscripts of the *Versión vulgar* derive directly from the archetype of the work. In the later stages of the Gothic history, from Kings Alaric to Rodrigo, the chronicle uses another branch of manuscripts known as the *Versión enmendada después de 1274*, and offers a significant series of variants; some of which appertain to Islamic history. To this series we can add the *Versión amplificada*, E₂, written in 1289 during Sancho IV's reign and revealing ideological transformations that suit this ruler's ambitions.¹¹

This analysis of the *Estoria* concentrates on the *Versión regia* but looks at the *Versión amplificada* for the later stages of the reconquest. The *Versión regia* begins with the birth of the prophet Mohammed during the history of the Goths, and goes as far as the Muslim invasion of Spain in 711 (chs 465–555). I assess this section as a narrative unit in its own right, justified by the presence of a thematic break, and possibly also a structural one too, at the beginning of the reconquest. Menéndez Pidal believed that the version of the chronicle redacted under Alfonso X encompassed the entire history of the Goths, calling this a natural internal division (Alfonso el Sabio 1955, xxv). Diego Catalán adds that an entire group of manuscripts treated the fourth year of Pelayo's reign as the beginning of a new part or book, owing to the influence of Jiménez de Rada's *Historia Gothica* (1997, 194). However, there may be other structural borderlines, revealing that the chronicle was not composed chapter by chapter from start to finish but that historiographers were working on different sections at the same time, leading to the creation of autonomous narrative units. Catalán and Inés Fernández-Ordóñez observe that the *estoria de los godos* up to the reign of Euric in Chapter 425 was composed simultaneously but

independently from the imperial Roman history that extends throughout a large part of the *Estoria*; there may be a similar lack of connection between the Gothic history from Euric to Alfonso el Casto and that which precedes it.¹² Despite the trace of separate narrative units and simultaneous composition, the compilers would have been aware of a “masterplan” (Catalán 1997, 91; see also Fernández-Ordóñez 1992, 213, 217). However much the vicissitudes of composition and the abundance of manuscripts might threaten to detract from the ideological cohesion of the *Estoria*, close analysis of content and structure reveals constancy in key political ideas in the *Versión regia*. The careful combination of Gothic and Islamic history in the early chapters acts as an important force of cohesion, a means of preparing us to understand a narrative, and by extension an ideological position, that makes no sense unless the two groups are combined.

Time and Transference: The Goths and Islam

Islamic history begins in Chapter 465 of the *Estoria*, within the narrative of later Gothic history, and from that introduction runs in chronological synchronization with the history of the Gothic kings. In a chronicle that ostensibly organizes itself around the history of the peoples who ruled the land “*ensennorearon la tierra*,” following a line of succession within the *imperium*, or *sennorio* as Alfonso names it, critics have picked up on the fact that a separate *sennorio*, or period of rule, is not dedicated to the Muslims. Menéndez Pidal stated that the Muslims were represented simply as invaders condemned to expulsion, that the true dominion, “*el verdadero señorío*,” was held by the Goths, and continued by the Asturian kings (Alfonso el Sabio 1955, xxvi). Fernández-Ordóñez refers more specifically to the fact that the *Estoria* does not structurally recognize the existence of a *sennorio* árabe: “*expone la historia de al-Andalus par a par con la de la monarquía goda, subordinada al año de reinado del rey que posee el sennorio de España, siempre el monarca godo, astur-leonés, leonés o castellano*” (2000c, 44). While the eventual dominance of the Goths in the chronicle is indisputable, these comments underplay the care and attention that Alfonso devotes to Islamic history. Ron Barkai has observed the stunning volume of material dedicated to Islam in the chronicle, “*la crónica dedica bastantes capítulos, en forma total o parcial, a describir lo que sucede en el mundo musulmán en general y en particular en al-Andalus, mientras que acontecimientos importantes del cristianismo, fuera de España, son relatados brevemente y sin darles gran importancia*” (2007, 230). Georges Martin writes, with a view to structure, of “*el cuidado con que la historia árabe está sistemáticamente asociada y*

subordinada, desde sus orígenes, a la historia de los godos, preparándose así el mito de una reconquista dominada por el enfrentamiento de esta pareja de actores étnicos" (2000, 24).¹³ Martin's comment, in recognizing association and contact between the two ethnic groups, represents an enlightening view of Alfonso's treatment of Islamic history but still falls short of fully acknowledging the connections between the two histories. The structural relationship between the two groups is extremely important and, I believe, elaborated with no small degree of care and attention in a section of the chronicle which was possibly separate from the earlier Gothic history and where chronology and lineage come into sharper focus. The concept of *sennorio* is not entirely absent from Islamic history and is a term Alfonso develops with significant emphasis from his principal source of this material, Jiménez de Rada's *Historia Arabum*. Just before the official beginning of the *Estoria de los godos*, the chronicle enunciates the structural relationship between the Goths and the Moors as follows:

Por ende dexa aqui la estoria de fablar de los sueuos et de los uandalos et de los fechos que contescieron en Espanna et cuenta de los godos que fueron ende senhores despues aca todauia, cuemo quier que ouieron y los moros yaquanto tiempo algun sennorio. (215)

This illustrates the historical proximity of these parties, but introduces a subordinate arrangement; the Moors are a concessionary clause, overshadowed by the language of permanence associated with the Goths, "despues aca todauia." However, they *are* granted the key term *sennorio*, even if it might be deprived of longevity, "yaquanto tiempo," and substance, "algun." We see this notion of *sennorio* occur again after the story of Mohammed's life, this time in the powerful symbol of a sword in the sky:

Aqui se acaba la estoria de Mahomat. Esse anno tremio la tierra, et aparecio en el cielo un signo en manera de espada, bien por treynta dias, que demostraui el sennorio que los moros auien de auer. (274)

The 30-day period during which the sword remains retains a sense of time-bound rule. However, it is long enough to assert the power of the Muslims, reflecting a larger multiple of the talismanic number three, and equating approximately to a calendar month. This, together with the more durable mnemonic function of the symbol, suffices to render the idea of *sennorio* cohesive, imminent, and threatening.

The term *sennorio* is frequently used during the early history of Islam, starting with the description of the prophet Mohammed's quest for

power: “començo a cuedar en muy grandes cosas et grandes fechos; e aquel su cuedar fue en como podrie seer contrallo all emperador de los romanos, et sacar las yentes de so el su sennorio” (269). The desire to contend with the *sennorio* of the Roman emperor proves successful in Mesopotamia and Syria where “tanto fizo y que los torno a su uoluntad et a su sennorio” (269), and in Africa “E dalli adelante fue tolludo el sennorio et la premia de los romanos de las ceruizes de los moros” (270), a translation of Jiménez de Rada’s “Et ex tunc fuit iugum imperii Romanorum excussum a ceruicibus Sarracenorum” (1999, 92), except that Alfonso adds the concept of *sennorio* to his source’s reference to the “iugum” or “premia.” However, a certain vulnerability surrounds these early attempts at Islamic dominion. Mohammed worries about the religious commitment of those he has conquered:

sospecho que algunos dellos pueblos que eran so el su sennorio que non eran aun tornados a aquella su secta que el fiziera, et que por uentura que se tornarien en algun tiempo a la fe de Ihesu Cristo, et que ayudarien all emperador de Roma. (270)

His response is to create a system of laws (*zohoras*) to control their loyalty or, as the chronicle puts it, to seize their souls, “prender las almas” (270). This marks a movement on the part of the chroniclers away from the political ideology of *sennorio* toward a more spiritually oriented expression of dominion as the Islamic religion gains strength. We can see this in the description of the creation of the Koran, and its association with diabolical, sinful practice, where Alfonso closely follows the tone and content of the *Historia Arabum*:

e destas zoharas les fizo ell un grand libro departido por capitulos, al que ellos llaman *alcoran*... e pero estas zoharas le recibieron aquellos pueblos malauenturados seyendo beldos de la ponçon del diablo et adormidos en el peccado de la luxuria, e oy en dia los tienen et estan muy firmes en su porfia e non se quieren llegar nin acoger a la carrera de la uerdadera fe nin auer en si la ley de Dios nin el su ensennamiento. (274)

per tales zohoras distinguitur liber eius qui dicitur Alchoranus, in quo tot ignominiosas zohoras predicauit quod puderet dicere, nedum sequi; quas tamen uiru diabolico debriati et libidine dulcorati infelices populi receperunt et adhuc in sua perfidia permanent obstinati nec legem uite et discipline desinunt infestare. (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 96)

The law is often described by the Alfonsine chroniclers as the instrument of a *secta*, a term also found in the *Historia Arabum* and the *Chronicon mundi*, and after the death of Mohammed we find the two notions of *sennorio*

and *secta* frequently combined, as during the conquests of Autuman in Libin, Marmorochin, Penthapolim, Gazania, and Ethiopia, “metio las so el su sennorio et tornolas a la su secta” (277), those of Abdalla in Egypt on behalf of King Moabia: “pues que todo lo ouo tornado al sennorio de Moabia et a la su secta” (282), and those of King Izid, “metio Izid rey de los alaraues so el su sennorio et su secta todas las tierras que en derredor dell era” (299). The *Historia Arabum* inspires Alfonso in this particular combination, referring to a version of Alfonso’s *sennorio*, dominion, with the terms *ditio*: “Sarracenorum secte et sue subdidit ditionit” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 97), “et totam Egiptum ditioni sue et secte subdidit Machometi” (97), and *dominio*, “postea autem partes orientales bellis indesinentibus sue secte et dominio subiecerunt” (98). It must be noted, however, that in the immediate lead-up to the Muslim invasion of 711, during the reign of Witiza, the Alfonsine chroniclers decouple the pairing of *sennorio* and *secta* in favor of a broader, providential overview. We see this in the description of how the devil sows his evil seed in Spain, corrupts King Witiza, and incurs the wrath of God:

el diablo...sembro la su mala simient et negra en el regno de Espanna, et metio en los poderosos soberuia... Pues por esta guisa que auemos dicho fue el regno de los godos de Espanna destroydo, el que ante desto era grand et ancho, ca tan gran era el su sennorio duraua et tenie de mar a mar... Assi en esta guisa como dezimos fue toda Espanna llena de nemiga et de peccado et de sobeiania de mal por el rey Vitiza que mouio los oios de Nuestro Sennor Dios a sanna. (305)

This is followed by the explanation that Ulid’s conquests, which verge on an empire, are due to the same divine wrath: “con la uara de Dios, esto es la su sanna” (305). As the invasion takes place, so too does an act of ideological suturing whereby the language of Islamic *sennorio* is incorporated into a dominant idiom of the providential fall and restoration of Visigothic Spain. Under these terms, Muslim *sennorio* is linguistically subordinated to the rule of the Goths who, we are led to understand from the very prologue, never truly lose control over Spain but enjoy a historical longevity that is providentially assured.

Although Muslim *sennorio* is subordinated in the chronicle’s language, its structural presence remains highly significant. The very inclusion of Islamic history responds to Alfonso’s desire for exhaustivity in a chronicle that was supposed to lead from Noah’s time up to his own reign. This was prompted by an acute awareness of the ephemerality of the written word, and the damage to the collective memory caused by transfer of dominion: “los libros que se perdieron et fueron destroydos en el mudamiento de

los sennorios" (4).¹⁴ Alfonso evokes here the concept of *translatio*, uniting the process of *translatio imperii* with the transfer of knowledge, except in negative terms since Alfonso blames political change on the matter of Spain's history being lost. The chronicle thus becomes an attempt to reinstate the passage of knowledge while narrating the passage of historical rule. Interestingly enough, its ideological connection with the Roman Empire, owing to Alfonso's own political quest for the title of Holy Roman Emperor, supports the impression that Alfonso conceives of the work as a kind of rebirth of the power and knowledge enshrined in Rome, a new start of the type described by Le Goff, "The power and knowledge which at the start of the middle ages had been in Rome had to be transferred to new seats . . . To be reborn was to set out again, not to return" (1988, 36).

The concept of transfer of rule that is at the heart of the chronicle's interpretation of history is a significant means of addressing Alfonso's work in more comprehensive terms. It becomes increasingly apparent that transfer is both a structural concern for Alfonso, operating at the level of historical narrative, and a broader ideological concept that is employed to deal with the challenge of representing the role of Islamic history, allowing for connective, incorporative discourse at one level, yet ensuring that this is subordinate to a master narrative of a renewal of the Empire—understood as Alfonso's unique conjunction of Roman and Peninsular history—at another. In this way, Islamic *sennorio* can be incorporated in the chronicle and is necessary to its recovery of a foundational narrative. There is alternation, albeit not with mathematical regularity, between Gothic history and the biography of the prophet Mohammed; 16 out of 30 chapters are dedicated to the Goths, 14 to Mohammed. Moreover, the story of Mohammed frequently comes in the middle of a number of chapters devoted to the reign of a given Gothic ruler, as in the case of Leovigild, Reccared, Gundemar, and Sisebut. After the prophet's death, Islamic and Christian affairs exist in even closer contact. Instead of an alternation of chapters, we have a frequent combination of both histories within each chapter of Gothic rule. This clearly deprives the Arabs of their own *sennorio*, as critics have suggested, but that it not to say that their presence in the narrative structure is wholly undermined. Splitting a seigneurial compartment between Islamic and Gothic history creates some interesting structural and thematic intersections. As time marches on toward the definitive invasion in 711, not only does the quantity of information and level of detail provided in relation to the Arabs increase,¹⁵ slightly altering the balance of these chapters, but also the affairs of the Arabs, Moors, and Goths develop closer links, which rely to a large extent on the use of chronology.

The two parties, Christian and Islamic, are structurally united through the inclusion of Arabic chronologies, a feature which Diego Catalán associates with Alfonso's universal spirit and desire to synchronize the history of Spain with that of the Roman Pontiffs, the Roman emperors, and the kings of France, and to highlight chronological comparison between the Hispanic era and the Christian and Islamic eras (1992, 49). From the account of the life of Mohammed to the Muslim invasion and beyond, a number of chapters contain reference to the corresponding date in the Islamic era. While Mohammed is alive, reference is often made to the number of years since his birth, followed by the years of his election as king, as in Chapter 493. After his death, the chroniclers adopt a system of dating which lists the number of years of the Islamic ruler's reign, followed by the number of years since Mohammed was elected king, for example: "e el de Omar rey de los alaraues en tres e el de los alaraues en que Mahomat fue alçado por rey delos en seze" (275).¹⁶ While the *Estoria* does not give the Arabs a separate *sennorio*, clearly it gives them an annalistic space, taking care not just to trace the chronology of an individual ruler, but to contextualize their reign within the wider frame of the history of Islam and to give it visible narrative space at the outset of chapters. The proximity of this chronology to that of the Christian rulers of the Peninsula and the Roman papacy and emperors creates something close to what Georges Martin calls a "sistema analístico-señorial" (2000, 26), a combination of annalistic form and chronicled governance.

Writing the Arabs into an annalistic preface to each chapter creates a distinctive feature from the point of view of theories of time and narrative. If Arab chronology answered Alfonso's universalizing political ambitions, its literary effect is rather more intricate. The calendrical convention that begins a given chapter can easily be distinguished in meaning from the narrative which follows it, acting as a marker of the "real," a predictable location of events in chronological time, as opposed to a more imaginative, more ideological, or even more mythical presentation of history. Hayden White, in discussing chronology in western historical narrative, calls *chronos* a representation of "time as it is humanly experienced" (1987, 8); Frank Kermode refers to it as "passing time" or "waiting time"—that which, according to the Book of Revelation, "shall be no more" (2000, 46). In the *Estoria* chronology is an important structural framework for Islamic history. Deeds are commonly introduced with the prefix "En esse anno" or "En el primero / Segundo..." giving them a sense of continuation, "paratactical and endless" (8) to quote White.

However, chronological associations are not necessarily numerical, creating another, more meaningful, perspective of time. It is common to find notice of the death of a Gothic king followed immediately by the

indication of the death of an Islamic ruler: “Despues desto a poco tiempo murio este rey Cintilla et dio ell alma a Dios. Esse anno otrossi mataron a Omar, rey de los alaraues, et fue desta guisa” (277).¹⁷ This sequential organization, marked out by the conjunctive adverb “otrossi,” reflects the precariousness of human rule; each demise, being accompanied by another, is prevented from being read as a single incident in time but is connected to a broader theme of political evanescence. In this sense, it is a display of *kairotic* time, the “time of eternity” (White 1987, 8); or “the season, a point in time filled with significance, charged with a meaning derived from its relation to the end” (Kermode 2000, 47). We also find *chronos* and *kairos* combined: “En aquel quizenno anno en que el rey Recaredo murio, era ya Mahomat de edad de ueynticinco annos” (265). It would not be exaggerated to claim that a note of empathy arises from this simple act of narrative adjacency. This finds support in Michel de Certeau’s theory that chronology is used in historiography to make oppositions compatible, to “overcome the difference between an order and what it leaves aside” (1988, 88–89).

Chronological references of both kinds, numerical and meaningful, provide important associations between the two histories, but the strong literary quality of the *Estoria* means that narrative time and narrative sequentiality play a major role in this respect. These two elements, human temporality and narrative structure, have been linked most prominently by Paul Ricoeur in his *Time and Narrative* where bringing together the Augustinian analysis of time in *Confessions* and the Aristotelian analysis of plot in the *Poetics*, he suggests: “time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence” (1984, 52). Fernández-Ordóñez regards this as a possible source of tension in the *Estoria*:

¿Es el vínculo temporal o es el temático el principio estructurador de la narración? ¿Debe prevalecer la organización analística o la organización narrativa? Tanto en la *General Estoria* como en la *Estoria de España* los ajustadores alfonsíes lucharon sin tregua por armonizar los dos criterios en una única verdad histórica. (1992, 53)

The thematic link to which she refers is connected with the idea of narrative organization, which prompts a reflection on the meaning of theme in this context.¹⁸ I would suggest that the Alfonsine narrative reflects Northrop Frye’s idea of theme as *dianoia*, the ideal or point of the story (1990, 52–53). We can see this generally in the emphasis upon action as an exemplary category in the lead up to the invasion, and the ideology

of *fechos* (deeds).¹⁹ It is also apparent in the use of a particular set phrase, usually employed right at the end of a chapter:

non fallamos cosa que de contar sea que a la estoria pertenesca, si non tanto que pusieron sus treguas et sus pazes entressi el emperador Justiniano et Abdelmelic rey de los alaraues, pero en esta manera que diessen los moros cada día los romanos mill doblas et un sieruo et un caualllo (301, italics mine)

The verb *pertenescer* is important; there is a clear idea of what *belongs* to the story, it has an organizing principle and a set idea driving it, the masterplan behind the chronicle. This is a frequent device in those chapters which dedicate a briefer narrative space to Islamic history,²⁰ indicating the predominance of the Gothic-Christian narrative through the suggested incorporation and appropriation of Islamic history within a master narrative. However, a narrative connection between Islamic and Gothic history is struck; the former pertains to the Alfonsine *estoria* and is somehow part of this plan.

As the Muslim invasion approaches, theme and time are interwoven again as the chronological line is converted into a historical narrative organized around a sequencing and interconnection of events. This often produces a blurring of chronological time and narrative time, such as when the chroniclers make preemptive references to events surrounding the invasion: “e este fue aquel don Pelayo el que despues se alço con los asturianos contra los moros en Asturias, assi como adelante diremos en su logar” (304); “et priso por mano dun cabdiello de su caualleria, que auie nombre Muça, el regno de los godos de Espanna, assi como lo contaremos adelant en la estoria en su logar” (306). Chronological order is overturned as the reader is reminded that the chroniclers are telling this section of Islamic history under the weight of the disaster which is about to befall the Goths, a good example of the literary themes of conquest and defeat being inseparable in the medieval Spanish context. The 711 invasion exerts a moral, political, and it seems structural, pressure upon the organization of their work, since it forms an integral part of the providential master-narrative of loss, abeyance, and recovery that is itself the point or “theme” of the *Estoria*, as the prologue clarifies. For the *Estoria* to achieve its full meaning, Muslim dynasties need to be portrayed in conjunction with the providential path of the Christian commonwealth. The chroniclers cannot help, therefore, but to anticipate through prolepsis a narrative development that will see the Goths inextricably linked to the Moors, moving away from Jiménez de Rada’s model of independent histories of the Goths, Ostrogoths, Romans, Barbarians, and Arabs. But

this chronological displacement has a narrative order to it: the ostensibly impromptu allusion by the chroniclers to telling the story later—"como adelante diremos," "como lo contaremos adelant"—is accompanied by the allusion to this possessing its own place in the scheme of the work: "su logar."

Time and theme are once again interwoven in the adoption of a more developed narrative style in later stages of the history. The dramatic tale of Moabia and Abdalla in Chapter 510 (281–83) is, for example, marked by the use of important linguistic devices such as "E daqui dia adelant" (from that day forth), "E dalli adelant" (from then on), "otrossi" (also), "este de que dixiemos agora" (this of which we speak now), "assi como dixiemos" (as we said earlier) which link the disparate events of the chapter together. That is not to say that chronology disappears; in fact it continues to organize the structure of this and other later chapters, but this connective language offers a more flexible, relative dimension of time. The development of "narrative" can be seen in a movement away from single unconnected sentences, or phrases linked together with "et" (and), into a form of prose that is more reflective and more cohesive, epitomized by use of conjunctions and gerunds: "de guisa que" (279) (in such a way that), "E desi" (282) (and hence), "pues que" (282) (since), "despues que" (301) (after which), "ca" (308) (because). Moreover, these phrases often directly link Muslim and Christian affairs: "Andado quatro annos otrossi del regnado del rey Sisebuto, Mahomat, seyendo rico et poderoso" (269). What is more, textual detail is passed from one chapter to another, creating continuity and familiarity, such as the description of Julian's fearsome reputation which bridges Chapters 554 and 555.

Islamic history is, therefore, in structural terms, more connected to that of the Goths than it might first appear, owing to the linguistic and structural concept of *sennorio*, the representation of the passage of historical time through annalistic form, chronological or kairoitic time, and the sequentiality and internal composition of Alfonso's narrative. This is linked to Alfonso's overarching theme of *translatio* where the transfer of dominion is part of an ongoing teleological movement toward rebirth and restoration; in such terms the changing location of power is a necessary part of his representation of history, since it is this very fluctuation which highlights the difference between rightful and wrongful possession. It remains now to look more closely at the actual content of Islamic history in the *Estoria*, the ideas and imagery presented therein, to explore further the correspondence between the Islamic and Christian histories.

The Craft of Anticlimax: The Life of the Prophet

Inserted into the history of the Goths is a biography of the prophet Mohammed. The history of his life and the beginning of Islam is part of the *Versión regia* and embedded within this expansive Gothic narrative it constitutes a foundational tale of an alternative religion within an overarching narrative of Christian identity formation. Unsurprisingly, it is one of the less subtle portions of the chronicle and in many ways deserves to be treated as a separate piece of rhetoric shaped by a wider European hostility toward the origins of Islam and its figurehead, and especially influenced by Lucas de Tuy's vision of "a deceiving pseudo-prophet who urges his faithful to conquest through bogus revelations and fake miracles" (Tolan 2002, 182) and Jiménez de Rada's detailed views on Mohammed's falseness in the *Historia Arabum*.²¹ While Lucas de Tuy's history is quite impassioned on what he regards as Mohammed's deceptions, Jiménez de Rada's account of Mohammed's life is described by Cándida Ferrero Hernández as moving away from popular legend toward something apparently objective, although not without "comentarios de carácter demoledor . . . un tono de controversia retórica" (2008, 368). The Alfonsine chroniclers invest the narrative with a particular character, one which involves the themes of magic, miracle, and mendacity present in source accounts but focuses on downgrading these elements of the fantastic through techniques—both lexical and rhetorical—which may broadly be described as leveling, comparative, and anticlimatic. This not only strips the history of Islam of any potentially impressive effect it may have on the audience, but it also ties it into registers and idioms found elsewhere in the chronicle outlining the vicissitudes of loyalty and truth, demonstrating that although this might be a digressive section in some ways, in others it also contributes to the closely compressed vision of conquest and defeat which constitutes the Alfonsine *Estoria*, a vision which emphasizes flux and hubris.

The chroniclers pit the unknown—prophecy, auspice, the occult—against the verifiable—law, loyalty, word—gradually gathering evidence for Mohammed's ostensible deceit and political ambition. The birth of Mohammed initiates the theme of auspice and prediction. The *Historia Arabum* describes in detail the mendacious predictions of a character called Aly (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 88), whom the *Estoria* is content just to acknowledge as a Jewish astrologer. In the Alfonsine version he foresees from the alignment of the stars and planets that the child will be "esforçado et alçado et poderoso en regno et en ley" (261). This prediction gains impact from the context in which it is pronounced, a severe drought throughout the Arabian lands, investing him with the air of some

mythical hero or savior. Nevertheless, the second prophecy of the astrologer, when Mohammed is four years old, is professed as false by the chroniclers before the words of the astrologer even appear, “dixo aquel iudio mintiendo... E el judio mintiendo dixo” (262), bolstered by Jiménez de Rada’s direct reference to him lying, “ut ipse mentitur” (1999, 88). This vision is supposed to be from the Archangel Gabriel, according to whom two angels will come and remove the child’s heart, split it in two, and wash its black blood with clear water. After this, the hearts of his people will be weighed and it will be discovered that his heart will always weigh more than those of the others (262).²² The *Estoria* is not averse to using auspice or augury to support its Christian protagonists either; in a later chapter, a Moor dreams that Alfonso VI enters Toledo riding on a pig, which is taken to be a sign that he will be ruler of Toledo (504). However, even in the abstract realm of dreams, visions, and so forth there is a decidedly empirical sense of truth and falsehood.

The predictions about Mohammed’s life pale in comparison with the practices of divination and foretelling in which he is involved directly. The *Estoria* spares no praise of Mohammed’s wisdom (264, 265), following Jiménez de Rada’s description of him being accompanied to Jerusalem by the astrologer where he learns natural sciences as well as “lege catholica et Iudayce perfidie documentis” (1999, 89), but observes that his bent for natural science turns toward diabolical “artes a que llaman magicas,” consisting of “coniuraciones,” “espiramientos,” “encantamientos,” “sennales,” and “milagros” (265–66), a set of details reflecting Lucas de Tuy’s emphasis upon his false arts, “simulatis illius seducti miraculis et facundia decepti. Erat enim pulcher, facundus et fortis et magicis artibus ualde inbutus” (2003: 166), and indeed general stress upon his mendacity. With the *Chronicon mundi* as principal source for the account of visions, these form a large part of the *Estoria*’s repertoire and the Angel Gabriel is cited over and again as the conduit of such visions, such as when Mohammed falls to the ground with *caduco morbo*, or epilepsy, and passes this off to his wife Cadiga as the effect of the angel addressing him, at the sight of whom he must fall to the ground, given his luminosity (266). The *Estoria* is quick to attribute such prediction to diabolical influence: “entraua el diablo en ell a las uezes et faziel dezir algunas cosas daquellas que auien por uenir” (266). Indeed, the very presence of Gabriel is explained as the shape-shifting of the devil, “por que a las uezes se torna el diablo assi como diz la Escripura en figura de angel de lux” (266), forcing the Christian audience to focus on the difference between resemblance and truth with the authority of the *Chronicon mundi*, which refers to “diabolus transfigurans se in angelum lucis” (2003, 168).

Running parallel to the theme of auspice, prophecy, and vision is a field of language and imagery more dedicated to marking the difference between truth and lies, and it appertains to religious motifs of heresy and of the law. The Islamic religion is cast as a *secta* in the *Estoria*, as mentioned earlier, and coupled with *sennorio* in the chapters that follow the death of Mohammed to convey a powerful alignment of political and religious might. We see the foundations of the religion in the prophet's early years when the Jewish astrologer's teachings in Jewish and Christian laws purportedly influence Mohammed's design of a new religion: "daqui priso Mahomat et tomo despues cosas que metio en aquella mala secta que el compuso pora perdición de las almas daquellos que la creen, por fazer creer a yentes que era uerdadera aquella predigación" (263). The borrowing of Christian and Jewish laws is quickly explained as a means of increasing the veracity of the Islamic religion. This is part of a broader attempt on the part of the chroniclers to show Mohammed's distinctiveness from an early stage, and to explain contact between the different ethnic groups as the point of departure for his new religion, rather than as a shared foundation. In Mohammed's adult life, for example, he becomes a merchant, frequently mixing with Christians and Jews but takes his predominant influence from a heretical monk named John of Antioch, who teaches him how to refute their laws:

daquel monge malo aprendio el muchas cosas tan bien de la nueva ley como de la vieia pora deffender se contra los iudios et los cristianos quando con ellos departiese, ca todo lo que aquel monge le demostrava, todo era contra Dios et contra la ley, et todo a manera de heregia. (265)

The monk's training is soon put into practice when he begins to preach the new laws, investing these "malas y descomulgadas leys" with the authorities of the Old and New Laws, a detail found in the *Chronicon mundi*, "a quo tam Nouum quam Vetus superficialiter et supersticiose didicit Testamentum" (2003, 166–67). At this stage of the Alfonsine narrative the chroniclers are frank in their bias, evident in the use of the adverb "enfintosamente" (falsely) to describe the manner of the preaching, and in the explicit statement about the absolute nature of the new religion, that anyone who preaches or speaks except in support of Mohammed is beheaded (266).

As his *zohoras* (laws) take root, Mohammed travels to Spain where more details about the deviation of his sect from the Christian religion are revealed. He declares that Christ was born of Mary through the Holy Spirit, but that he is not God (266). Saint Isidore's attempt to have him seized is thwarted by the devil himself who warns Mohammed to go

to Arabia and Africa, which leads to the further conversion—or, as the chronicle puts it, deceit and trickery—of other peoples there, once again with the assistance of precepts from Jewish and Christian law, “et enganno et coffondio muchos pueblos ademas, assi como oy en dia ueedes, et tornolos en su creencia por que les prouaua et les afirmaua aquello que les dizie por la ley de los judios et de los cristianos” (266). The chronicle narrates in a tone of forthright incredulity, marked by the frequent use of the adverb “aun” (even), Mohammed’s profession that he who kills his enemy will go “derechamientre” to paradise, impressing them with a description of paradise as a place where all the senses are satisfied (266).

Running parallel to the development of the new religion is the description of Mohammed as a false prophet. The woman who becomes his wife, Cadiga, thinks he is the Messiah the Jews are awaiting and is joined in this impression by the Jews, Arabs, and Ishmaelites. Mohammed’s first miracle, the details of which follow the *Historia Arabum*, takes place in Arabia, where a deluge nearly destroys the church in Mecca and a ship full of fine wood is sent from the king of Egypt to the Christians in Ethiopia to help them rebuild it, which they do, renaming it Alcahaba. Since the walls of the church are high, a “piedra ayamant” (magnetic stone), “lapis niger” in the *Historia Arabum* (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 89), needs to be placed in one of the gables. The elders argue over who should place the final piece in the new building and eventually agree that the first person to cross the entrance named Baysayba should place it there. It turns out to be Mohammed who first crosses the threshold and he places the stone with absolute precision “ell assi como albanne assento la alli o auie de estar” (268), “et ipse ut cementarius collacauit” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 90). In this foundational context, the Moors think they are seeing a miracle and believe him to be a prophet. One of them is quoted directly voicing astonishment that someone so young should be given this privilege when there are more experienced candidates, a statement that also takes place in the *Historia Arabum*:

“¡ay omnes buenos! como me marauillo de uos por que assi quisiestes poner sobre uos omne tan mancebo et darle tan grand onra comol diestes, auiendo entre uos tantos omnes buenos et tan ancianos que son ya prouados en muchas cosas de bien et del mal; ca este mancebo es muy sabio et muy sotil, et lo que diz luego lo proua et lo demuestra; et digo uos que este uos destroyra sin dubda ninguna.” (268)

The Christian leaders pass this off as foolish and diabolical talk but there is a lingering discomfort in the narrative over the role of the church in Mecca. Although it is still universally honored, Mohammed’s

ruling that it always be venerated adds a sense of his newfound authority over it. This is followed immediately by a direction from the narrative voice, not adapted from his source, to recall that in those days places of worship were called churches not mosques, an attempt to reassert historical authority from outside the narrative frame over the growing role of Islam within it: “Agora sabet aqui los que esto oydes que aun aquel tiempo eglesias llamauan a las casas de oracion, ca non mezquitas” (268).

The episode with the *piedra ayamant* establishes Mohammed as a prophet and leads to a marked increase in his ambition, at which point the *Estoria* merges allusions to the growth of the law with a more politicized lexis, familiar from other parts of the chronicle, including allusion to Mohammed’s desire to recover *sennorio* from the Romans:

començo a cuedar en muy grandes cosas et grandes fechos; e aquel su cuedar que en como podrie seer contrallo all emperador de los romanos, et sacar las yentes de so el su sennorio. Desi con sus engannos encubiertos punno de auuiar et de aluorosçar los pueblos en este fecho, demonstrandoles de como eran apremiados de muy grand et amarga seruidumbre. (269)

The concept of political dominion is thereby coupled with the growth of the religion, and the term *sennorio* frequently occurs in this context to mark the developing political might of Mohammed, while Jiménez de Rada seems to place greater stress on the idea of Mohammed releasing his people from a yoke or oppression.²³ Underpinning Mohammed’s political success is a collective belief in his divine backing, “affirmavan que las palabras que Mahomat dizie, que eran por el poder de Dios que yazie dentro en ell ascondudo; et esta tal era la su creencia dellos” (270). As earlier, the narrative voice steps in with added vim at the end of this chapter (487) to add a level of authoritative overview: “Agora sabet aqui que entre todas aquellas malas et descomulgadas leys que Mahomat predigo et demostro a los moros que fue secta de Nicolas el de Antiochia” (270). The chronicle, using the *Chronicon mundi* as source here, affirms that Mohammed is doing little more than returning to the previous sect of Nicholas, that which was denigrated by the angel of the Lord God at Ephesus according to the Book of Revelation, and which is quoted as the last lines of the chapter as a commanding and combative finale to the victory of Mohammed:

“aborreciste tu los fechos et las obras de Nicolas assi como las yo aborresci” (270) (“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” [Revelation 2.6]). Alfonso not only takes the wording

here from Lucas de Tuy, but perhaps also the structural power of this quotation, given that Lucas positions it immediately before the death of Mohammed in his account.²⁴

As the narrative progresses, the securing of Mohammed's power consistently merges the themes of his false prophecy, his consistent recourse to law as a means of control, and his political ambition. The *Estoria* describes Mohammed riding on a fantastical beast named *alborach* in Arabic; while it is named as such in his source text the *Historia Arabum* ("que dicitur Alborac," Jiménez de Rada 1999, 92), Alfonso adds more detail, describing it as a spirit creature with wings of the type used by prophets of old (270). The ensuing description of Mohammed's trip to Jerusalem on the beast further suggests his falseness as a prophet as he is represented as mendaciously recounting several visions, including one of the Angel Gabriel affirming his righteousness. The *Estoria* underscores his outright deception not just in allusion to him lying, "mintiendo dize que" (270), but in the use of direct speech to convey his reports to his disciples, where the sense of directness, detail, and even poetic license of the *Historia Arabum* in this regard is fully exploited to illustrate the persuasiveness of his reports, for example "quando yo ui a Abraham et a Moysen et a Ihesu, dixo el, los oios deste mio cuerpo dormien, mas los oios del mio coraçon uelauan; e semeio me que Abraham era tal como yo en forma et en cuerpo" (270), a direct translation of Jiménez de Rada's "Cum uidi . . . Abraham, Moysen et Ihesum, oculi corporis dormiebant, set cordis oculi uigilabant; et uidi quod Abraham similis era michi" (1999, 93). Likewise, a comparison between Jesus's hair and running water is maintained: "semeiauan . . . moiados et que corrien agua, tanto eran fremosos et claros" (271), "et uidebatur aqua ab eius capite prosilire, ueramtamen aqua non erat ibi" (1999, 93).

The longest of these direct accounts from Mohammed concerns his ascent to the seven heavens, beginning with his warm reception there, once again taking the direct speech from the *Historia Arabum*: "fueron muy alegres conmigo; et con el grand plazer que ende ouieron, catauan se unos a otros et dizien: '¡Ay que bien este!, '¡ay que bien!'" (271), "et cum risu et gaudio respexerunt dicentes comuniter: 'Bene, bene'" (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 93). The celestial bodies are even alluded to as friends, a detail Alfonso adds: "como a omne que tenien por su hermano et su amigo," "Moysen, mio buen amigo" (272). Gabriel is once again at the forefront of the narrative, acting as a visionary guide but this time there is a two-way exchange as Mohammed repeatedly asks Gabriel to explain the figures he sees in each tier of heaven, such as Lucifer, Adam, and Aaron. Conversely, Mohammed explains how in the heavens Gabriel introduced him by name when asked who he was and verified that he was sent "ya enuiado es" (272); "iam est missus," in the *Historia Arabum*

(Jiménez de Rada 1999, 95). The echo of Gabriel's news-bearing and revelatory function in the Bible is clear, and taken to another level, with the use of Jiménez de Rada's authoritative and detailed account.²⁵ After traversing the seven heavens, Mohammed claims to have arrived at no less than paradise courtesy of the angel, "puso me Grabiél ante Dios" (272), a direct translation of Jiménez de Rada's "Gabriel me proposuit ante Deum" (1999, 95), to receive his commandment about daily prayer.

The *Estoria* reserves comment on this for some chapters later when it takes up the theme of Mohammed's *secta* with vehement opprobrium, adding material not found in the *Historia Arabum*, which quickly follows Mohammed's ascent to the heavens with his death, nor in *De rebus* or *Chronicon mundi*, although the tone of the latter, and its general emphasis upon falseness, is influential. Alfonso's mode is more resumptive and pragmatic now; when describing Mohammed's frequent trips to Mecca the chronicle summarizes how "predicaua et dizie mintiendo todas estas cosas que auemos dichas, e aun otras muchas que son de riso et de escarnio et de falsedad" (273), as if the sheer amount of what it deems to be risible lies are not worth repeating in full. To the familiar lexis of deceit which is notably abundant in this chapter—*engaño*, *descubertamiento*, *enfinta*, *mintiendo*—a conclusive image of Alfonso's own making is added, in keeping with the resumptive mode, that of the prison of death or "prisiones de muerte" in which he traps his followers (273). This is complemented by the impression that these followers willingly entrap themselves in lies and stubbornly adhere to them, being "muy firmes en su porfia . . . non se quieren llegar nin acoger a la carrera de la uerdadera fe nin auer en si la ley de Dios nin el su ensennamiento" (274). There follows the narration of Mohammed's death, a deflationary account describing how Mohammed's claims that he will be brought back to life on the third day are false, since his soul goes to the devil, and his body begins to rot and emit an abhorrent stench.

Alfonso generally prefers Lucas de Tuy to Jiménez de Rada as a source for the death of Mohammed but still adapts his source to his particular vision. This vision includes a predominant sense of bathos, evident for example in the reduction of Mohammed's heavenly journey to the description of how his supposedly loyal followers part ways with him when his body starts to smell, "desampararonle et fueronse su via" (274). Moreover, Mohammed's faithful disciple Albimor comes back to see the body, only to find that it has been eaten by dogs, information openly sourced from Lucas de Tuy, "eis abscedentibus Albimor post undeciam diem reperit corpus eius a canibus dilaniatum" (2003, 169), adding an extra level of authority to the overall impression of anticlimax as details from the verifiable, everyday world puncture the fantasy. Alfonso's

sinking style has strong rhetorical value and culminates in an explicit demarcation of the end of the *estoria de Mahomat*. The ending involves a combination of kairotic and chronological time markers, describing something rather fantastic in annalistic format: “Esse anno tremio la tierra, et apparescio en el cielo un signo en manera de espada, bien por treynta dias, que demostraua el sennorio que los moros auien de auer,” “Esse anno otrossi alçaron los alaraues por rey a Abubacar et regno tres annos” (274). No such references occur in the *Chronicon mundi* and the *Historia Arabum* and the allusion to the earthquake provides a compelling closure to the account of the prophet’s life, one that appears to summarize in figurative and fantastical terms the quite literal tremors his religious and political undertakings cause, and which are frequently described in his biography through allusions to his political agitation as *aluoroſçar*, a term particular to the Alfonsine narrative.²⁶ The ending, however, strikes a less reductive chord than the rest of the account of Mohammed’s life, tempering the bathos with an ominous sense of the political might, and the undoubted aftershocks, of the Arabic *sennorio*.

“Crebanto” and “Fitna”: Discord and Division

The royal version of the chronicle reaches the Muslim invasion of Spain in 711, after which the account of the reconquest of Spain heralds a change in both structure and content.²⁷ Here the chronicle is a true narrative of defeat and conquest, exploring the histories of the ethnic groups and political dynasties that populated the Peninsula, describing the invasion by Moors and Berbers, the age of the Amirs, Umayyad rule, the fall of the caliphate of Córdoba, the Taifa kingdoms, the Almoravid empire, and the Almohad caliphate, then Christian dominance at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, and the sieges of Córdoba, Jaén, and Seville. Looked at like this, this reconquest narrative seems to build toward the achievements of Alfonso’s father, Fernando III, in conquering the principal towns of Andalusia. However, close attention on the part of the chroniclers to the successes and upheavals of these different political groups, and a keen sensitivity toward historical instances of discord and division, challenges and distorts what might look, on the surface, like a triumphalist narrative, betraying anxieties of similar practices occurring within the Christian polity.

These later stages of the chronicle, where the *Versión regia* ends, have a miscellaneous quality. Changes were made to the chronicle after Alfonso’s death in 1284 when his son Sancho IV (1284–95) undertook to complete it and, in so doing, to adjust it to his own political interests. This reworking was undertaken c.1289 and resulted in the *Versión amplificada* (E₂), the

second alternative branch, which extends from the reign of Ramiro I to the year 1243 in the reign of Fernando III.²⁸ Although Menéndez Pidal based his edition on the principle prototypes of the *Estoria*, the two royal manuscripts E₁ (Y-i-2), and E₂ (X-i-4), Diego Catalán has sought to demonstrate that only the first manuscript and the earlier parts of the second came from the royal ateliers (1962, 17–94). The rest of his edition reflects a collection of manuscripts of various origins, dating from the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth. Although this second part of the chronicle is not as cohesive as the earlier Gothic history, it is true to the work insofar as the *Estoria* was never finished in King Alfonso's lifetime, nor after his death, existing historically in a state of flux and instability affected by contemporaneous political movements. There was never a complete original text of the chronicle in these later stages.

The implications of this for interpretation of the work are significant: this is a later text, at further remove from the royal atelier and its literary masterplan in some sections, and may be influenced by the politics of Sancho IV, Alfonso's son. Sancho did not use the definitive text of the first redaction, the *Versión primitiva*, but a draft of it, allowing for the introduction of variants. Differences in content and ideology are clear, and have been outlined by Fernández-Ordóñez (2000c, 61–62) and Bautista (2006, 85–86), both of whom state that the *Versión amplificada* does not participate in the strong neo-Gothic ethos found in the first redaction of the *Estoria* and in the *Versión crítica*. Instead, the author of the *Versión amplificada* brings politics to the people, considering the reconquest to be the task of the *naturales* of the land, rather than the exclusive responsibility of the Gothic kings and their descendants. The representation of Islamic Spain is no less captivating for these changes; in fact the alterations to the chronicle in these later stages allow us to assess the importance of the Islamic narrative in relation to a different political climate in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Spain. There is a freer and more discursive quality to this phase of the chronicle, a loosening of the imperial and absolutist ideology of the earlier Alfonsine material. Greater value is placed on cooperation and incorporation, and on the role of the people in the shaping of the polity. It is no surprise, then, that the desirability of loyalty and detrimental effects of civil division are emphasized so strongly.

The narration of the Islamic invasion of Spain is initially embittered; a polarized description pitting Gothic nobility against Moorish deceit matches the structural division at this point of the chronicle:

La uil yente de los affricanos que se non solie preciar de fuerça nin de bon-
dad, et todos sus fechos fazie con art et a enganno, et non se solien amparar
si non pechando grandes riquezas et grand auer, essora era exaltada, ca
crebanto en una ora mas ayna la nobleza de los godos. (312)

It is right here, however, in the midst of a stereotypical display of intolerance, that the idea of breakage, expressed by the verb *crebantur*, comes into being, introducing a far subtler means of thinking about the effects of the invasion, and the relationship between the two groups. Recurrent concerns with breakage and discord raise the two narratives, Gothic and Islamic, above the level of simplistic antithetical comparison and suggest connections and common challenges. Within the overarching frame of conquest and reconquest, the threat of internal division hangs ominously over the Islamic polities, providing a number of lessons about the craft of kingship; these are of universal appeal, but would also have been of particular interest to the thirteenth-century kings who struggled against betrayal and rebellion.²⁹ Indeed, the prevalence of this theme reveals a deep awareness of the ephemeral nature of worldly power, a theme of universal relevance:

Todos deuen por esto aprender que non se deua preciar: nin el rico en riqueza, nin el poderoso en su poderio, nin el fuerte en su fortaleza, nin el sabio en su saber, nin el alto en su alteza, nin en su bien; mas quien se quisiere preciar, preciese en seruir a Dios, ca el fiere et pon melezina, ell llaça et el sanna, ca toda la tierra suya es; e todos pueblos et todas las yentes, los regnos, los languages, todos se mudan et se camian, mas Dios criador de todo siempre dura et esta en un estado. (311)³⁰

Breakage is couched in a moral language in both the Christian and Islamic narratives, consistent with Alfonso's vision of *translatio imperii*. The certitude that sinful behavior cannot coexist with successful rule is illustrated over and again, never more obviously so than in the downfall of the Gothic kings in the wake of Witiza:

tanta fue la muchedumbre de los peccados et de las nemigas en tiempo deste Vitiza, que la bondad et la nobleza de los godos que solien mandar reys et regnos et yentes alli fue crebantada et metida en fondon del lixo, et en las auolezas que non conuienen a dezir, et en todo mal. (305)

In the Islamic narrative thread, much emphasis is placed upon overreaching as a specifically damaging action and the language of the deadly sins is used to describe it. This has obvious political interest in a historiographical narrative organized around the recovery of land on the part of the Christians, and which stresses the role of the natural inhabitants in this enterprise, as it focuses on the point where the compulsion to conquer and achieve becomes an overweening and improper act of pride (*soberbia*) or covetousness (*cobdicia*).

One striking example of the latter comes in the tale of the Arab King Ysca who develops a desire for material wealth that has devastating

political consequences: “ca tanto fue ciego por la grand cobdicia que ouo de allegar tesoro, que non cuedo en al sino como podrie seer rico ademas, por que pudiesse passar de riquezas a todos los otros reys que ante del fueran” (328). In this salutary tale, which amplifies Jiménez de Rada’s allusion to his destructive *cupiditas* (1999, 110), the king’s *cobdicia* weakens his political power and, by extension, the collective might of the Arab peoples. Because of his covetousness, the provinces that ought to show obedience to him revolt for four years (328). The rebellion then gains momentum as those who dwell in the country and at the western limits of the land rise against him (335). This creates a dramatic scenario where hoards of African rebels led by Belgi Abenbex confront Ysca’s emissary at the River Maffan, a terrifying spectacle which underlines their ethnic difference in the same way as the *Historia Arabum* does (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 111): “Et os reuellados eran negros como la pez, et auien los cabellos crespos et los dientes mui blancos . . . tan negros et tan espantosos con sus dientes regannados” (335).³¹ The resulting encounter leads to a quite literal fracture of the Arab polity as the Arabs split into three parts, “esparzieronse los alaraues en tres partes” (335). What is more, Belgi is then able to enter Spain, causing further experience of rupture: “pasaron la mar por su mandado por mal et crebanto de yente de Espanna” (335). Schism runs deep in the aftermath of these events as Abdelmelic, king of Córdoba, attempts to block the entry into Spain causing the Moors of the Peninsula to come to Belgi’s aid and overrun the lands of Abdelmelic in three factions. The impression of division could not be more emphatic as the chapter concludes describing their clashes in broad geographical terms: “E tantas batallas fizieron despues Belgi et Abderrahmen en las partidas de orient et de occident” (336), in direct imitation of Jiménez de Rada’s closing wording, “Et tanta in Oriente et Occidente ab utrisque prelia sunt peracta, quod uix lingua sufficit enarrare” (1999, 112).

The connection between covetousness and political disunity is corroborated by further examples, such as the Cordoban Moors who attempt to rise against Alhacan on account of their wealth making them bold (354). More arresting still is the account of the siege of Úbeda where the fall of the city prompts avaricious behavior from the Christians but incurs Divine punishment: “tanto los tenie enlazados la cobdiçia, que por ella entendien ya a fazer tuertos et robos; onde Nuestro Sennor Dios, por poner freno et estoruo a la cobdiçia dellos, firio con enfermedades a ellos et a sus bestias” (705). A striking image is presented of the demolition of military organization and social bonds: “assi que apenas auie en todas las sus tiendas uno que pudiesse servir all otro, nin cauallero a cauallero, nin aun seruient a sennor” (705).

Equally damaging is the sin of pride. King Abd al-Rahmān al-Gāfiqī harbors this fault, leading the Berber Munnuz to incite rebellion against him: “con el grand esfuerço de coraçon que auie et por la grand onrra en que se uio puesto, començo de seer mui soberuio et de maltraer a todos” (331). This causes political rupture and reopens old “wounds,” an interesting metaphor as not only is it absent from the *Historia Arabum*’s account of this episode, but it also connects both Christian and Islamic experience, the 711 invasion itself having earlier been cast as a wounding of the Christian body (311): “las llagas, que non eran aun bien sanas nin guaridas de las priessas en que se uiran las yentes, que por el su brauo sennorio se renouassen aun” (333). Abd al-Rahmān mistakenly believes in his own power as the source of all political success, neglecting the role of God, with the result that God kills him: “cuedando que este bien nol vinie de Dios, sinon del su poder mismo, cresciol soberuia et quiso entrar mas adelante por tierra de Francia... Mas Dios, a qui pesa con la soberuia, cerrol los puertos de la mar, esto es los dias de la uida” (332).³² This is developed from the *Historia Arabum*, which alludes to his misplaced sense of power in precisely these terms, “Hucusque uenies et undas fluctuum hic confringes, Abderramen non a Deo set a sua potencia extimans prouenire” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 108). This metaphor comparing the end of his days to the closing of sea ports underscores the dangers of excess through a turn of phrase whose referential, symbolic capacity seems to outweigh the military connotations of the port as a literal point of conquest and, in so doing, renders its meaning absolutely universal.

In the history of the Umayyad caliphate, political cleavage becomes a persistent theme and a more politicized idiom is employed to articulate the reasons behind the eventual collapse of this dynasty. The narrative is proleptic, anticipating the eventual fracture of the dynasty in a way that whets the appetite for the reasons for it: “diremos de como fue el su sennorio partido en dos partes” (338), “contaremos del desacuerdo que ouo entre los del linnage de Mahomat, el propheta de los moros” (338). *Desacuerdo* is a key concept in the *Estoria*, used to describe the loss of imperial territory in the Roman history, “por desacuerdo se perdien las cosas” (30), as well as the fall of the Visigoths owing to “el desacuerdo que ouieron los godos con so sennor el rey Rodrigo” (4). Describing the disputes in the lineage of Mohammed, the chronicle widens its vocabulary of political contention to include *exceco*, *contienda*, *guerra*, and *desamor* (strife, conflict, war, and lack of love):

Humaya et Benalabeci uinien del linnage de las fijas de Mahomat, el su grand propheta de los moros; e duro mui grand tiempo entre amos estos

linnages daquellas dos hermanas enxeco e contienda...E despues de la muerte de Mahomat los de linnage de Humaya, que morauan aquend mar, partironse del sennorio de Affrica so que eran, et fizieron cabeça de su regno en Cordoua...Pues que fueron departidos los unos de los otros por sennorios, mantouieron siempre guerra et enxeco unos contra otros, et desamaronse, etuuscaronse mal quanto pudieron. E duroles aquel desamor fastal tiempo de los almorauides, que fueron sennores de Espanna. (339)

Here Alfonso appreciably strengthens the *Historia Arabum's* account of such conflict and destruction, “unde et inter domos eorum diu contentio perdurauit” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 114), “Deinde particularibus dominiis excidia patrauerunt usque ad tempora Almoravidum” (114–15). Despite this background of rivalry Abd al-Rahmān Adahil becomes king of the entire Muslim polity; the *Estoria* acknowledges the long and prosperous reign³³ of this figure described by modern day historians as founder of a dynasty, organizer of administration, and reformer of the army (Chalmers 1994, 349, Wasserstein 1985, 23). His stabilizing policy continues among his descendants; after the rule of his son Yssem, there is some contest between Yssem's brothers, Abdalla and Çulema, and his son, Alhacam, for the kingdom which leads to the death of Çulema. However, this is neatly resolved when Alhacam forgives Abdalla his envy and malice (349), and peace and stability are restored (350). Strong and just kingship is represented as an answer to the continual threat of disorder, a political ideal linking Muslim and Christian polities.

The portrayal of a series of strong rulers confirms that the creation and consolidation of authority, especially royal power, would have been of great interest to the Christian readers of the chronicle, and forms part of a larger repertoire of examples relating to the craft of politics. Proof of this is the readiness on the part of the compilers to translate Arabic terminology, thereby improving understanding. At times, this combines with a sense of *admiratio* as found in the description of Abd al-Rahmān III, who is acknowledged as very powerful, honorable, and just (384); this chapter also reveals, using the *Historia Arabum* (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 127), his adoption of the title *anancer ledinelle*, which it translates as defender of the Law of God, and the secular appellation *amiramolin*, or king of the believers.³⁴ We also gain insight into his political method, his attempts to bring peace to the divided line of the Prophet, developing Jiménez de Rada's reference to this, “Et quia dissensio erat inter domum Abenhumeye et domum Abelabezi” (1999, 127):

por que auie desamor entrel linnage de Abenhumeya et el de Abelabeçi...que fueron nietos de Mahomat el so grand propheta, que

apenas auie logar en toda la tierra o non fiziesse estonces mal aquel so desamor, este rey trabaiose quanto mas pudo de meter paz entrellos, et a los unos falagaua, et a los otros metie grand miedo por que ouiessem paz. E a los que ueye que eran rebelles, assi los crebanto por batallas et guerras, que les tollio tod el poder que auien, et fizolos estar solos sin otras compannas, et callar...et metio toda la tierra so el so sennorio, et obedecieronle todos. (384)

In so doing he rises to the expectations of his caliphal role, which sought to perpetuate order through a strong hand. Almanzor (Ibn Abi Amir) is also presented as a great leader, and the explanation of his title, again using the *Historia Arabum*, sustains an interest in the organization of power amongst the Muslims, and reflects the Umayyad preoccupation with what Al-Azmeh calls the indefatigable accumulation of “indices of royalty” (1997, 68). The term *alḥagīb* is first translated as “omne que es en logar de rey” (395), “quod interpretatur uicerex” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 128), then subject to further explanation, taken from *De rebus Hispaniae*, that the term equates to the Castilian word for eyelid because just as the eyelid is like the cover and defense of the eyes, so he was like the cover and defense of his people: “como “soberceia” en el castellano...por que la soberceia assi es como deffendimiento et cobertura de los oios, ca assi era el cobertura et deffendimiento de los pueblos” (445).³⁵ The meaning of this title is repeatedly explained suggesting that the chroniclers find the bodily simile an appealing one, although they later express a preference for the title under which he will come to be widely known, “Almañor” meaning “defender,” because apparently it sounds better and is more appropriate to his military success (445), which is supported by both of Jiménez de Rada’s narratives, “quia fere semper in preliis fuit uictor, Almançor fuit appellatus, quod deffensor interpretatur” (1999, 128), “Almañor autem interpretatur deffensus et defensio, eo quod multis victoriis gloriosus se et suos strenue deffensauit” (1987, 162). The presence of these explanations for Arabic titles is clear evidence of the chroniclers’ high regard for this king’s physical and moral strength in particular—after all, he was loyal for 26 years to Yssem, a quality the chroniclers are primed to value—but it also suggests the very closest of interests in the craft of Arabic kingship on the part of these Christian writers.³⁶ Thus, similar attempts to translate impressive and meaningful Arabic titles are found in the cases of Alḥacam, son of Abd al-Rahmān III, named as *almuẓtañḥirbille*, or “omne que se deffende on Dios” (425), man whose defense is God, and Muhammed ibn Abi Amir, a worthy successor to the title *alḥagīb*.³⁷

Just when it seems, however, that the Umayyad chapters showcase the successful imposition of political order on the fickle behavior of men,

making the Arabic kings examples to follow, providential overtones start to dominate the narrative. When the powerful Alcorexi sacks Portugal, the chronicle, using Jiménez de Rada's *De rebus* as the source, describes how Saint James sends a fatal form of diarrhoea and dysentery to the Moors (443). Moreover, Almanzor's deeds are described as punishment for the sins of King Bermudo (445), developing an entire chapter of *De rebus* devoted to "De insolenciis Veremudi et uxoribus eius et de uictoria Almançori" (1987, 162). Almanzor's honor is removed in the assertion that his success comes not from him but from God's anger toward the Christians (448). When he moves the bells of the cathedral to the mosque of Córdoba, the chroniclers revert to a description of a foul illness that is meted out to him by God, reveling in *De rebus*'s reference to such "inmunda su plaga, scilicet, dissenteria, fere totus exercitus est consumptus; reliqui morte subitanea perierunt" (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 165):

Mas ante que el se partiesse de tierra de Santyague fue ferido el con toda su compaña de maiaimiento³⁸ de Dios; et por el peccado dell atreuimiento et de las suziedades que el fázie en la egleſia de sant Yague, cayo en el una de la mas suzias enfermedades que podrie ser, et es aquella que dizen los fisicos diarria; et diarria es dolor del uentre que rompe las entrannas et faze en los omnes la malazon tan fuerte que mueren los omnes ende. Et Almançor et todos los de su hueste, de guisa fueron consomidos et desfechos los cuerpos, que todos murieron ende. (449)

It is hard to imagine that this is the same character whose political virtues were so recently extolled. This sudden movement from a narrative about the craft of successful kingship, to a reductive, providential one may be explained by the fact that this is the apogee of Umayyad success and as such represents the greatest ideological threat to the Christian polity; from the point on there is simply less need to temper success with such propaganda as the decline of the Umayyads unfolds.

The collapse of the caliphate of Córdoba was a focal episode for Arab historians, and the *Estoria* also displays a keen interest in the stages leading up to its decline. The prevalence of treachery in this section of the narrative is striking, creating a haunting link with the end of the Visigothic era when the omnipresence of treachery was the very epitome of decline in moral standards. In a scene reminiscent of the luxury and idleness rife in the latter days of the Visigothic kingdom, Abd al-Rahmān "Sanchuelo," a licentious and debauched ruler occupied only with women and wine, meets his death at the hands of his own vassals (451). The death of this king is often seen as the beginning of the end for the caliphate, sparking the *fitna* that would lead to its demise, a vehement power struggle

between Berbers, Slavs, and Andalusians (Vallvé 1992, 257, Wasserstein 1985, 55).³⁹ The theme of treachery escalates during the reign of Almahadi, for whom this fault is habitual (456). After pretending to kill Yssem, his reign is characterized by mass revolts on the part of the Moors, as well as insecurity on his part; typically a traitor himself, treachery is what he most fears in others and what triggers acts of savage cruelty (453). When Yssem is retrieved from prison and his kingship restored, he rightfully denounces the treachery of his rival before having him beheaded (457), as described in *Historia Arabum*, “de proditiōne reputans Hyssem et multos alios capitali sententia condempnauit” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 130). Scales notes that the Muslim chroniclers revel in his severe punishment as befitting of one who had opened the door to the *fitna*.

During an ensuing period of conflict between Berbers and Cordobans, disloyalty is once again a direct cause of division; when Almortada is elected king he fails to give his supporters, Hayram and Mundar, the honor they deserve causing them to retract their alliance, “touieronle sanna, et desamaronle” (463). The higher stratum of the polity then descends, with their help, into bitter conflict, “entro luego entre los mas altos omnes de su hueste un tan grand desacuerdo et tan grand bollicio que mayor non podrie seer” (463). The battle against the Zirids of Granada is lost as a direct result of this division, a detail Alfonso adds to his source, the *Historia Arabum*: “porque los altos omnes de la hueste de Abderrahmen eran partidos en uandos por quel bollicio que entrara entrellos, assi como diximos la razon por que fuera, ouieronse de uencer los de la hueste de Abderrahmen por aquella razon” (463). No clearer proof is needed of the chain of association in the chronicle between misjudged rule, disloyalty, internal divisions, and collective demise. The severity of the conflict is underscored by Ibn Hayyān, who is quoted as saying that with this battle, the whole of al-Andalus disintegrated and was never united afterward (Scales 1994, 99). In the *Estoria*, the total demise of the caliphate is preceded by yet more conflicts; the Cordoban revolt against Qasim, the murder of Abd al-Rahmān son of Mahomat, dragged out of hiding in the furnace of the baths, and, most poignantly, the claim to the caliphal title by the Cordoban Humeya. In response to fears for his safety, he makes the rather ominous remark “obedescetme uos y oy, et siquier cras me matat,” a quotation taken from the *Historia Arabum*, “Michi hodie obedite et me in crastino interficite” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 146). Just as this is stressed by Jiménez de Rada with the comment “Ecce quanta est ambitio dominandi” (1999, 146), this prompts a gloss from the Alfonsine chroniclers explaining what an important lesson in obedience this is: “Aqui dize la estoria que en esto

puede omne entender que grand cosa es la obediencia deste mundo” (466). The precarious nature of loyalty as so pithily emphasized here is borne out time and again during the ensuing *taifa* period.

The establishment of independent Muslim-ruled principalities called *taifas* historically allowed the Christians to take advantage of internal strife. Wasserstein writes that “The taifa rulers, torn by internal feuding, exhibited from the start a doom-laden and almost insouciant weakness in the face of the threat posed by their Christian neighbours” (1985, 136). The rulers of each *taifa* state typically had few or no outside resources or allies, or were subject to temporary aid or, worse still, betrayal; they were now individual targets for Christian attack. This comes through clearly in the *Estoria* when the grandson of King Almemón of Toledo, Alcahir, hands over the city to Alfonso VI on the bad advice of his counsellors (548). This misjudgment, based on duplicitious advice, allows the Christian king to capitalize on their discord: “porque ueye que los moros estauan todos desacordados... et non aurie y ninguno que se le amparasse por la discordia que era grand entrellos” (548), a notable development of Alfonso’s source *De rebus* (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 203–05). Incidents of internal conflict are numerous in this section of the chronicle, confirming the impression that isolated episodes of political dissention stoke widespread disunity. The chronicle moves seamlessly from the particular to the general, reflecting in the sparseness and linearity of its narrative style the ease with which internal feuding grows into political schism. Thus, the sons of the *alguazil* Abubecar, who ruled Valencia with control and authority, display *cobdicia* in the division of their father’s assets which leads to the creation of two separate factions, each claiming to be more worthy than the other. The sequential style of the narrative lends itself well to expressing the spread of discord:

Et la yente de la villa estaua con grand pesar deste desacuerdo et destos bandos que se leuantaua entrellos, et assi se fizieron essos de la uilla otrossi dos bandos, et destos; los unos querien que diessen el sennorio de Valencia al rey de Saragoça; los otros quel diessen a Alcahir nieto de Almemon. (548)

The style of writing here positions the reader between the preceding narrative and the unfolding one, encouraging them to keep their previous store of knowledge about the discord very much in mind in registering its development. The use of demonstrative adjectives and pronouns, “este,” “esto,” “estos,” is key to this and a regular feature of this long chronicle as the Alfonsine team choreograph a history heaving with significant characters, events, and places, ensuring that appropriate connections are

made and actors and actions duly noted. Here, however, it is particularly effective in conveying a sense of progress that is at the same time a significant step backward for the Muslim peoples. As a result of this split, a political manoeuvre similar to that of Alfonso VI is described as Alcadir sees the opportunity to take Valencia on the basis of discord: "Entonce touo Alcadir que aurie el la villa, pues que bandos et desacuerdos andauan entrellos" (649).

The concentrated internal strife of the *taifa* kings was checked by the arrival in Spain of the Almoravids, a zealous Berber sect from North Africa, whose presence created a united Muslim front to face the growing power of Alfonso VI. The *Estoria* describes how the Almoravid passage to Spain has its origins in a famous love story that crosses the religious divide as the daughter of King Abenhabeth of Seville, Zaida, falls in love with Alfonso VI on account of his knightly reputation. She converts to Christianity, they marry, and a son is born. The chronicle describes how Alfonso feels indebted to the king of Seville and establishes a bond of friendship with him: "ouo dalli adelante su connocencia con ell et sus amores muy grandes" (553). The union between the kings is rooted in their equally powerful standing as the greatest men of Spain and seeks to protect as much, which prompts Alfonso to send for the elite of the Almoravid soldiers as backup against the potential threats of the rulers of Zaragoza and Tortosa (554). Despite Alfonso's beneficent treatment of the Moors in his siege of Zaragoza, the Moors of the Algarve call for help from Yuçef Abentexefin to keep Andalusia from Christian rule. This decisive shift of loyalty is initially presented as the outcome of political counsel (557). However, some lines later the chronicle records the reason for this as treachery on the part of Ali, the senior *alguazil* (the officer responsible for apprehending criminals and malefactors) who pretends to be Miramomelin and ruptures the pact with Alfonso:⁴⁰

Et cuenta la estoria que la razon que mas mouio a este Yuçaf Abentexefin passar a España fue la trayçion que le fiziera Ali, el su alguazil mayor, que el enuiara con los almorauides, que se fiziera llamar Miramomelin...E desde que fue aquende ayuntaronse con el los mayores moros dell Andaluzia, et acordaron luego todos en uno que se ayudassen segund su ley. Et parti-
erense luego del sennorio del rey don Alffonso. (557)

Ali and his Moors capture Seville but Ali is imprisoned there and beheaded by Yuçaf Abentexefin. However, the strength of the Almoravids is now so great that the Andalusian Moors fear them as much as the Christians and pragmatically elect to be ruled by another Moorish people rather

than a Christian one. It is this which finally leads to the union of the peninsular and African Moors in one entity:

escogieron antes que meior era de seer so el sennorio de los almorauides que eran moros como ellos, que non de los cristianos. E desde entonces a aca fueron los moros daquend mar et dallend mar todos so un sennorio, ca dantes uno era el sennorio de los moros dallend mar et otro el de aquend mar. (557)

With the entirety of Muslim Spain under their control, the Almoravids represent a serious threat to the Christians, but are unable to resist the push of reconquest. The fall of Valencia to the Cid brings the theme of pride, seen in earlier stages of Islamic history in connection with political decline, back to the fore. The source of the chronicle's account is the *History of Valencia* by Ben Alcama, a Muslim historiographer from Valencia writing in the early twelfth century. The account is delivered via an elegy by the wise Moor Alhuacaxi who identifies pride as the key reason for the loss of the city:

non vernie sobrel pueblo de Valencia esta tribulation nin los vençrien sus enemigos, sinon por los sus grandes pecados et por la muy grant soberuia que mantouieron; et por este pecado auran a perder tan noble çibdat como Valencia, en que eran apoderados. (577)

The imagery used in his account is foundational, he alludes to four foundation stones, "piedras cabdales," upon which Valencia was based: the king; the Infante; the king of Zaragoza as friend and counsellor to the king; and the noble *arrayaz*, the army captain and vassal to the king. The ordinary citizens of Valencia are compared to a noble wall erected on these foundation stones, and the *ricos omnes*, nobles and defenders of the city, to high and noble towers (577). Consistent with this extended metaphor, the loss of the city is described in terms of breakage, culminating in the Moor's expression of personal and collective fracture: "Et todas estas cosas que yo he dichas, son con muy grant quebranto que yo tenia et tengo en el mi coraçon por la muy grant coyta en que esta Valencia" (578). So important is the reasoning behind the fall of Valencia that it returns in the description of the Cid's accession to the city when he informs the people that if he should commit error or show pride, God will take the city from him: "fizome Dios merçed que gane Valencia et so apoderado della. Pues si yo derecho fiziere en ella et aderesçar sus cosas, dexarmela a Dios; et si yo y mal fago a tuerto o a soberuia, bien se que mela toldra" (589). The consistency of both Christian and Islamic

views on pride, covetousness, and excess is arresting, illustrating that in the early, and relatively volatile, stages of the reconquest the balance of power is a challenge for both sides. While the authority of kings is subject to scrutiny, and abuse of their power seen as damaging, there is also a shared sense that political schism can have relatively small and insignificant beginnings in smaller acts of betrayal, indicating the need for loyalty to run deep in the political ranks. It seems highly likely that this was a sentiment Sancho IV, a king who came to power through the cooperation of the nobles, would have propagated.

The Amplification of Andalusia

The narrative of the reconquest continues with a detailed account of the rise of the Almohad dynasty and their defeat of the reigning Almoravids, then an equally comprehensive description of the victories of Fernando III over the principal Moorish strongholds of Andalusia. While the chronicle continues to pay close attention to relations between the different Moorish factions, the theme of this stage of the chronicle is reconquering in its truest and most literal sense, and the narrative style also consciously builds on what has gone before, increasing a sense of hindsight and retrospection. In these final stages of the chronicle, the *Versión amplificada* thus seems to dovetail in both theme and style: reconquest is its theme but this later version also takes charge of the concluding material in such a way as to constitute a form of literary reconquest, a retaking of the narrative space. The idea of an “amplified” version of the *Estoria* comes into its own at this point, and can be helpfully compared to Gerard Genette’s definition of amplification as “thematic extension and stylistic expansion...which most often consists in their synthesis and convergence” (1997, 262). Ironically, however, both content and style in this amplified form continue to reemphasize the importance of the Islamic legacy. The more exposed we are to the chronicle’s obvious attempts to conquer both the historical memory, and its own versions, the more consciously we value the vicissitudes of memory and of history.

This first phase of the narrative sees the chroniclers proleptically anticipate the definitive battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) when the armies of Alfonso VIII, the fearsome king and emperor⁴¹ defeated the Almohads and severely hindered Islamic rule in Spain. Here a crusading discourse is introduced into Spanish historical writing, an original contribution of the *Versión amplificada* (Bautista 2006, 86). The tale begins in a rather folkloric vein, taking its information from *De rebus* (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 231), in recounting how Abentumet, a gifted astronomer, seeks out a young man

named Abdelmon and prophecies that he will become king of the Arabs (658). He is aided in this endeavor by a companion named Almohadi who is well versed in the Koran and preaches against both Christian teaching and against the Almoravids, in service of the caliph of Baghdad who, we are told, is the equivalent of the Christian pope (658), all details from *De rebus*. United in their efforts, Abentumet and Almohadi successfully rise up against Abohali, king of the Almoravids, enabling Abdelmon, who is behaving like a king-to-be in accordance with the predictions of Almohadi and the advice of Abentumet, to kill Abohali and become king and lord of all the kingdoms of Africa (659). The rise of Abdelmon is a foundational narrative in the truest sense, describing how he goes to Morocco to establish the seat of his sovereignty, “que era la cabeça de los moros, et puso y la siella del sennorio, et firmola y mas que nunca fuera, et mando llamar a la çipdad *metropoli*” (659). The chronicle even translates the term *metropoli* in Castilian as “mother of all cities.” Leaving Almohadi in Morocco honored as prophet and governor there, Abdelmon travels back to Spain where he is lord of all the Moors but, we are informed, not in such a way that detracts from the rights of Emperor Alfonso. When he returns to Morocco, after securing his dominion over the Arabs in Spain, Almohadi dies and is buried nearby. Here the foundational narrative moves to another level as the chronicle describes how he is revered as a saint by the Moors, who honor his shrine with offerings, prayers, and vigils. Moreover, it is from Almohadi that the Almohads take their name, according to Jiménez de Rada, “Alii tamen dicunt Almohades unito interpretari” (1987, 231):

Et del nombre deste moro Almohadi ouieron nombre *almohades* los otros moros que por este nombre fueron llamados, segunt dize ell arçobispo et las otras estorias que acuerdan con el; pero segunt que ell arçobispo departe y mas, almohades en el castellano tanto quiere dezir como “ayuntados,” porque por la predicacion daquel su moro Almohadi se ayunto toda aquella muchadumbre de los moros et se fizieron un uando que podien mas que todos los otros moros. (659)

The translation of the Arabic term into Castilian adds great strength to the foundation narrative by combining the genealogical identity of the name “Almohad” with an identity forged by an individual’s behavior. The name Almohadi both predates and later encapsulates the behavior of the individual character as a creator of unity among the Moors. It is as if the prophetic practices to which he cleaves are borne out in his very life story, as one named as “unifier,” destined to establish a unified Islamic people, who does precisely that. The pause for onomastic consideration also

provides the audience with a byword for Muslim success: unity. The triumphant foundational tale of the Almohads nevertheless takes a distinctly more ominous turn some lines later. A summary of the line of rulers following Abdelmon reaches Abenmafomat (Muhammad al-Nasir), whose distinguishing feature is that he was defeated by King Alfonso at Las Navas de Tolosa. The reference to Las Navas is qualified with “o fueron los moros tan crebantado que nunca despues cabeçca alçaron en Espanna” (659). Here the chronicle directly glosses Jiménez de Rada in stating that “este rey don Alfonso dio achaque et razon a los almohades, que eran estonces ell alteza del sennorio en Affrica, de seer esparzidos et desterrados” (659), before returning to the notion that they never again lifted their heads against Christians “nunca despues tornaron cabeçca contra cristianos” (659). The actual wording of *De rebus* is “Auenmahomath, qui in Nauis Tolose ab Aldefonso rege nobili fuit uictus; que uictoria discensionis et exterminii Almohadibus causam dedit” (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 231–32), illustrating that the corporeal metaphor is an Alfonsine addition. The image of the “cabeçca” is thus an important one for two reasons; the *metropoli* in Morocco established by Abdelmon was described as “cabeçca de los moros” (659), where *De rebus* has “sedem suam” (1987, 231), thus the chronicle reappropriates that term to establish Christian dominance over the hitherto impressive Moorish seat of power. Furthermore, it institutes a corporeal metaphor, particular to this chronicle’s vision, that converts Moorish unity into a unified narrative of failure, a single body politic reduced to submission.

The ensuing account of the battle of Las Navas, for which the main source is *De rebus*, occupies ten chapters of the *Estoria* and sees the vision of the Moors take on an ever more generalized and indiscriminate tone, and the chroniclers adopt an enumerative, exaggerated, and overstated style. Although much of the detail comes from Jiménez de Rada, who fought there, the tone of the *Estoria* differs from *De rebus*. For example, the particular corporeal imagery, used to describe the Moors as broken, their heads down, “quebrantados et aterrados, de guisa que nunca despues alçaron cabeçca” (693) recurs periodically. Triumphalist rhetoric of divine providence and assistance runs through the account, in even stronger terms than *De rebus*, mixed with praise for the political withal of Alfonso VIII. Leading up to the battle, the chronicle describes it hyperbolically as “uno de los mas grandes fechos que en el mundo contesçieran” (689), attended by people from all lands and kingdoms. Long lists are provided of the attendees, details furnished from *De rebus* (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 270): men from the Gallic kingdoms, Prelates and men of the church, Orders of Knights (Calatrava, Templar, Hospital, Santiago) as well as of the equipment and provisions carried by the armies.

The overriding impression is of a crusade; with continual allusions to the mounting Christian armies and their dedication in body and soul to “el fecho de la fe et de la ley de Cristo” (691). And indeed it is explicitly described as such, in a manner particular to this chronicle:

por todas estas tierras fuera, con el otorgamiento dell apostoligo et de la corte de Roma, predicada et pregonada cruzada por todas estas yentes; et por los grandes perdones que y eran dados, cruzaronse yentes sin cuenta destas tierras, caualleros et peones, que uinieron a esta batalla como en romeria a saluarse de sus peccados. (692)

The description of Alfonso's kingship, which is wholly positive in *De rebus*, highlights distinctive qualities not so stressed in the source, chiefly his strategic and pragmatic sense, summarized as “muy complido seso” (693) or most excellent wisdom, and his concomitant ability to inspire loyalty. Thus, Alfonso accepts with equanimity any troubles among the visiting troops, seeking to correct them peacefully and with good will. Moreover, he takes his high ranking nobles and vassals aside in council to stress the reciprocal bonds between nobles and king:

uos sodes mios naturales et sodes fijos dalgo... Et bien creet que, en el regno, el que mas sabe de sus fijos dalgo—don uienen cada unos, et quales son en sus costumbres et quales en hardiment en armas, et quales los leales a sennor... et quales son los que mas et mejor guardaron todauia nobleza de fidalguia et los sus derechos—el que mejor los sabe et mejor los conoçe, ell rey es. (693)

The concept of *naturaleza* alluded to here, and in surrounding allusions to Alfonso addressing “los sus naturales,” is defined in Alfonso X's fourth *Partida* as “an obligation which men are under to others to love and cherish them for some just reason” (IV.24.1, 2001: 990). Ten different forms of this natural obligation are further outlined in the law code, including “the relation which men sustain towards their natural lord, because they, as well as those from whom they are descended, were born and settled, and exist in the country of their said lord,” in addition to vassalage, becoming a Christian, and living ten years in a country of which one is not native (IV.24.2; 2001, 990). It is an important ethos in this charged political context of the *Estoria* because it invokes a vertical relationship of loyalty between king and vassals that operates in both directions. *Naturaleza* is synonymous with *señorío*, rule, in the case of the king and expresses his inherent, God-given power over his vassals. Inversely, it is also an obligation on the part of the people to remain loyal to their king. Moreover, *naturaleza* also binds all men, of whatever rank, to their *patria*, working on a horizontal level too.⁴²

The concept of *natureleza* not only allows Alfonso VIII to remind his men of their vassalic bonds and duty of loyalty, but it also encourages them to remain conscious of their shared relationship with the land and with the Christian faith. We see this in the king's address to men from the other kingdoms of Aragon, Portugal, Galicia, and Asturias, where he addresses them with "Amigos, todos nos somos espannoles" and invites them to consider his personal afflictions as their concerns, "que uos pese mucho del mio mal et del mio crebanto, et de uuestros cristianos" (693). Similarly, Alfonso reminds French visitors "como en la cristiandad et en la egleſia todos eramos unos, et de como ell su danno alcançaua a todos: que otrossi la su emienda et la su uengança onrra et pro serie de toda la cristiandad et de la egleſia" (693). The political utility of the concept of *natureleza* in uniting men from all kingdoms of Iberia and beyond to mount an unprecedented attack on the Islamic rulers is evident. However, the *Estoria* invests Alfonso with a Christ-like quality that takes *natureleza* to a new extreme, using the bond of Christianity to override all other ties, whether national, feudal, or vassalic. After all, promoting political unity is not exclusive to the Christians as the term "Almohads" reveals, making it incumbent upon the chroniclers to portray a deeper, more spiritual bond. This is evident in both the content of the narrative, and in the style of this section of the chronicle, the phrasing of which reveals an overridingly stoical attitude to hardship, suffering, and difficulty which contains biblical echoes. For example, Alfonso's decision to overlook the behavior of the troops is described in strikingly impassive terms, "suffrie el en paç et en manssedumbre todas aquellas cosas...et sostenielo con ygal coraçon et derecho; assi que lo que era a los otros enoyo, suffriendolo el muy bien, tornaualo el en uertud de la su nobleza et de la su grand bondad" (692). Furthermore, where men are aggrieved and unhappy, he overcomes this with a happy countenance (692); when he hears shameless words spoken he seeks redress from the speaker (692); his generosity meets the needs of those who have fallen to sad and evil ways (692), and he gives the hungry to eat (694). The overall effect is a combination of the self-abnegating Christ figure and the reparative, restorative patterning of the Beatitudes (Mt 5: 3–12). That this is far from accidental is proven by the following description of his exemplary kingship:

Et guardando el el muy noble contenent de las costumbres de los reyes, assi obraua en ell el buen coraçon et la buena alma, que aquello en que se el abaxaua en fazeſe ygal et comunal con los otros, de guisa lo faze el et en tan apuesto et ensennado contenent, que no semeaiua a los otros sino auantaia et meioria que leuaua el sobre todos, porque todos los que bondad amassen podrien tomar del exemplo dello. (692)

The model of the king who in lowering himself is raised higher above his people as an example to all is of course Christ. This parallel between Christ and Alfonso allows us to see the latter as a “king of kings,” consistent with the exaggerated style of the lead-up to the battle of Las Navas, and in readiness for regarding it as a crusade. In context, this confirms that the idea of *naturaleza* is central to the vision of the reconquest in this later version of the *Estoria*.

The heavily religious characterization of Alfonso VIII is a fitting prelude to the battle itself, which is styled as a definitive clash between the religions, albeit a one-sided one. Although the account describes the military organization of both parties, and includes relevant details of numbers, ranks, and equipment, it tends toward a use of iconography and symbol that detracts from any sense of realism, and is even stronger than that found in *De rebus*. This reaches a climax in the triumphant claim that the Christians defeat the mendacious enemies of the cross (703), and not a drop of blood could be seen on the battlefield in the end which was surely a miracle (703). The image of the cross, which does appear in *De rebus*, is more prominent in the *Estoria*, on one level connected with the burning desire of the Christians to see the battle through to death and martyrdom if necessary and, on another, constituting a powerful example of how the narrative knowingly exploits symbolism for mnemonic purposes, and moves away from the creation of history as record toward a history that is primed for entertainment and collective celebration. The Moorish king is thus depicted in a black cloak that originally belonged to Abdelmon, founder of the Almohads, and close by him is a copy of the Koran; this strong visual image, present in *De rebus* (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 271) is, however, eclipsed by prominent Christian iconography, such as when the Canon of Toledo, Domingo Pascual de Almoguera, enters the Moorish ranks bearing the cross, the “cruz uero Domini” described in *De rebus* (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 273), and emerges unscathed, while the royal standards bear the image of the Virgin Mary, described as the vanquisher and patron of Toledo and of all Spain (702). Moreover, the flight of King Amiramomelin enables mass killing by the Christians and this success is celebrated by the archbishops, bishops, and clergy crying so-called holy tears and singing praise to God with *Te Deum laudamos, te Dominum confitemur* (702), following Jiménez de Rada’s narrative (1987, 274).⁴³ The digest of the battle in the ensuing chapter moves to the first-person account of Jiménez de Rada who was present there, allowing for a striking interrogative and rhetorical style. Although the inclusion of direct witness ought to increase the sense that this is verifiable, factual detail, the first-person narrative may also point to an increased entertainment value. As Aengus Ward observes, “this technique, frequently employed in

later chronicles, may also point to the dissolution of the genre of chronicle as it had been up to that point, for the performative aspect of direct speech may hint at the privileging of history as story and therefore entertainment over history as record" (2011, 182). We see this in the way even the limits of speech are exhausted in this attempt to extol the greatness of Alfonso's triumph: "¿quien lo podrie contar, nin dezir ende al sinon todo bien et alabança de Dios, que lo fizo todo?" (703).

The final phase of the reconquest covers the victories of Fernando III in Andalusia. Foundational imagery underpins his campaign and grows with it in an attempt not just to describe his recent conquests but to lend cultural and spiritual authority to them for the present time. The impression is one of conquest as a multilayered process, one in which the actuality of seizing a strategic town prompts a burrowing down into the history of that place to appropriate it as well, like a securing of its foundations. In these deeper strata, however, lie embedded memories which cannot be displaced. This is evident in the church of Toledo when the Holy Spirit of God (721) descends on Archbishop Jiménez and the king, rousing the monarch to conquer the lands lost by Christianity to the Moors, and to place a cornerstone in the church of Santa María. That the church is in the form of a mosque characterizes this phase of the chronicle as a highly symbolic narrative about conquest and religious superiority, where layers of memory, palimpsests, reveal themselves in the very act of being subordinated. In the campaign for Jerez, an account not contained in *De rebus* but alluded to in *Chronicon mundi* (2003, 339), one might be forgiven for thinking that the chroniclers have pronounced the final word on the matter: "la cosa del mundo que mas quebranto a los moros, por que el Andalozia ouieron a perder et la ganaron los cristianos dellos, fue esta caualgada de Xerez; ca de guisa fincaron quebrantados los moros" (729).⁴⁴ This impenetrable wording is, however, preceded by the image of scores of Moors fleeing the olive groves of Jerez which furnishes a strong visual impression of what "quebranto" actually consists of, and leaves a lingering sense that to conquer means to displace something that is already there. We see this repeated when Fernando places a cross and his royal standard on the highest tower of Córdoba where the name of "el falso Mohamad" was called and praised, replacing these with calls of "¡Dios, ayuda!" and chants of *Te Deum laudamus* (733), material taken directly from *De rebus* (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 298). Similarly, the chronicle follows Jiménez de Rada (1987, 299–300) in describing how the bells taken by Almanzor from the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and hung in the mosque of Córdoba as lamps are returned to their original setting, to the delight of pilgrims who praise God for this deed (734). The chronicle lingers over the consecration of the mosque and its conversion back to

a church by Bishop Juan de Osma in terms which seek to obliterate the Islamic legacy; the description is of a cleansing, “alinpianmiento,” of the defilement of Islam, “la suziedad de Mahomad” (734), a development of Lucas de Tuy and Jiménez de Rada’s references to “spurcicia Machometi” (2003, 341; 1987, 299). However, the traces of history cannot be fully removed; Christian joy is inextricably connected with, and dependent upon, the loss that precedes restoration and the use of restorative verbs in this chapter—*tornar* (return), *restolar* (restore)—makes that clear, developing the concluding references of Lucas de Tuy, “restituens ecclesie sancti Iacobi apostoli campanas suas cum magno honore” (2003, 342), “reuersus est inclitus rex Fernandus Toletum cum uictoria et gloria magna” (341). The chroniclers even pause to explain that *restolar* means “conbralla a seruicio de Dios” (734), to recover it for the service of God.

These are quite clear, literal examples of how Christian conquest finds meaning in that which it displaces, necessarily emphasizing the former state of affairs, but the question of historical legacy takes a more subtle turn in a discourse centered around ownership and belonging. Patronymics and the idea of patronage play an important, if somewhat anachronistic, role in this phase of the chronicle, unearthing tangible evidence of former dominion only to diminish it in the act, or simply creating a historical legacy *ex nihilo*. The chroniclers linger, for example, on the death of the king of the “gazules,” explaining how this is an earlier term for the Arabs, and describing how Abenhut gave this king Alcalá in the province of Cádiz, then known (and still known) as Alcalá de los Gazules, a patronym now devoid of its potency. Conversely, we see Christian success marked with the use of new patronyms in the present time, such as when Alvar Colodro, an Arabic-speaking Christian, ascends the walls of Córdoba capturing a tower to be henceforth known as “la torre de Aluar Colodro” (730). The capture of Córdoba particularly emphasizes patronage and naming in a way that accentuates Jiménez de Rada’s detail that “in festo apostolorum Petri et Pauli a sordibus Machometi patricia ciuitas expurgatur” (1987, 298). The city is taken on the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul, early leaders and fathers of the church and, in the case of Peter, rock of the church (Mt 16.18). This unites the trope that Christian conquest is a constructive enterprise, its kings like master builders, with the technique by which identity structures are reconfigured for the present time with the weight of historical and cultural precedent. Córdoba is thus rebranded as a flagship example for the present, as “patriçia de las otras çipdades, esto es padrona et enxienplo de las otras pueblas del Andalozia,” a gloss on Jiménez de Rada’s “patriciam ciuitatem” (1987, 297), deliberately evocative of Mary’s quasi-familial role as *padrona* of Toledo and all Spain. The physical reality of Christian conquest is thus combined with

a formalized spiritual relationship between Spain and its saintly patrons, encompassing layers of sponsorship and support which seem to want to replace and overwrite previous political and cultural configurations.

Saint James of Compostela, known as Santiago, also features in this foundational context as another celestial body associated with patronage and indigenous loyalty to Christian Spain. In the battle for Jerez, the war cry of “¡Santiago!” is rewarded with his miraculous appearance in the sky with a dazzling white horse and military apparel, and provides a turning point in the campaign. With the conquest of Jaén, patronage overlaps with providence as a new term appears to describe Fernando’s success, *ventura* or fortune: “la gano con guiamiento de la su ventura buena” (746), a simplified expression of providence at work which is often combined with the political lexis of the rule of Fernando “el sennorio del noble rey don Fernando” (746). The term reappears during the contest for Seville, and Fernando’s “good fortune” appears to exasperate the Moors, leaving them “en desesperança,” and consistently thwarting both their attempts, both duplicitous and tenacious, to gain an advantage over the Christians (754). At the same time, there is a muted respect for the way the Moors of Seville resist the Christian attempts on the city. In the later stages of the conquest of Seville, the fact that the Moors retaliate against a Christian slaughter of 35 to 40 Moors, killing 30 or more Christians in return prompts the chroniclers to note that from this episode comes the old proverb “de qual dar, tal recibir” (756): you get what you give. There is also praise for the Moors as “grant conpanna de gazules, caualleros muy fuertes et de grant coraçon” (759) and they are said to be defeated here because God was not on their side, “non auien y Dios de su parte” (759). The impression that the Moors are not defeated because of military shortcoming but because of inherent religious advantage is ever clearer when Fernando orders that crosses be flown from his ships’ masts when no wind is blowing, and God comes to the aid of the Christians by raising the wind (761). Left with no alternative, the Moors hand over the *alcazar* of Seville on the Feast Day of Saint Clement, to the Christian cries of “Dios, ayuda” and Fernando’s standard flying from the tower (767). It seems that while there are circumstantial and contextual examples of Moorish valor and strength, the content and shape of the narrative at this stage is wholly overtaken by the vision of time as meaning or *kairos*, calibrated in feast days, heavenly interventions, and layered memories.

Seville represents a climactic point in the chronicle, being the last city conquered by Fernando before his death. In keeping with the tendency of the narrative at this stage to lay down its own mnemonic markers, calling attention to itself as it unfolds, the description of this place of beauty and plenty is rhetorically exaggerated, and the siege praised as “la meior

cercada que ninguna otra allen mar nin aquen mar que fallada nin vista podiesse ser" (768). This is subsequently announced as one of the greatest conquests ever seen in the entire world, "una fue esta de las mayores et mas altas conquistas que en el mundo todo fue vista nin fecha" (769). The reason for Fernando's success always comes back to the concept of God granting him "ventura" (768, 769, 700) and consistently this is connected with the idea of successful rule, *sennorio*. What is particularly interesting is how the closing sections of the chronicle put together *ventura*, *sennorio*, and *naturaleza*, illustrating that there is a clear linear relationship from God to the king, to the people:

fueras merçed que fue del Sennor, cuyo seruidor era, quel quiso onrrar et dar ventura buena, porque tan noble sennorio et tan acabado ouiese, et lo al, que es la flor de los acabamientos de todas onrras: la grant lealtad de los buenos vasallos que auie...que sabemos que por todas las partes del mundo ouieron siempre los castellanos prez sobre quantas gentes otras son, et mas seruidores de sennor...Des aqui lieue Dios el su buen prez adelante, a onrra suya et de la su naturaleza. (769)

The relationship also works horizontally, through the idea of Castile as a shared, and spiritually distinguished, territorial identity. These strong and immutable words thus seem to overcome the delicate structural intersections and thematic connections between the Gothic and Islamic narratives seen in the earlier stages of the chronicle. In their place, in this amplified version, is the impression of a master narrative of Christian success, encapsulated in three key concepts—*ventura*, *sennorio*, and *naturaleza*—in turn representative of providence, leadership, and loyalty.

Although the representation of Islamic rule undoubtedly changes to become less particular and less nuanced in these later stages of the *Estoria*, this is due not just to a different vision of reconquest, as the task of all natural inhabitants of the land rather than the Gothic monarchs, but to a different conception of *sennorio*, where seignorial rule is a freer and more fluid idea, involving a two way responsibility between ruler and people. For that the *Versión amplificada* is indebted to the Islamic history in the earlier stages of the *Estoria* where manifold lessons of interpersonal loyalty and cooperation are taught and, more broadly, to the incorporative, universalizing ethos of Alfonso X, the king's determination to make a virtue of Spain's many historical dominions, "el fecho dEspanna, que passo por muchos sennorios" (4). Seen in such a light, the passage and transference of rule from Islam to Christianity is, in Alfonsine terms, precisely that: an active transfer, not a loss. Even if the king began his chronicle with an

overarching vision of power moving from East to West, converging on Rome and his imperial dream, his work is not entirely shaped nor simplified by this vision. Instead it conveys in its structural complexities and attention to detail a deep and lasting impression of cross-cultural contact and influence, as well as an abiding interest in, and respect for, historical mutability and the need to preserve the memory of Spain's years of flux for generations to come.

CHAPTER 2

FOUNDING FICTIONS, CREATING CASTILE: THE *CRÓNICA DE VEINTE REYES*

Chronicling Castile

The *Crónica de veinte reyes*¹ is an enthralling piece of early Castilian historiography, rich in the epic legends and founding narratives that inform the emerging identity of Castile. Although an independent and idiosyncratic work, the *Crónica* has a close relationship with Alfonso X's *Estoria de España* and may even share in its spirit and intentions. The matter of this relationship has been subject to much critical attention, often focusing on which of the two works came first. Ramón Menéndez Pidal first suggested that the compilers of this chronicle, which he dated c.1360, had access to the Alfonsine material but adapted this in a highly personal way in freely resuming, translating, and correcting matters of chronology (1898). Henry Lang (1926), Theodore Babbitt (1936), and José Gómez Pérez (1965) all thought that the *Crónica* predated the Alfonsine project. Luis F. Lindley Cintra, in his introduction to his edition of the *Crónica Geral de 1344*, dated the *Crónica* to the end of the thirteenth century, rendering it contemporaneous with the reign of Alfonso X, or shortly thereafter, by showing that it was used as a source for the *Crónica de 1344*. Diego Catalán took Pidal and Cintra's work further by proposing that the *Crónica de veinte reyes* was a reworking of the *Estoria de España* by an individual with a critical eye who sought to correct and perfect the Alfonsine work (1962, 188). In subsequent articles, he proposed that the *Crónica* was connected to the *Crónica general vulgata* (*Tercera crónica general*), and that both derived from a *Versión crítica* of the *Estoria de España* (1963a, 1963b). His groundbreaking investigations have been continued by Inés Fernández-Ordóñez who establishes the work as part of a family of manuscripts from the *Versión crítica* which represent a single stage of reworking of the *Estoria de España* (1993, 113–14). The chronicle exists in the

form of 12 manuscripts, dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that together cover the reign of Fruela II, king of Asturias, to the death of Fernando III (De la Campa 2003, 144). For the purposes of consistency and length, in this chapter I refer to one of those manuscripts, X-i-6 of the library of El Escorial, Madrid which is the oldest manuscript, dating back to the first third of the sixteenth century, possibly around 1530 (Hernández Alonso et al. 1991, 56). It is also preserved in an excellent physical state, on luxurious paper, and presents a fascinating and highly detailed text extending from the sixth year of the reign of Alfonso IV of León, successor of Fruela, to the death of Fernando III.²

Despite the *Crónica's* relationship with Alfonsine historiography, and specifically the *Versión crítica*, the work presents a unique and distinctive picture of Castilian history. Dwelling only on the reconquest, unlike the *Estoria de España* which begins the history of Spain in antiquity, it is much more focussed on the idea and identity of Castile, both in terms of structure and content. Unlike the *Estoria*, whose focus on empire and dominion enables other peninsular kings, such as the Leonese kings, to have their own rubric, the *Crónica* imparts news from the peninsular kingdoms through the chronological lens of the Castilian monarchs, starting in the era of the Judges of Castile, and ending with the death of the great Fernando III. Its vision of Castile is governed by a rhetoric of expansion, “ensanchar a Castilla,” which bridges the work, from the rise of Fernán González as count of Castile (83), to the death of King Fernando who “ensanchó su rreyno de grandes tierras que non solía ante aver” (345). Owing in part to the narrower chronological focus, but chiefly to the particular vision of history of the chronicler concerned, the *Crónica* demonstrates a style of historical writing that is notably discursive and dialogic. At the same time, the abiding concern to delve deep into the process of expansion of Castile makes for a slower, more measured, and detailed pace. One of the key examples of this is the attention paid by the *Crónica* to epic legends, which receive here the most extensive treatment in all the Alfonsine material, rendering it a showcase of the most important foundational tales in the popular memory. The heavy use of epic material, together with the animated style of the chronicle and its propensity to bring events alive through dialogue and detail, raises important questions about the chronicle's relationship with the criteria of truthfulness and accuracy that informed and shaped medieval historical writing, and indeed invites us to reflect on what these criteria actually consisted of. In this chapter, I hope to illustrate that part of this chronicle's innovative narrative quality, and its departure from its Alfonsine relations, lies in its close attention to, and reinterpretation of, historical “truth.” It is in this context—a framework in which attention is repeatedly drawn to matters

of veracity, plausibility, and textual authority—that the representation of the 711 conquest and the characters connected with it needs to be understood.

Although an obvious Castilian focus prevails in the work, it is remarkably attentive to the Islamic presence in the Peninsula after the 711 conquest, to the extent that it challenges historical preconceptions about the relationships between Moors and Christians in a fashion that is even more detailed and engaging than the *Estoria de España*. César Hernández Alonso describes how “una lectura cuidadosa de muchos pasajes relacionados con los árabes nos permitirán modificar considerablemente las concepciones heredadas e históricamente fijadas de las relaciones entre árabes y cristianos en la España medieval, especialmente la anterior a Fernando III” (1991, 63). This close interest in the Moors works on a grand scale, in a consistent delivery of information pertaining to their dynastic history, their successes and failures, and prominent battles in which they are involved. However, it is also found in more subtle contexts too, such as the discussion of Arabic titles, the inclusion of Arabic chronologies, and even details about the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of Islamic figures, such as the reflections of King Ysem, reported in direct speech, on where he would like to be buried (138). Although the overall impression one gains from the chronicle is of a politicized account concerned with the foundation of Castilian identity, it quickly becomes apparent that the Moors are not, as José Fradejas Lebrero contends, “siempre subordinados en su relación con Castilla” (in Hernando Alonso et al. 1991, 33), but essential to the narrative of the developing nation. Conflict between Moors and Christians is a consistent theme of the work but the manner in which Islamic characters constitute an integral part of the historical narrative—and one that departs from strictly factual record at that—urges reconsideration of their role in the wider political panorama. I contend that Islamic figures are an essential part of the unique foundational ethos of the *Crónica*, helping to shape and define the style and content of this narrative of the creation of Castile in terms which distinguish it from its Alfonsine counterparts, and which raise important questions about the meaning of truth within the historiographical narrative.

Epic, Envy, and Enmity

One of the most prominent sources of the *Crónica*, alongside Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *De rebus Hispaniae* (1243), and Lucas de Tuy's *Chronicon mundi* (1236), is popular epic poetry, or *cantares de gesta*. The chronicle makes frequent reference to these songs, often comparing them to the

written accounts, or so-called *estorias verdaderas*, which are ostensibly preferred when there is any discrepancy in fact: “Algunos dizen en sus cantares que avía el rey don Ferrando un fijo de ganancia que era cardenal en Roma . . . Mas esto non lo fallamos en las estorias de los maestros que los escripturas compusieron, e por ende tenemos que non fue verdat” (173). The criteria of empirical truth as it might be understood today is not the sole concern of the chroniclers, however. As Aengus Ward puts it, in the medieval chronicle “the question of accuracy and conformity to truth seems to be less important than the preservation of memory, both in the present and for posterity” (2011, 14). This is evident in the determination to include alternative, popular versions alongside written sources, with a degree of reluctance to concede authority to the latter: “E commo quier que ésta sea la verdat que estos onrrados omnes dizen, fallamos en otros lugares e en el cantar que dizen del rrey don Ferrando” (173). Fradejas Lebrero describes this as a paradox, whereby the chronicle does not confer absolute authority on the *juglares*, but neither can it dispense with their songs entirely, referring to it as “un magno *cancionero épico*, con la particularidad de haber seleccionado, con rarísimas excepciones, los poemas de más fuerte historicidad y verosimilitud” (in Hernando Alonso et al. 1991, 37). It seems to me to be less a paradox and more clear evidence that chronicle discourse recognized different degrees of accuracy. Chris Given-Wilson outlines three different ways in which medieval chroniclers understood accuracy: first, conformity to fact (exactitude, precision, actuality, correct chronology and genealogy, authentic names, dates, and places); second, they believed that the “universal truths” to be deduced from any specific episode were just as important as the need to provide an incontestably factual account; third, there was the degree to which “factual” truth was perceived to be plausible, the extent to which it corresponded to other comparable truths (2004, 2–3). Truth was the category of trustworthiness they claimed for themselves, the certitude that their evidence and evaluation of it was reliable (Given Wilson 2004, 6). Marta Lacomba deftly summarises this process, “La chronique est moins récit des événements véritables que véritable récit des événements” (2008, 231). If the epic songs are not *estorias verdaderas* in the strictly factual sense that does not mean, therefore, that they cannot lend universal truth not plausibility to the chronicle. If the general populace did not believe them to be literal truth, it does not mean that those aspects of human behavior emphasized within them did not hold universal significance nor appear to be eminently plausible, and were therefore worthy of being sung and repeated as if they were historical fact. Hayden White’s description of narrative history as legitimately something other than a scientific account

of the events of which it speaks, goes some way to confirming why the chroniclers include this material:

In the historical narrative the systems of meaning production particular to a culture or society are tested against the capacity of any set of "real" events to yield to such systems. If these systems have their purest, most fully developed, and formally most coherent representations in the literary or poetic endowment of modern secularized cultures, this is no reason to rule them out as imaginary constructions. To do so would entail the denial that literature and poetry have anything valid to teach us about reality. (1987, 44)

It is in this context of multiple degrees of accuracy, and a greater value placed on that which "could-be-true," and has universal human value that the foundational role of Islamic figures within the epic material contained in the *Crónica* needs to be understood.

Close reading of the epic legends reveals that Muslim characters particularly emphasize the matter of envy among the Christians, an issue which runs counter to the cooperative spirit of an emerging Castile. The first of the epic legends to appear in the chronicle is that of Fernán González, first count of Castile, which starts in the first book and ends with the death of the count in the fourth, thus covering a significant expanse of the early sections of the chronicle. This is fitting given its strong foundational content, Fernán's rise to prominence as an elected count, then his successful campaigns to recover land from the Moors, culminating in battle with the fearsome Almanzor (Ibn Abi Amir). This is the most Christian of all the epic narratives, and in this spirit contains strong invectives against the Moors as religious enemies, including a description of them using diabolical practices to terrify the Christians, such as conjuring a vision of a raging serpent in the sky (99). However, the depiction of Islamic figures is closely tied into the theme of rivalries between the Christians and their role even in this most pious of epic narratives is certainly not confined to that of the enemy, or the maligned "other." Instead, they are represented with detail and nuance, including extensive use of dialogue, and makeup part of a broader picture of shifting and uncertain loyalties where Christian nobles are just as likely to pose a threat to the count and to Castile. This unsteady and ever-changing field of loyalties is epitomized by the opening scene of the epic material, a surprising one in which Fernán González and a noble called Diego Núñez rebel against King Ramiro of León by advising a Moorish king called Açeypa on how to conquer Christian land, culminating in

the seizure of Salamanca, Ledesma, Ribas, Los Baños, Peña Gusende, Alhandega, and many other castles and strongholds (82). The chronicle reports this Moorish-Christian liaison without alarm: "estos dos rricos omnes que deximos alçáronse contra el rrey don Ramiro e ayudauan aquel rrey moro" (82), although the two men are eventually imprisoned in the tower of León and the castle of Gordón and forced to swear to become Ramiro's loyal vassals. The threat of Christian rebellion haunts Ramiro and as much of his reign seems to be devoted to establishing concord and cooperation among his Christian nobles "en asosegar su rregno e meter en concordia" (82), as it does fighting the Moors. By contrast, the election of Fernán González as count of Castile is undertaken in a mood of harmonious and universal agreement, "allegáronse todos los omnes e los caualleros e los çibdadanos de Castilla e alçaron conde a Fernand Gonçales, fijo de Gonçalo Nunes, ca era ya gran cauallero a aquella sazón e tomáronle por señor. E este Fernand Gonçales era mucho amado de todos los ricos omnes e de toda la otra gente" (83). Fernán's affinity with the people contrasts with Ramiro's pique that a count has been elected without his royal mandate but, in the face of an attack from Açeypa, the king is forced to swallow his pride and accept Fernán's help; after a successful defeat of the Moors, the king issues his royal approval of Fernán's new role (83–84). From this point onward, attacks from the Moors increase in severity, with Aben Ahia, king of Zaragoza, and Abd al-Rahmān, king of Córdoba, both raiding Ramiro's lands. This is, however, to no avail as Ramiro successfully defends his land and dies triumphant.

The shaky start between Fernán and Ramiro highlights how the Moors are often depicted as intermediaries in relations between Christian parties, used as incentive to join forces at times of pressing threat, or as confirmation of severed alliances when enlisted to help attack fellow Christians. Their ability to exploit Christian discord is also evident. Even though Ramiro's reign stabilizes, the narrative maintains the impression that relationships between Christians are at best precarious, while the Moors are a constant background threat, ready to step into the breach left by the retraction of loyalty. An ominous proleptic reference to the rise of Almanzor, implanted in Ramiro's otherwise victorious reign, serves as a reminder that Islamic success is contingent on Christian behavior: "E en esto se leuantó en Córdoua un moro muy poderoso que auía nonbre por su aráuigo Mahomad ybne Abdenhamir e por sobrenombre Almançor. Este fue muy guerrero e muy contrallo a los christianos, asy como adelante oyredes en las estorias" (84). This is later confirmed when the Moors receive word of "grand desamor," great enmity, between King Ordoño and Fernán González and duly besiege San Esteban de Gormaz (90).

This intrinsic connection between the two groups, Christian and Moorish, at the level of political loyalties centers upon Fernán. Throughout the narrative, he plays a dual role, waging war against both Christian and Moorish parties alike in defense of Castilian interests: “so entrado en enemistad con moros e con christianos, porque los rreyes de España de los moros oblidaron a ti, su señor, e tornáronse sus vasallos... e finqué yo solo entre todos desanparado. E quando vieron que asy me apartaron dellos, fuy de todos malquisto” (98). The fact that Fernán does not distinguish between Christians and Moors, instead regarding the behavior of the Christians as supportive of Moorish interests, means that the Moors are not represented as fundamentally different or despicable. Instead it is Fernán who finds himself on the outside of the group—“despanparado,” “me apartaron dellos”—substantially altering the political dynamic. Fernán’s isolation is crucial to the foundational aspect of his story. His remoteness from absolute support, either Christian or Moorish, means that when he does fight the Moors his deeds shine through as the epitome of single-minded heroism and prompt reflection on the nature of good leadership. Fernán’s dealings with Almanzor are thus an important means of defining and defending the ethos of earned leadership on which the story of his counthood, and the independence of Castile, rests. Almanzor is singled out in the chronicle too, as the most powerful Moor from across the sea (88), as equivalent to an emperor among the Moors (90), and as Fernán’s most desired opponent, who will best test his mettle, “yo este día cobdiçiaua de verme con Almançor en el campo, e veer cómo sabedes los castellanos guardar señor” (90). In the case of this exceptional opponent, Fernán’s campaign is backed by divine support, evident in the prophecy of a hermit that he will defeat the Moor, and in the appearance of San Millán in a dream to tell him likewise (98). Almanzor also regards the clash between them in a similarly spiritual fashion, returning to North Africa to broadcast an appeal for help against the Christians. The *Crónica* describes this as him “preaching,” in a manner reminiscent of crusading rhetoric: “mandó predicar por toda la tierra quel viniesen ayudar contra los christianos de España. Los moros quando oyeron la pedricaçión que andaua por la tierra, viniéronse a él como a perdón” (98).³ Rather than creating an “us” against “them” situation, the individuality of Fernán and Almanzor means that they are not to be automatically regarded as representatives of Christianity versus Islam, but rather as individuals and leaders in their own right, centers of loyalty for their respective peoples, and foils to one another, whose contest sets the very highest of stakes, hence the appeals for super-human support.

That Almanzor is not demonized, nor dehumanized, is proven by the chronicler’s inclusion of his direct speech in the same context as that

of Fernán. The whole matter of incorporating first-person dialogue in a chronicle places the question of the truth status of historiographical narrative to the fore; this is not the result of direct witness on the part of the chroniclers but rather a reconstruction of a plausible and eminently entertaining dialogue between the two characters which, for all its factual deficiencies, can still be read as instructive, and on more than one level. In the midst of battle, the Christian hero frequently utters affirmatory and sometimes interrogatory statements, alternating between displays of confidence in himself, “vençidos los avemos e yo só el conde Fernán Gonçalves” (100) and crippling doubt in his God, “¿porqué me fallesçes tú?” (100). Almanzor is depicted in a similar questioning mood; the recovery of the Christians following the appearance of Saint James prompts him to ask, “¿Qué puede esto ser o dónde rrecreçe tan grand poder al conde?” (100). On the one hand, his speech serves to exalt the phenomenal power garnered by Fernán from the heavens but it also reinforces his own identity as a strong and credible leader in the sense that even the patterns of his speech mimic those of his opponent, highlighting intrinsic similarities between them, not least shared insecurities over the stability of their own positions. This is borne out by the fact that Fernán never vanquishes Almanzor and, after the count’s death, the Moor is praised as an energetic and popular leader: “Tanto amauan los moros e preçiauan a este Almançor por estos esffuerços que fazia que por muchas vegadas le quisieran dar el rreyno” (117).

It is notable that while the principal Moorish opponent, Almanzor, serves to reinforce the qualities of leadership and individual strength that underpin Fernán’s heroism, prominent Christian figures detract from this ethos of individual strength and achievement, thereby emerging as the true enemies of the count. There is a continual involvement of the Moors in inter-Christian relationships, often to subtly ironic effect, both because of the extent to which the Moors are demonstrably needed by the Christians, and intricately involved in their affairs, and because of the chronicle’s ability to convey this at the most subtle, and even potentially quite absurd, levels. For example, when Fernán sends a message to King Sancho Abarca asking him to amend the wrongs he has done the Castilians (not least by liaising with the Moors) or be punished for them, the king believes that Fernán’s recent success against the Moors has gone to his head, “mucho es él agora loçano porque esta vez vençió a los moros” (91), rejecting any possibility of a rapprochement on that rather petulant basis, and overlooking the vulnerable position in which this enmity places him. In a similar vein, King Sancho of León asks for Fernán’s help when presented with the threat of another attack from Almanzor but is offended when Fernán only wants to bring his

own men as accompaniment in the fight; this leads to terrible strife between the Castilians and Leonese (105) that jeopardises his position further. The case of Sancho el Gordo is another ironic case in point; the Leonese nobles and Fernán are in agreement to expel the king but the latter is advised to go to Abd al-Rahmān for advice on slimming down. He returns "cured" of his obesity with a Moorish army provided by Abd al-Rahmān to recover his lost kingdom, which he achieves, also managing to pacify any lingering unrest (97–98); in this case the Moor is instrumental in the King's physical and political turnaround. Further ironic intersections come in subtler form, such as the fact that the precious garment used to adorn the body of the count of Tolosa after Fernán González kills him was that won in victory against Almanzor (92–93); moreover, it is Almanzor's horse that King Sancho covets when Fernán appears with it at court, and which, together with a fine hawk, leads to him accruing so much interest on the items that he is forced to pay with the independence of Castile, "e perdió por ellos el señorío del condado de Castilla" (101).

In such terms it is difficult to read the depiction of the Moors as a denigratory and dichotomous one; instead they appear to be used in this epic context, both overtly and subtly, to direct attention to the source of true political rifts and vulnerability: the incessant strife between Christian parties. It is no surprise, then, that the epic narrative tails off with a very praiseworthy account of the death of Abd al-Rahmān, into a digression on the evils of *envidia*, pronounced by Fernán in response to an unwelcome summons to the Leonese Courts. Fernán's reasoning is that it is better for the Castilians to attend the court than be denounced as disloyal and as traitors; he muses too that all their good deeds would be forgotten through a human tendency to let one bad deed overshadow one hundred good ones. The root cause of all this is envy: "E esto todo nasce de envidia. Nunca nació omne en el mundo que fuese a todos omnes comunal, e por ende dizen a las vezes del grand mal, bien, e del bien, grand mal" (106). The focus remains internally directed on Fernán's subsequent comments on the importance of a good counselor, and the idea of envy reappears in his warning that "algunos son que en lugar de consejeros son invidiosos" (107). The fact that such close attention to sources of internal discord comes at the end of the epic narrative illustrates how important the concept of loyalty is to Fernán, and undoubtedly to the chroniclers too, in this foundational context as a distinguishing feature of Castilian identity. The evil men do, it seems, lives on: "E, amigos, sobre todo ha menester que guardades lealtad, ca maguer que muere la cara, la maldad que ome faze non muere e fincan sus parientes con mal heredamiento" (107).

If envy is prominent in the Fernán González narrative, it is the absolute driving force of the epic tale of the *Siete Infantes de Lara*.⁴ The legend is thought to be the oldest of Spain's epic songs, composed around 1000 (Deyermund 1987, 75). It is certainly the most violent and disturbing, being a true epic of vengeance, distinctive for a clannish and private nature that distances it from the usual matter of epic poetry, royal lineages, heroic feats and so forth.⁵ This complicated tale demands a brief summary. It begins at the marriage festivities of Ruy Velásquez, a Castilian warrior, and Lambra, his noble bride, which are attended by Ruy's sister Sancha, her husband Gonzalo Gustioz of Salas, and their seven sons. The youngest son, Gonzalo González, kills Lambra's cousin Álvaro Sánchez when a competition to knock down the *tablado* takes the spirit of rivalry too far.⁶ A sequence of events ensues in which Lambra sends a servant to throw a bloody cucumber at Gonzalo as an attack on his honor. When the servant is killed while sheltering under her cloak, Lambra is outraged and appeals to her husband to avenge the two murders. He devises a complicated plot to do so, sending Gonzalo Gustioz unwittingly to Córdoba with a letter for Almanzor which asks that the bearer of the letter be beheaded. Almanzor puts Gustioz in prison instead where he falls in love with the Moorish noblewoman sent to serve him and they conceive a child. Ruy Velásquez also advises Almanzor to send an army with Kings Viara and Galve to Almenar where the seven Infantes and their tutor Muño Salido are lured into a battle against the Moors where they are heavily outnumbered and eventually beheaded one by one by a Moor and their heads taken to Córdoba, where Gonzalo Gustioz is required by Almanzor to identify them. The Moorish woman comes to comfort Gonzalo and tells him of her pregnancy. The son Mudarra is born and raised by Almanzor as a superb knight, and returns to take revenge of Ruy Velásquez, killing him with a single blow of the sword, and later burning Lambra to death.

While Christian clan rivalries are at the heart of this tale, there is substantial involvement of Arabic characters, in particular Almanzor, which builds on the impression from the Fernán González legend that the representation of Islamic figures in this chronicle is closely tied into the matter of understanding and articulating Christian enmity. While Almanzor's prominent role is not original to this chronicle, he does seem to come to life here in a way that heightens the emotional capital of the narrative by acting as a catalyst in the tragic denouement exacted by Ruy Velásquez, but also by arousing pathos through displays of reserve and empathy toward the disconsolate Gonzalo Gustioz. When Ruy Velásquez first writes to Almanzor, the incentive presented to the Moorish leader is occupation of Christian lands, demonstrating how the rivalry surpasses

any greater loyalty to the land, "Ca si uos éstos ouíeredes muertos, averedes la tierra de los christianos a vuestra voluntad, ca estos nos son los más contrarios caualleros que otros ningunos que y sean e en que más esffuerço tienen el conde Garçi Ferrandes" (123). Despite this lure, Almanzor's response is commendably circumspect and epitomises the balanced approach that he takes throughout the tale, and which contributes to his rather positive portrayal in the chronicle as a whole. On reading the letter, Almanzor immediately rips it up and the chronicle reports in direct speech his conversation with Gonzalo Gustioz in which he tells him of the treacherous content of the letter, and of his intentions to imprison him instead of beheading him. Almanzor's clement treatment of Gustioz, in not imprisoning him, and in sending an honorable Moorish woman to serve him, and the frankness he shows him, as accentuated by the chronicle's direct verbal report, initiates his rather ambivalent role in the tale, as both the agent of Christian downfall and an empathizer with Gustioz's predicament.

Almanzor does send the substantial armies of Viara and Galve to Almenar but the episode of the Infantes coming up against tens of thousands of Moors is related in such a fashion as to stress the duplicity and deceit of Ruy Velásquez, rather than any sense of exploitation of their situation on the part of Almanzor. When Muño Salido detects ill auguries, it is Ruy's "palabras falagueras, pero falsas," "palabras... con engaño e con falsedat" (124) which seek to persuade him otherwise. Even when the considerable Moorish armies appear on the horizon, Ruy tries to downplay the threat, before going over to the Moorish camp in secret to incite the Moors to fight the Infantes and their meagre troops (124). Ruy's refusal to help the Infantes fight strikes the reader as a more deplorable act than the readiness of the Moors to fight for what is presented to them as an easy victory on Christian territory. The impression that this narrative is not intended to encourage a negative view of the Moors is confirmed by Almanzor's reaction to the inconsolable Gonzalo Gustioz when he identifies the heads of his seven sons. Gonzalo pours out anguished tears before the Moorish leader and recounts the good deeds of each of the sons before taking a sword from the palace wall and killing seven noble Moors. The act prompts the attending Moors to seize him but Almanzor, out of sheer pity for the Christian, orders that nobody do him harm, "con duelo que ouo dél mandó que ninguno non le fiziese mal" (126). The killing of the Moors leaves Gonzalo and Almanzor in a level position and dissipates attention from the Moorish warriors who beheaded the Infantes, allowing it to remain focussed on the Christian treachery that brought them to that position. The fact that no grudge nor enmity exists between Gonzalo and Almanzor is proven by the Moor's additional

demonstration of empathy in releasing the prisoner, and Gonzalo's grateful response:

Almançor le dixo: "Gonçalo Gustios, he gran duelo de ti por este quebranto que vino e suéltote por ende de la prisión en que yazes, e darte he lo que ouieres de menester e las cabeças de tus fijos e vete para tu tierra." Gonçalo Gustios le dixo: "Almançor, Dios vos lo agradezca el bien que me dezides e la merçed que me fazedes." (126)

The Moorish noblewoman with whom Gonzalo conceives Mudarra is also an important source of consolation, contributing to this positive view of the Moors. It is Almanzor's clemency that brings her and Gonzalo into contact in the first place, and she is shown to comfort the Christian by telling him that she lost 12 sons in battle in a single day but never lost her strength and courage as a result, nor should he do so, "non dexé de me conortar por eso, nin de me esforçar" (126). The Moorish woman's impressive fortitude undoubtedly comes through in the child Mudarra, whose knightly pedigree is unrivalled, meaning that the source of revenge for Gonzalo is actually partly of Moorish blood. Just as the Moors were implicated in the treachery of Ruy Velásquez, so too, through Mudarra, are they involved in his death, and later that of Lambra, thus underlining the extent to which they play a central part in the narrative of Christian enmity but are actually exempt from the connotations of treachery and cowardice this brings. The *Crónica* seems to struggle, however, with the idea of Mudarra's Moorish blood, describing how his father baptizes him a Christian, "tornólo christiano, ca antes moro era" (128). David Pattison observes that this detail is not contained in the *Estoria de España* (1983, 47), thus it seems likely to be a deliberate addition to remove any unease about Mudarra's ethnicity. Nevertheless, Mudarra's vengeance over Ruy and Lambra does take place before this happens, confirming that he feels an intrinsic loyalty to his Christian kin despite his Moorish blood and upbringing and, by extension, that he removes the Moorish characters from any associations with the insidious behavior of the Christians.

While the narrative of Mudarra's birth and rise to prominence unfolds, Almanzor's military triumphs form the substance of much of the later stages of this narrative. His characterization, oscillating between empathy toward the predicament of Gonzalo, and ruthless attacks on Christian strongholds in León, Castile, and Galicia is somewhat mixed but cast in an ultimately positive light. The first waves of attacks see Almanzor returning to Córdoba rich, honorable, and proud of his spoils. It is when he reaches Santiago de Compostela, however, that his incursions take a potentially more negative turn. The chronicle describes how he takes

the bells from the church to hang as lamps in the mosque of Córdoba, and how he then sets fire to the church (127). Before he leaves the land, God takes revenge on him by inflicting his troops with life-threatening diarrhoea, killing his men and forcing him back to Córdoba. Although it might seem that the chronicle is adopting an intolerant attitude toward the Moor, the accompanying explanation shows that he plays a more sophisticated and important role in the Christian narrative as an agent of God's wrath:

Agora sabed aquí que bien avía doze años pasados que sienpre diera guerra este Almanzor a los christianos, e sienpre les quebrantara las tierras, e les fazía mucho mal e mucho daño, e metiera muchos lugares so el su señorío, e sienpre vençía e tornaua honrrado. E esto non era por él, mas por la saña de Dios, que era muy grande, sobre los christianos, ca después quel prez de los godos fue amortiguado en España, luego fue la iglesia de Dios despreçiada, todas leuaron los moros el thesoro della. E el quebranto que fue en el tienpo del reyy don Rrodrigo rrecudió agora otra vez en tienpo deste Almanzor. (127)

The comparison between the days of Almanzor and those of Rodrigo, last Visigothic king, implies that the Moor is to be understood as a symbol of the punishment of Christian sin, like the first conquering Moors of 711. The term "quebranto" is used to describe both Almanzor's devastating attacks and the context of the initial conquest and is a fitting one, doubling up as an expression of both territorial havoc and the fracturing effects of internally engendered, destructive behaviors like rivalry and envy. The context in which we are to interpret Almanzor's characterization is therefore wholly epic; internal sin on the part of the Christians—here rivalry and envy rather than the lust of Rodrigo—has once again brought about political downfall, proving that the *Siete Infantes* narrative is perhaps not quite so private and clannish as it first appears, but wholly connected with the national panorama. Only in the context of broken internal loyalties can Almanzor achieve success, as proven by the way the chronicle interweaves the chapters describing his conquests with the unfolding tale of Mudarra's rise, retaining a connection with the clan rifts that form the earlier substance of the tale. Almanzor is therefore part of a cyclical vision of repeated Christian sin, followed by political downfall that forms the master narrative of this and other Spanish epic tales. His death as reported in the chronicle is thus finite in its immediate context but, at another level, indicative of the end of this latest cycle of sin and punishment, before another one begins.

The theme of kin rivalry continues in the epic tale of Fernando I's division of his kingdom. The fratricidal wars between the sons of King

Fernando offered the *juglares* an attractive theme of which to sing and the popularity of this epic narrative is evident in the *Crónica's* account. In this version, Fernando is gravely ill and summons his offspring that he might divide up his kingdom among them, in order to rule out the danger of conflict between them after his death. He gives Sancho, his oldest son, the principal kingdom of Castile; Alfonso is given León, and García Galicia. The narrative relates the refusal of Sancho to accept the division, and the arrival of the Cid with Cardinal Fernando, the King's other son, to question why the King's daughter Urraca has been left out of the division of the kingdom. Urraca appears in person to complain and is eventually given Zamora. The King's nephew, Nuño Ferrandez, also claims a share, and wins the Kingdom of Navarre from Sancho, although the chronicler casts doubt on this point (177). The narrative then goes back to the King's deathbed where his sons are forced to uphold his wishes and abide by the division of the kingdoms, which they duly promise (177). Compared with other chronicle accounts, in particular that of the *Estoria de España*, the *Crónica* makes a decidedly long and developed task of reporting the dissent that follows Fernando's decision. This results in part from a desire to revise and reconcile all the available source materials, both popular and learned, with a judicious eye, in keeping with the notion that truth is synonymous with trustworthiness in historiographical writing (Given-Wilson 2004, 6). Reference is made, for example, to a possible illegitimate son, Cardinal Fernando (173):

Algunos dizen en sus cantares que avía el rrey don Ferrando un fijo de ganancia que era cardenal en Rroma e legado de toda España e abad de Sant Fagunde e arçobispo de Santiago e prior de Monte Aragón...Mas esto non lo fallamos en las estorias de los maestros que las escripturas compusieron, e por ende tenemos que non fue verdat, ca sy quier non es derecho que un omne tantas dignidades touiese. (173)

The chronicler goes into some detail about his purported church honors before pronouncing that all this is not true, given that it does not exist in authoritative written sources. This indication of a concern with trustworthiness is then combined with a view to plausibility, that it could not possibly be correct that one man would possess so many accolades. Despite these doubts, however, the popular notion of a decorated illegitimate son, whether he existed or not, does possess a "truth" of a different sort in the form of the more universal, or secondary, truth that the king's relationship with his offspring is one of competing claims and loyalties. In this way, factual or not, this detail confirms the broader meaning of this narrative. The question of truth works both ways. When the chronicle

comes to the matter of whether King Fernando's daughters Urraca and Elvira are given any land, the authority of Jiménez de Rada and Lucas de Tuy in stating that they are is sidelined in favor of the *cantares*: "E commo quier que ésta sea la verdat que estos onrrados omnes dizen, fallamos en otros lugares e en el cantar que dizen del rrey don Ferrando, que en castillo de Cabeçón yaziendo él doliente partió él los rreynos, asy commo deximos, e non dio entonçes nada a doña Urraca" (173). Once again, the provision of alternative models of "truth" serves not just to show the chronicler's scrupulous workings, but to reinforce the idea that the narrative is fundamentally concerned with kin conflict and rivalry. Pattison confirms that "the *CVR* may be said to represent a more critical use of source materials than the *PCG* (*Primera crónica general*), and an unwillingness always to prefer the popular source to the learned ones" (1983, 111). Louis Chalon makes a similar point: "il choisit dans chaque cas particulier la version que lui paraît la plus plausible" (1976, 346). The result of this striving for plausibility and trustworthiness is that the epic tale is frontloaded with the theme of internal conflict in a way that is much more detailed and emphatic than other chronicles of the period, and which once again calls our attention to the epic concern with civil strife, and the way this is connected with Moorish figures.

Just before King Fernando dies, Arias Gonzalo makes an unnerving prophecy: "E señor, bien sé yo que la guerra que vos solíades dar a moros que se tornará agora sobre nos, e matarnos hemos parientes con parientes, e asy seremos todos astragados los mezquinos d'España" (177). The notion that energies spent on fighting the Moors are to be channelled instead into internecine war is not an unrealistic prospect given the two historical precedents offered by the chronicle: that the Kings of Spain, and more directly Sancho, share the "cruel blood" of the Goths and a propensity to kill their own brothers (177), and that conflict has been rife among Fernando's children for some seven years already during their father's lifetime, to the extent that not a day of peace has descended between them during that time, "tan grande fue el desamor que entrellos entró por cobdiçia de ser cada uno dellos señor de los otros que de mayor nunca omne oyó dezir, ca un día solamente nunca avía paz unos contra otros" (177). Some chapters later, in the midst of describing Sancho's fight with Alfonso, the chronicler comes up with another rationale for the internal strife, this time comparing their behavior to Moorish practice: "E la suerte que los moros solían auer de matarse hermanos con hermanos cayó entonçes en los christianos" (185). The fratricidal wars are thus linked in abstract terms with the Moors, through the suggestion that this type of conflict resembles Moorish practice, and through Arias Gonzalo's comment on the degeneration of warrior behavior. From closer quarters,

the *Crónica* also illustrates that the Moors are intermediaries in the relationship between Christian parties in the form of vital military support and alliance, and can even form the focus of Christian enmity. Sancho, the most belligerent of the brothers, is depicted as urging his kin to help him fight the Moors, which meets with an uncooperative response (181). Indeed, their reluctance to assist him in this enterprise directly fosters hostility between them and, according to the *Crónica*, leads him to focus on taking their inheritance as part of his campaign for territorial expansion, “El rrey don Sancho, auiedo muy grand querella de sus hermanos porquel non quisieran yr ayudar contra los moros, trabajóse en cómo los guerrea por les tomar los rreynos que les diera su padre” (182). When Sancho sets his sights on García’s land, meanwhile, it is to the Moors that his brother turns for support against Sancho:

Dixo el arçobispo don Rrodrigo que ouieron entonçes su acuerdo de yr pedir ayuda a los moros e que se fue el rrey don García con trezientos caualleros, que dixo a los moros que sacasen hueste contra su hermano el rrey don Sancho e que él les faría dar el rreyno de León e el suyo mesmo, e los moros rrespondiéronle asy: “Quando eras rrey e tenías la tierra en poder non podiste defender tu rreyno, e, agora, ¿cómo vos nos lo dariades pues que lo ha perdido?” Con todo esto diéronle entonçes muchos dones e onrráronle asaz bien. (184)

The Moors’ blunt response, identifying García’s attempt to wager with territory he was not even able to hold on to, has a sententious ring to it but their decision to confer gifts and honors on him notwithstanding indicates the political advantage that this liaison can bring them. It is Alfonso, however, who has the most extended relationship with the Moors in this section. When Alfonso is imprisoned by Sancho, his sister Urraca pleads his release on the condition that he leave the kingdom for Moorish lands or become a monk at Sahagún in León. Alfonso chooses the former and is received with great honor by Almemón, ruler of Toledo. The Moor’s welcome of the Christian exile could not be warmer:

Almemón, rrey de Toledo, pagóse tanto del rrey don Alfonso quel amó tanto como sy fuese su fijo, e diól muy grant auer e fízole mucha onrra, e juróle e fízole pleito que sienpre le onrrase e lo aguardase mientra que con él fuese. Este mesmo pleito fizo él al rrey don Alfonso. E el rrey Almemón fízole luego grandes palaçios e buenos çerca del alcáçar. (186)

The reference to Almemón loving him like a son creates an ironic connection with the devastated kin relations Alfonso has left behind. Indeed, in the midst of ongoing Christian enmity, the chapters describing the

relationship between Alfonso and Almemón provide an exemplary display of loyalty. This loyalty is put to the test when Almemón overhears two Moors praising Alfonso and predicting that he will one day become king of Toledo, which makes the hairs on Alfonso's head stand spontaneously on end. Almemón is highly unnerved but does not wish to break the oath he has made to the Christian, "lo uno porquel amaua muy de coraçón, lo ál porque avía fecho grand seruiçio" (187). When Alfonso is brought to Almemón he gladly swears not to attack the king nor his sons as long as he lives and adds a further testament to his loyalty, "prometióle que fuese con él contra todos los omnes del mundo en ayuda" (187). This reciprocal display of trust strengthens the bonds between them, which are described in the closest terms, "E aquella ora adelante fue el rrey don Alfonso más su priuado del rrey Almemón e más su amigo" (187).

The relationship is tested a further time on the occasion of Sancho's death when the atmosphere between the Moors and Christians becomes more guarded. Double agents attempt to communicate news of the death to the Moors and are prevented from doing so by the Arabic speaker Pero Ansures. Ansures worries that if Almemón were to find out Alfonso would be in danger, but that if he were to be found concealing the information from Almemón, Alfonso's plight could be even worse. Alfonso's response is one of absolute loyalty to, and frankness with, the Moor, "Amigos, quando yo vyn a este moro rreçibióme él bien e mucho onrradamente, e diome todas las cosas que oue menester e tóuome en vez de fijo, ¿pues cómo le encubriré la merçed que me Dios fizo e faze?" (193). Almemón, who is already apprised of the situation, is delighted that Alfonso has shown him such loyalty, telling him that had he decided to flee he would have met with death or prison, but that as it stands he is free to return to his kingdom with whatever support and supplies are needed to pacify his own subjects (193). Alfonso is then given the most honorable send-off, "salió Almemón con todos los más honrrados moros de Toledo e fue con el rrey don Alfonso bien fasta el monte que llaman agora de Vela Tomé, que avía entónçes nonbre la Sierra del Dragón, e diole allí muchos dones e grant auer, e después despidiéronse allí unos de otros con grand amor" (193–94). The *Crónica* does report an alternative version of this chapter, in which Alfonso decides to say nothing about Sancho's death to Almemón but merely tells him he wishes to return to his lands with some Moorish warriors for support. Almemón only discovers the truth from the Moors who are leaving with Alfonso and tries to capture Alfonso but it is too late. The chronicler follows this, however, with the statement that "esto non fue asy nin de creer, synon aquello que contamos primero, en el comienço del capítulo" (194), and the rationale that some people give this version, because each person writes what they

deem most appropriate and truthful. Although the chronicle clearly prefers the first version, the inclusion of this caveat about multiple versions of events clearly situates the representation of Moorish-Christian affairs in a context where the truth is not absolute but forms part of a tapestry of reliability and believability.

The loyalty demonstrated in the first of the two options is borne out in the rest of Alfonso's dealings with Almemón and as the king stabilises his kingdom he remains a staunch ally of the Moor: "nunca se le oluido las postura que fiziera con Almemón, rrey de Toledo, e con su fijo, mas ayudólos sienpre demientra que biuieron en todas las cosas que ovieron menester" (201-02). This is proven once again when the king of Córdoba poses a threat to Almemón and Alfonso mounts an army to help him. At first, Almemón thinks that Alfonso is about to attack him and sends messengers to remind him of their pact; when Alfonso clarifies his movements Almemón is delighted and the pair attack Córdoba in unison, quashing the threat (203-04). It is only when Almemón and his son die, and Almemón's lazy and malevolent grandson Hiaya Alcadizbille succeeds them that Alfonso sets his sights on Toledo. Even that is prompted by word from the inhabitants there who secretly request that he help them by sieging the town and removing Hiaya's power (212). Alfonso's conquest of Toledo remains peaceful nevertheless, culminating in a pact whereby the Moors are allowed to remain in their properties, and to keep their mosque, while Alfonso takes the citadel and orchard and receives tribute from them (214). The reciprocity of the arrangement, "fueron los moros seguros dél e él dellos" (214) does little to trouble the narrative of exemplary loyalty between a Christian and a Moor, set against a background of vicious civil strife between the Christian king and his own kin.

The legendary material concerning the deeds of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, the Cid, follows the story of Fernando I's troubled legacy. The Cid's biography was abundantly covered in the early chronicle tradition, including the *Historia Roderici* (c.1110), *Crónica Najarense* (c.1160), the Arabic history of Valencia by Ben Alcama, and the writings of Jiménez de Rada and Lucas de Tuy; this wealth of historiographical material was accompanied by the extant *Poema de Mio Cid* (c.1207). There are many similarities between the versions of the Cid's life in the *Poema* and in the *Crónica*, as discussed in detail by Brian Powell (1983), although he suggests that the chroniclers set out to create their own version "by being true to its basic story of the Cid, Alfonso, and the Infantes de Carrión, but not being tied to all the details of that story... by positively discriminating against what did not suit them both in content and in language" (110). One of the most striking differences concerns the role of the Moors. The Cid's dealings with the Moorish kingdom of Zaragoza, which are only

mentioned briefly in the *Poema*, are subject here to more extensive treatment, where far greater attention is given to the Cid's treaty of vassalage with the king of Zaragoza, and to Moorish affairs in general, including the atmosphere of deep civil division among the Moors that precedes, and at least partly enables, the Cid's conquest of Valencia.⁷ Before discussing the *Crónica's* treatment of the Zaragoza episode, it is worth pointing out that the theme of enmity against the Cid from other Christian nobles which runs through the *Poema* with no particularly clear reasoning as to why, is given an interesting explanation in the chronicle, that concerns his contact with the Moors.⁸ The king of Granada, Almudáfar, and the king of Seville, Almucamís, are at war with one another, the former supported by powerful Christian nobles including Count García Ordóñez, who features as the Cid's enemy in the *Poema*. Since Almucamís is a vassal of King Alfonso the Cid defends him by sending letters to the Granadan camp asking them to desist from attacking the Sevillian king's territory. When the letters are ignored, the Cid proceeds to sack the Granadan's land and wins, returning with riches for Almucamís and meeting with a highly favorable reception from King Alfonso. The *Crónica* reports that "Por esto le ouieron muchos enbidia e buscáronle mucho mal e mezláronle con el rrey" (204). It seems highly relevant that the root of the Cid's famous enmity with the Leonese nobility might actually stem from his intervention in a conflict between two Moorish kings, and that this might lie behind the *Poema's* celebrated representation of his heroic recovery from unjust exile. The close intersection of Moorish and Christian affairs here, to the extent that Christian nobles choose to side with one or the other Moorish king, wonderfully epitomises the centrality of the Moors to Christian politics and, moreover, to Spain's most famous and most feted foundational legend, going some way to explaining why both Moors and Christians name the Cid "Canpeador" (204).

The Cid's relationship with Zaragoza is reported at length in the tenth book of the chronicle. The Cid's raiding of Zaragoza leads to the establishment of a tribute relationship, and the forging of a strong vassalic bond between him and King Almondafar: "puso el Cid su amor muy grande con Almondafar, rrey de Çaragoça, e el rrey rresçibióle en la villa mucho honrradamente e fizole mucha honrra" (209). Shortly afterward, the king falls ill and dies, leaving two sons, Çulema and Ben Alhange, who divide the kingdom so that Çulema takes Zaragoza and Ben Alhange takes Denia. Enmity soon breaks out between them and a similar situation to that described previously arises, wherein the Cid sides with Çulema, and other Christian nobles, namely Pedro of Aragon and Count Ramón Berenguer of Barcelona, support Ben Alhange, and greatly despise the Cid for his support of the Zaragozaan king (210). News of the Cid's raids

in the Moorish territories of Alcamís soon reaches Count Ramón and Ben Alhange, who gather an army of Christians and Moors and pursue the Cid to Tovar del Pinar. When battle ensues, Ben Alhange flees and Count Ramón is taken prisoner (210). The *Poema* dwells on the capture of the count in some detail, including the Cid's treatment of the prisoner and insistence that he eat, but never refers to his Moorish counterpart. The context provided by the *Crónica* thus opens out the matter of the enmity between the count and the Cid to reveal that this is largely based on them siding with different Moorish allies.

The power of political alliances between Moors and Christians is further demonstrated when Ben Alhange, disturbed by news of the Cid's feats, takes counsel from a larger group of Christian nobles, including Count Ramón, the count of Cardena, the brother of the count of Vergel and eminent men from Belsaldón, Rosilón, and Carcasés, who advise him to siege the castle of Almenar. The Cid escapes to see the king of Zaragoza in Tamarit. The respectful exchange between them as to how to deal with the siege is reported in direct speech, creating a sense of close kinship between the two, especially considering that the Moor is perfectly happy to take the Cid's advice on how to deal with his own brother. Although the Cid's plan to bribe Ben Alhange's faction not to siege the castle fails, he wins the battle and takes prisoners back to Çulema. Once again, we see the perfect accord between the Cid and Çulema when the king releases the prisoners as soon as the Cid asks for them, and in the description of esteem in which the Cid is held by the Zaragoza Moors: "e los moros de la çibdat rreçibieronle muy bien con muy grant alegría, e el rrey mesmo fizole muy grand honrra e diole poder en todo su rreyno que fiziesen su mandado" (212). The Cid and the king of Zaragoza join forces again to raid Aragon, and then the territories of Ben Alhange, much to the displeasure of the latter, who calls on his ally Pedro of Aragon for help. The pair are defeated and a list of their noble Christian supporters who are taken prisoner is reported in detail with some 17 names. When the Cid returns to Zaragoza he is once again received with great honor, "El rrey de Caragoça . . . salióle a rresçebir con sus fijos e con toda su gente mucho honrradamente" (213).

This detailed account of the Cid's harmonious dealings with the Zaragoza king, and the political implications of this relationship takes a more complicated turn when the chronicler turns to describe the conflict that leads to the fall of Valencia, and a generalized atmosphere of strife among the Moors. The precipitating factor is reported to be the death of Abubacar, who in ruling Valencia for 11 years, managed to stamp out the "desacuerdo" to which its people were prone (214). The chronicler, with a tinge of lyricism and perhaps empathy for Moorish affairs,

describes his death as like a light going out in Valencia, “amatóse la lumbre de Valencia” (214). The business of the shift of power in Valencia is given significant explanation in the chronicle, with particular attention to the background of Moorish discord and strife which precedes its fall, further illustrating that the legendary career of the Cid, who is famous for capturing Valencia, needs to be understood in a context of prominent political change among the Moors. Abubacar leaves behind two sons who, perhaps predictably, divide their father’s domain and each covet the inheritance of the other, to the extent that they form two warring factions. This rift gives rise to further political schism, as some wish the city to be ruled by the king of Zaragoza, others by the grandson of Almemón, Alcadir, out of fear of King Alfonso. Even when Alcadir takes control of the city, an undercurrent of unrest prevails and is described on a very human and believable level, including details of the misgivings of Aboeça Aben Lunpo, *alguazil mayor* (principal official) of Valencia, about whether or not he can trust Alcadir, the continual competition for power between the sons of Abubacar, and the complaints of the Moors about the costly payments they have to make, another reason cited for the loss of the city, “E esta fue la cosa por que touieron todos que se perdería Valençia por aquel nieto de Almemón, así commo perdiera Toledo” (216).

The description of the fate of Valencia forms a substantial interlude in the narrative of the Cid’s heroic feats, and one which accentuates the disastrous political situation among the Moors in a way that the epic *Poema* does not. This tale of shifting loyalties is compelling, continuing with further evidence of deep-seated mistrust when the king of Valencia seeks advice from Aboeça Aben Lunpo about how to deal with his vassal Aben Maçór ruler of Xátiva, who refuses to come to see him, and is advised to permit Aboeça to remain where he is (217). Although the chronicle states that this was good advice, the king consults the sons of Abubacar, who tell him that Aboeça’s advice is trickery as he is an ally of Aben Maçor, and that the king should proceed to attack Xátiva. The King, not foreseeing the troops that have been assembled to protect Xátiva, is promptly forced to retreat from his attack totally dishonored and popular opinion of him completely changes for the worse (218). Loyalties shift to Aben Hut, king of Denia and Tortosa who, realizing that the Valencians are unhappy with their ruler, seizes the opportunity to attack Valencia. This transferral of loyalty is reiterated in a later chapter to striking effect: “E aquellos sus vasallos en quéll más fiaua, aquéllos le fallestieron” (223).

At the same time as the king of Denia is mounting his attack, an alliance of the Cid and the new king of Zaragoza, Almozcaen, also has designs on the city, causing Aben Hut to retreat and establish a pact

instead with the king of Valencia. The Cid's dealings with Zaragoza, and the Moorish rulers more generally, are, in this instance, consistent with the quickly changing political picture: he establishes a secret alliance via letter with the king of Valencia, keeping the king of Zaragoza in ignorance, then telling him that he will not help him to conquer Valencia because it is ultimately the property of King Alfonso (224). This manipulation of political turbulence is further evident when the Cid proceeds to tell the king of Valencia not to surrender the city to anyone, then tells the king of Zaragoza that he will help him conquer it, while also sending a message to the king of Denia to strike a pact with him (224). It is clear that the Cid's overriding loyalty is to Alfonso and that his plan is to use the Moors to suit him, anticipating that they will tire and the land will be won by him, "con aquello enflaqueçerien los moros e asy ganaría él la tierra toda" (224). His confidence in being able to dominate even the most ostensibly powerful opponents is made abundantly clear: "dixo que non tenía en nada quantos poderosos eran en aquell tiempo e que él apremiaría a quantos señores eran del Andaluzía e quél sería su señor dellos" (226). Nevertheless, even the Cid's loyalty to Alfonso is called into question when a campaign of calumny against him restarts, "mezclaron ally al Çid muy mal con el rrey, asy que lo desamó mucho además e fue su enemigo" (229). Here the matter of the epic *Poema* concerning the influence of court meddlers over the king resurfaces, but once again in a context of shifting political alliances between Christians and Moors. Thus, the Cid strikes an alliance again with King Almozcaen of Zaragoza, and with the king of Aragon.

The impression that the fate of Moorish Valencia is doomed, even before the Cid's successful campaign, recurs when the chronicler describes how the Almoravids, led by Aben Haxa, attack the city. The detail that the king of Valencia is forced to flee in women's clothes while the Almoravids take the citadel is followed by the laconic explanation that this was one of the contributing factors to the loss of the city (230). Aben Iaf, a Valencian general, rises to prominence by beheading the king of Valencia while he is in exile, a deed which initially prompts a formal expression of disapproval and dishonor, a *riepto*, from the Cid (230). However, the Cid soon realises that there is dissent among the Almoravids and Aben Iaf and is delighted to be able to exploit it, quickly agreeing to an alliance with the latter. It emerges, however, that Aben Iaf is a less than trustworthy character when he is caught sending booty back to the Almoravids, much to the Cid's dismay (231). The Cid is nevertheless able to use this to his advantage, maintaining a secret pact with Aben Iaf when the Moors go to him for help and thereby discovering their motives, "Aben Ihaf auíe su amor con el Çid en poridat, e fue a él a demostrarle todo aquello que los moros le avían

dicho" (233). This flexible relationship, and the entire climate of distrust which the Cid exploits, is part of his successful campaign for Valencia. The shady nature of Aben Iaf and any possible taint this might cause the Cid's triumph, is purged when the Cid asks the Valencians whether they want Aben Iaf as their governor, to which they respond that he has done things that deserve mortal punishment. In the end, he is tortured by the Cid into handing back his ill-gotten gains, "El Çid prendió a Aben Iaf e diole muchas penas fasta quel fizo manifestar todo el auer que tenía e ge lo entregó todo" (234).

The Cidian narrative continues with the tale of the reprehensible behavior of the Infantes de Carrión, namely their wedding to the Cid's daughters, followed by their dishonoring of the girls by beating them almost to death in an oak forest (239). The resolution of this dishonor and the serving of justice at a court convened by King Alfonso ensues, before the narrative reaches a clear conclusion with the detail of the girls' new marriages to the Princes of Navarre and Aragon, and the death of the Cid through illness (243). All this is central to the epic *Poema*, bringing the two versions in line at the end. The outstanding impression, however, from the *Crónica's* detailed and politically engaged narrative is that while the epic poem conveys with enormous pathos and interest, the matter of envy and enmity among Christian nobles, namely the Cid, Count García Ordóñez, and the Infantes de Carrión, the chronicle—in keeping with its judicious concerns for versions and variants in pursuit of historical "accuracy"—presents an amplified picture of enmity, division, and discord which takes full and detailed account of the troubled political situation of the Moors. When this is included alongside the juglaresque tale of court calumny, the poetic version of the Cid's warriorly feats, in particular his dealings with the Moorish kingdoms in the east of the Peninsula, seems in comparison rather lacking. Powell thought that the *Crónica* reduced the Cid from the "heroic but human person portrayed in the poem into someone who is dull and predictable" (1983, 96–97). I would argue instead that this full and engaging account of Moorish political affairs turns the Cid into a more worldly figure, better able to manipulate a climate of division and distrust than the character we see in the poem, and one that is all for the more epic for that.

"Fitna" and the Fall of Córdoba

Close attention to Moorish affairs is central to the *Crónica's* construction of a foundational context for Castilian identity; this is evident in the space the chronicler devotes to the history of the Islamic stronghold of Córdoba, and the detail with which the early political narrative of the

city is invested. The sixth book of the chronicle is striking in the attention it gives to relationships between Moorish figures in the lead-up to the fall of the Islamic caliphate. Here the chronicle is concerned with the details of different Islamic rulers of the city, the circumstances that bring them to power, and the rivalries, conflicts, and betrayals that constitute their undoing. Christian figures do feature but chiefly concerning their political alliances with Islamic rulers. The history of Córdoba will eventually be steeped in the triumphalist rhetoric associated with the conquest of the city by Fernando III, as discussed later, but in this earlier stage of the chronicle it represents a place of political insecurity, of the grassroots competition for civil loyalty that affects all those in positions of power. In this light, it becomes a useful example for a Christian audience which would have shared concerns about the destructive communal effects of envy, betrayal, and individual political ambition.

Although Córdoba is lost to the Umayyads, the tone of this sequence of chapters is neither exultant in that fact, nor is the chronicler overly keen to represent this loss, and the political turbulence that precedes it, as a divine sanction that substantiates Christian dominance. Instead, what we see is a highly detailed account of a sequence of Islamic rulers, their respective strengths and shortcomings, and the consequent effect on their territory. Indeed, the tone of the chronicle is so engaged with Islamic history that it creates the impression at certain points of sharing a collective memory that extends across the frontier, alluding for example to Moorish battles that have since become famous among their people, such as the clash between Mahomad Almahadi and Çulemán, “Esta batalla es muy nonbrada e muy alabada oy en día entre los moros” (137).⁹ One of the reasons for the chronicle’s attention to Cordoban history appears to be an interest in the betrayal and disloyalty that characterises its citizens, described as “su mala costunbre de ser traydores” (136). Given the emphasis on envy and civil division in the chapters that treat epic material this is scarcely surprising, standing as further evidence that the *Crónica*’s foundational narrative for Castile is built upon understanding the causes of internal enmity and division. The Cordoban chapters portray incessant division and subdivision of political relationships, to the extent that the overall impression is one of flux, opportunism, and individual ambition, driven by *soberbia* and *cobdicia* and frequently enabled by treacherous means. The result is, in White’s terms, a more “dramatized” and “novelized” version of historical events (1987, 44) but, as in the epic-related chapters, the abiding focus on the tendencies and modes of human behavior means that the “truths” of this narrative history are of an order that departs from purely empirical record to encompass universal lessons and shared principles.

A generalized atmosphere of mistrust is evoked by the chronicle, inviting its readership to experience betrayal in all its nuances and as an inescapable feature of communal life. Treacherous behavior at times involves the Christians, often as innocent parties. A striking example of this comes when an uprising against King Ysem, led by Mahomad Almahadi, surpasses political rebellion to become something decidedly more underhand. Ysem is seized by Almahadi and hidden in the house of one of his treacherous supporters. Almahadi then makes the Moors believe that their king is dead and, in order to make this more plausible, kills a Christian who looks like Ysem and shows his body to the elders and Moors of the city, who are completely taken in by the deception (133–34). This is an act of multiple betrayal: against Ysem, against the citizens, and against the innocent Christian who serves as a double for the Islamic king. That Almahadi's action is not to be taken lightly is confirmed when, some chapters later, Ysem is depicted surveying his fortresses from the top of the citadel. On regarding the tombs of his forefathers in the distance he identifies a monument to his Christian substitute and on seeing it comments that he would like to be buried there (138). The inclusion of the Christian monument in the same territory as the majestic sepulchres of his royal ancestors, and Ysem's readiness to be buried close to it, provides an unusual demonstration of empathy and equality between the two groups, brought about because of an act of betrayal. King Abdalla of Toledo's exploitation of King Alfonso is a further example of Christian suffering at the hands of Moorish betrayal. The king is advised to have his sister Teresa married to the Moor and to establish peace with him in order to gain support against other Moorish attacks, principally from the king of Córdoba. Central to his decision is the fact that Abdalla deviously pretends to be a Christian when he is not. Once the marriage is performed, Teresa objects to any physical contact with "omne de otra ley" (134) and swears that if he touches her he will be struck down by an angel sent from God. When he rapes her he is struck by an illness that takes him to the verge of death and sends Teresa back to León.

Treachery thus inhabits the borderline between Christians and Moors in the Cordoban chapters, but can also reveal Christian parties to be willing participants in the flexible movement of loyalty from one ruler to another. The political alliance between Çulemán, king of Córdoba, and Count Sancho of Castile, "treguas muy buenas y firmes" (135) is a case in point. A Berber approaches the Moor and suggests that he kill his Christian supporters with a view to securing his future position, "ca así commo a ty siruen agora, asy seruirán mucho ayna oy a otro señor e venirte ha por ende algund mal e algund grand quebranto" (136). The

warning is pitched to the King's political sensitivities but his response is one of exemplary loyalty to his Christian allies, "En segurança de mi fe e de mi verdat vinieron a mí, e, por ende, non faré tan grand enemiga commo esta que me tú conseias" (136). Moreover, Çulemán is concerned as a result of this that some harm will come to the count and his companies and duly sends them back to Castile, rich and greatly honored.¹⁰ This loyalty is not, however, reciprocated for long. When Ysem continually sacks Çulemán's land, the latter is forced to appeal for help to Count Sancho, promising him reward in return. Sancho reflects on the offer at length before contacting Ysem to inform him that if he were to make at least an equal offer of remuneration, here the return of six castles to the Christians, he would help him instead, "sy él quisiese que antes vernía él ayudar a él que non a Çulemán" (139). When Ysem matches the offer and hands the castles over, Sancho's loyalty is all his.

The presence of trickery and disloyalty in relationships between Christians and Moors pales, however, in comparison with the way Islamic figures are depicted as treating one another. The impression of Christian-Moorish relationships is that most political alliances readily shift for pragmatic purposes, such as the acquisition of territory, whereas others are more steadfast because the relationship continually suits the political interests of both parties, calling into question whether we can even describe it as betrayal. Between Islamic figures, however, the word "trayçión" is used frequently and the climate of disloyalty evoked by the *Crónica* is more sinister, pathologically present in almost every political liaison to some degree or another. Mahomad Almahadi is a focal character in that respect. His treacherous rise to power in imprisoning Ysem and feigning his death is finally checked by the Moors of Córdoba when Almahadi abuses his position, mistreating women and committing a host of other misdeeds. Under the leadership of a certain Ysem Araxid the Moors rebel, entering the citadel to kill and burn the bodies of "muchos de aquellos traidores que fueran en el conseio" (134). In battle against Almahadi outside of the town, Ysem is seized and beheaded in return, along with several of his men, because of Almahadi's fears of betrayal, "temiéndose de trayçión" (134). One act of betrayal seemingly deserves another. Continually afflicted by the evils of Almahadi, the Cordobans elect the Berber Çulemán, nephew of Ysem Araxid, as their king. Even within their faction, however, a group of Berbers tries to have Maruhán, cousin of Çulemán, elected king. Çulemán is made aware of this through a friend and has the rebels beheaded and his cousin thrown into prison. In an astonishing turnaround, prompted by Çulemán's alliance with Count Sancho, Mahomad Almahadi decides that the imprisoned Ysem would be a better option for king of Córdoba than the Berber Çulemán and

duly has him brought out of incarceration. The fearful response of the Moors and their refusal to believe that Ysem is alive forces Almahadi to hide in the house of Mahomad of Toledo while Çulemán takes the city of Córdoba by force (136).

The cycle of political rise followed by betrayal continues when Almahadi, supported by Alhagib Almerí and some prominent Christians, mounts an attack on Çulemán in Córdoba. The refusal of the Cordoban Moors to help Çulemán defend his position is explicitly described as betrayal by the chronicler, and their excuses found wanting: “escusáron-sele con unas rrazones muy frías” (136). The Berbers, on the other hand, show greater loyalty to their leader, reported in direct speech by the chronicler for added comparative effect: “Señor, por non yr contigo los de Córdoba non des tú nada por ello, nin ayas miedo, ca nos yremos contigo e ayudarte hemos muy bien fasta la muerte” (136). It seems logical to assume that the Berbers show greater loyalty to one of their own kind, although the earlier Berber rebellion in favor of Maruhán shows that this is not necessarily always the case and that individual political ambition overrides any loyalty to the group. Thus the scene when Almahadi takes over in Córdoba is one of utter chaos. The Arabs ask Almahadi to pardon all their prisoners and when he does they quickly start to provoke unrest among the Cordobans, “començaron aquellos malfechores de meter bolliçio e mal grande entre los de Córdoba” (137). The Cordobans, meanwhile, are at risk from the Berbers who go around the land razing towns and cities (137). In reponse to this, the Arabs who were intending to kill the remaining forces of the Berber Çulemán decide instead to turn on Almahadi and make Ysem king again. That this change of loyalty is colored by betrayal is exemplified by the role played by the *alhagib* Alhamerí, one that raises the issue of trust between king and advisor.¹¹ When Almahadi defeats Çulemán he rewards his astute counsellor by placing him in charge of the kingdom, “ordenaua él todas las cosas del rreyno, así que Mahomad non avía y al dever synon el nonbre que avía tan solamente de rey” (137). It takes little, however, for Alhamerí to change his alliance to the rebel faction against Almahadi. When Almahadi falls, Alhamerí becomes Ysem’s right-hand man instead: “poderoso de todo lo suyo, así como lo fuera en tienpo de Mahomad Almahadí” (138). Despite Ysem’s popularity as king, once the Berbers put Córdoba under intense pressure again, Alhamerí sends word to Çulemán and the Berber faction in secret, “en poridat” (139), telling them of the famine and plague that are afflicting the city. The chronicle reports that Alhamerí is not as devious as he thinks, wryly repeating the term *poridat* in explaining how Ysem comes to intercept his perfidious letters, “mas esto non lo fizo él tan en poridat que lo non supo luego Ysén” (139). In response, Ysem has him captured,

beheaded, and his head paraded throughout the city as a warning against treachery, “por tal que supiesen todos que por la trayción que cuydara fazer le dieran tal muerte” (139).

Ysem’s reign is characterized by a zero tolerance approach to betrayal. When he seizes power from Almahadi, his words to his rival address his treachery above all else, “Tu eres traidor a Dios e a my, ca feziste matar todos los moros que tenía comigo, e tomásteles todos sus vienes que avían e fezistes a muchos perder conseio e andar pobres e mezquinos, e aun syn esto fezistes después muchas traiciones” (137–38). Like the treacherous royal favorite Alhamerí, Almahadi is beheaded then his body hung from a public wall, before being cut into pieces and his head placed on top of a lance and paraded through the town as an example to all of the repercussions of betrayal. Despite a strong and popular start to his kingship because he is visibly present among his people, and comes directly from a royal lineage, and despite his clear stance on treachery, Ysem too is betrayed by his people. He is already wary of the famed perfidy of the Cordobans, “sabiendo bien la trayción e la couardía que sienpre oviera en esos de Córdoba” (138) but annoyed to discover that men of his own lineage have been liaising with Çulemán and the Berbers to make Çulemán ruler of the city. The report of this treachery comes in direct speech from two “castrados,” eunuchs who are deemed trustworthy, adding to its dramatic effect. Ysem’s response is to round up all those of Umayyad lineage and throw them in prison (138). Even the eventual capture of Córdoba and overthrow of Ysem is owing to an act of betrayal; it is not the combined force of Çulemán and other powerful Moorish leaders which defeats Ysem but rather the fact that one night a guard leaves a door open so that the Berbers may enter the city (140).

A lingering loyalty remains after Ysem is deposed in the form of the eunuchs who used to guard him, inviting reflection on their exceptional role in this treacherous setting. Eunuchs played an important role in Islamic society long before the birth of Islam. Coming from many different ethnicities, they served in the royal court, carrying out a variety of functions including acting as envoys for the ruler, supplying him with information, keeping a vigilant eye on women in the harem, handling and guarding money, and performing domestic tasks (Ayalon 1999, 330–38). The most distinctive characteristic of the eunuch was deemed to be loyalty, as Herodotus testified, “For it is among the Barbarians that eunuchs fetch a higher price than whole men, because they are trustworthy in every respect” (1962, 529). According to David Ayalon, “this constituted the very foundation of their success in Islamic and in other civilisations” (1999, 14). Eunuchs were numerous in the courts of Islamic rulers in medieval times and often had a special influence over their

patron. Ayalon attributes this to the fact that they could have access to him day and night, including in his private quarters (18). Eunuchs also depended greatly on their patron, too, as the Greek historian Xenophon notes, "inasmuch as eunuchs are objects of contempt to the rest of mankind, for this reason, if for no other, they need a master who will be their patron" (cited in Ayalon 1999, 37). Loyalty is a defining feature of the "castrados" in the *Crónica*. Seeing the power and status being accrued by Çulemán, the eunuchs experience "grande pesar e quebranto" (140) and are forced to leave, ending up in Murcia where each has to defend his own position, "alçose cada uno dellos por donde pudo" (140). Hayrán Alhemeri is the most powerful among them, but was forced to flee when Çulemán occupied Córdoba, caught by the Berbers and savagely beaten, then left for dead. Hidden and brought back to health in the house of a sympathetic Cordoban Moor, he travels to the seat of the other eunuchs at the castle of Oriela, using this as his base to attack Çulemán, joined by a further Moorish vassal named Abetamit. As his campaign gathers pace, the chronicler confirms that his efforts are driven by loyalty to Ysem: "Aquell Ahyrán amaua mucho a Ysén, el que fuera rrey, e todo lo que ganaua dezía que para él lo quería" (140). His reaction closely corresponds to Xenophon's description of the loyalty of eunuchs in the misfortune of their masters: "of their fidelity they gave the best proof upon the fall of their masters, for no one ever performed acts of greater fidelity in his master's misfortunes than eunuchs do" (in Ayalon 1999, 37). Hayrán then transfers his loyalty to Alí Abenhamit, appointed by Ysem as *adelantado* (governor), and sets about trying to make him king. His political sway and powerful mediatory position is evident in the fact that he sends word to Granada, Murcia, and the surrounding towns instructing men to become vassals of Alí. A close accord is struck between Hayrán and Alí whereby they agree to attack Córdoba, acting still in the memory of Ysem. When Çulemán, his father, and brother are captured and brought to Alí, the latter confronts Çulemán over the treachery committed against Ysem, "començo a denostar e a maltraher a Çulemán por la traición que fiziera contra Ysén, su señor" (141).

This vision of a powerful duo of Alí and Hayrán, united in their vengeance against the treatment of Ysem is, however, short-lived. Once Alí begins to fear that Ysem might still be alive and might strip him of his kingdom, an idea planted in his mind by Çulemán, he reinforces his control over Córdoba, causing Hayrán to become decidedly nervous. Hayrán is described as fearful that Alí might falsely blame him for something, "temiéndose de Alí, que se le querié achacar por aventura en alguna cosa" (141), showing some of the vulnerability associated with the eunuch's position. When Hayrán sets out for Almería, Ecija, and Granada, Alí no

longer wishes to keep the pact between them, a development which sees Hayrán turn from vulnerability to anger, “fue este Hayrán muy sañudo contra él” (141) and solicit help from King Mundir of Zaragoza. A new pact is thereby forged, as Mundir agrees to help him fight Alí but when they suffer a crushing defeat in battle the relationship quickly crumbles, “fue asy que se ovieron de desabenir ally Hayrán e Mundir, e departiéronse unos de otros” (141). This swift transition of loyalties continues as Hayrán then becomes determined to make Abderramén Almorcada king on the basis that he is of Umayyad lineage. The chronicle also reports him to be “omne cuerdo e manso e muy zofrido e...por ende mucho amado de todos” (141) suggesting that the eunuch is right to fight for his kingship, which he does with greater determination than with all his previous allies, undeterred even when Gilfoya attacks his territory (141).

Hayrán's political dealings show him to be a resourceful character, constantly adapting to changing political situations by searching for a new nucleus of loyalty. Nevertheless, as the history proceeds, it becomes clear that he is a strange composite character, a combination of cowardly and intimidating, needy but influential, loyal but quick to form enmity. This moral ambiguity is partly rooted in the eunuch's borderline status, physically, politically, and even in terms of his gender.¹² The impression the chronicle gives is that being on the border means that loyalty can sharply be reversed, a situation reflected in the historical setting whereby the proximity of eunuchs to the ruler, and their watchful presence in the royal court made them ideally placed to commit acts of murder and betrayal (Ayalon 1999, 19). Despite Hayrán's combative posture, for example, the chronicle relates how he is defeated by Gilfoya “más por couardía que por otra cosa” (141). Moreover, he is depicted as fleeing from further danger and taking refuge in a house in the district of Alcándalos (141). This is not the first time the chronicler uses an idiom of secretion and self-protection, “acoxóse,” “ascondióse” in connection with Hayrán; his being hidden away by the Cordoban Moor, “ascondiólo en su casa” (140) adds to the impression that he is quick to look after himself. This is given a negative inflection insofar as while Hayrán is in Baza his men flee to Almería, thinking that he is with them, only to discover that this is not the case, which renders them “muy cuitados e muy quebrantados” (141).

The spatial location of Hayrán, whereby he frequently moves between cities and towns, and negotiates extremes of sanctuary and danger, underlines an important feature of the eunuch: their association with physical boundaries and their crossing. Shaun Marmon describes, for example, how in the Cairo Citadel, “an assigned path led through a complex system of interior doors and gateways. A corps of eunuchs was permanently

assigned to these portals of transitional space" (1995, 11). The physical location of the eunuch maps their symbolic role as "neutral emissaries in a moral universe . . . a universe in which the forces of *fitna*, a word that signifies sexual temptation as well as political discord and civil strife, were seen as an omnipresent threat to the social and moral order" (Marmon 1995, 5–6). In the *Crónica*, the eunuchs seem, therefore, to guard and to negotiate the boundary between loyalty and betrayal as a means of protecting against the forces of *fitna*, widespread discord and strife. This is clearly illustrated when Alí takes control of the citadel of Jaén. Although he is received with joy by the people, his former misdeeds are not forgotten by the eunuchs, who are depicted entering the citadel while the king is taking a bath and then killing him, "e entraron con él alguno de los castrados que fueran vasallos de Hayrán e matáronle y e saliéronse luego e fuxeron" (141). Their easy access to this most private and personal space, and the politically motivated action of murder they conduct therein, exemplifies the uniquely close position of the eunuch to the nucleus of power, and their ability to traverse the boundaries of a space that is at once private and political, the domain of the ruler, but the concern of all. This applies not just to the citadel but to the ruler himself: "the sultan was . . . a kind of sanctuary, and the eunuchs who surrounded him not only controlled access to his person and his family but also served to emphasize the sacred power of rulership" (Marmon 1995, 12–13).

A ruthless, vengeful, and even violent side of Hayrán increasingly emerges. His ongoing quest to have Abderramén elected king is not affected by the brutal murder of two eunuchs by Caçin, brother of Alí, as Hayrán sends word to the Kings of Zaragoza, Çitaua, Valencia, and Tortosa to ask for their vassalage. Although successful in this task, Hayrán finds that the much solicited King Abderramén (Abd al-Rahmān) ignores and dishonors him and Mundaz, "Mas a Hayrán e a Mundaz, que le alçarran rrey, non los quería ver nin catar por ellos nin los honrraua asy commo solía" (142). Moreover, when they are waiting to have an audience with him one day in the palace, Abderramén denies them entry, "mandólos tener la puerta que non entrasen dentro" (142). This gesture is highly symbolic in the context of the spatial freedom and privilege normally granted to eunuchs and serves as the greatest confirmation that their status is wholly undermined by the new king. The chronicle proclaims them to be "muy sañudos" and reports their indignation in direct speech, which is laced with sarcasm, "Con grand derecho nos faz él esto e nos lo mereçemos, ca mucho nos trabajamos de le fazer rrey" (142). The outrage of the eunuchs thus comes through with great personality and vim via historiographical technique, as does the absolute retraction of their loyalty to Abderramén, described with a simple yet rather

disconcerting idiom of reversal by the chronicler, “De aquell día adelante touiéronlo ellos saña e desanpáronle, e así commo se trabajaron de le alçar rrey, así guisaron otrosí cómmo non rreinase mucho en esta guisa” (142). Indeed, just as the eunuchs are associated with guarding against *fitna*, this is precisely what they unleash on Abderramén in revenge. “Muy grand alboroço e grand bolliçio” (142) breaks out among the nobles of the king’s army, which is the doing of Hayrán and Mundar. Moreover, they speak to the king of Granada to warn him of Abderramén’s plans to attack. The two deeds combine to disastrous effect when Abderramén’s soldiers are too divided among themselves to fight adequately and the king and many of his men are killed in the battle, “los coraçones de los altos omnes de la hueste de Abderramén eran ya departidos por el bolleçio que entrara entre ellos” (142).

The revenge against Abderramén secures Hayrán’s power and status, as evident when King Abuz of Granada later sends for him and Mugeyt to help topple the new king of Córdoba and son of Alí, Hyahya. They are described as “dos moros muy poderosos” (144) and “altos omnes” (144). One thousand Berbers are killed with their effort and assistance, providing a powerful display of both their social rank and appetite for fighting. Nevertheless, the focus soon shifts from their military prowess to the dangerous hostility that breaks out between them, although we do not discover why: “entró entre esos amos muy grand enbidia e grant desabenença, e, temiéndose de se matar uno a otro, saliéronse amos de la çibdat e partiéronse que non andudieron en conpañia” (144). This depiction of the two leaving the enclosed space of the city and departing for unspecified locations in isolation from one another places the eunuch in a contrasting physical location to the sanctuaries and citadels with which he is frequently associated, one that is left open and therefore insecure. As the guardians against discord teeter on the brink of their own internal *fitna*, we realize that this narrative bears a synecdochic relationship with the wider political context, as the structures and supports against discord in Umayyad Córdoba crumble once and for all.

Although the presence of the eunuchs mitigates against *fitna*, they become embroiled in it toward the end of the Cordoban narrative. With their potentially mediatory and stabilizing presence called into question, the reasons for the fall of the city come through strongly. A familiar moral idiom reemerges as *cobdicia* and *soberbia* stand out as the principal motivating factors for serious political discord. When Mahomat is elected king of Córdoba, his love of precious gems and riches swiftly leads to his murder, in an ironic, if not serendipitous, situation where the covetous king is killed by those who covet: “por quel aver deste mundo

es muy cobdiçioso e fazen muchos por él mal sus faziendas, tomáronse algunos de los de su casa cuydando aver aquellas riquezas e diéronle yeruas e matáronle” (144). When (the second) King Ysem is elected to rule, his downfall comes because of an *alhagib* who wishes to be more powerful than him, despite Ysem’s superior lineage “Ca él non quería catar en qué omne era e de qué sangre, mas tenía por mejor omne dél que non avía en el rreyno” (144). The pride of the *alhagib* and his consequent mistreatment of the good men of the kingdom drives them to kill him and to remove Ysem’s power too, for allowing his advisor to behave in this manner, “non pudiendo ya zofrir la su soberuia de aquel alhagib, matáronle por ende e tolliéronle el señorío a Ysén porque ge lo consentía” (144). The pride of the advisor forms a striking contrast with the deference of the eunuchs throughout the preceding chapters, underlining the impression that individual ambition is the quickest route to civil discord.

The removal of Ysem is followed by Humeya’s claim to rule. When the Moors tells him that the city is in so much disarray and discord that they fear his death, his response is “Obedesçedme ya oy e sy quier cras luego me matad” (144). The same exchange is reported in the *Estoria de España* and is glossed by the chroniclers thus, “Aqui dize la estoria que en esto puede omne entender que grand cosa es la obediencia deste mundo” (466). In this *Crónica*, the gloss is “Agora podredes ver que grand cosa es la cobdiçia de querer omne ser señor en este mundo” (144). The change of emphasis from *obediencia* to *cobdiçia* significantly alters the reading of Humeya’s act, reminding us that in the historiographical context “any given set of real events can be emplotted in a number of ways, can bear the weight of being told as any number of different kinds of stories” (White 1987, 44). The change renders Humeya’s act more of a single-minded, and by implication reckless, gesture in service of unmitigated personal desire. The Moors reject Humeya’s offer, warning him, like Ysem, that if he does not leave the citadel he is in danger of mortal harm. In counsel afterward, they decide that no man from the lineage of Humeya should remain in the city. The political consequences are described by the chroniclers as further movement toward individualism, “A aquella sazón non avía en España rrey que del linaje de Humeya fuese e, por ende, cada unos de los poderosos alçáuanse con los lugares que tenían donde eran adelantados” (144). While powerful men stake their own positions, the Cordobans are left with no king, using the name of Ysem in their documents and coins. It is thus that the kingdom of Córdoba comes to an end, with the ghost of a king and a host of self-styled governors, the social order fractured beyond repair.

Fernando's Mixed Frontier

The concluding stages of the *Crónica* narrate the success of King Fernando III in reconquering principal Moorish strongholds in Andalusia. That the reign of this monarch lives in recent memory for the chronicler is evident in the amount of detail and verve with which his military triumphs are described in a crowded and colorful set of chapters. Fernando's reign provides a jubilant conclusion to the historical narrative, one that secures the sense of tenacity, bravery, and divine support with which Castilian identity is associated throughout. While there is an increase in patently religious content, including crusading language, in the chapters leading up to Fernando's accession and during some of his campaigns, it is striking that the type of definitive ethnic, moral, and military cleavage between Christians and Moors which is normally associated with such language does not take place here. Instead, the chronicle's vision of Fernando's success conveys flexible boundaries between Christians and Moors, both in terms of political liaisons, and the malleable borderline between loyalty and betrayal that affects both parties in a way that fits with the previous narrative content. This narrative of knighthood and conquest does not, therefore, exclude Islamic figures but rather illustrates how they continue to help to define Castilian identity even in these late and combative stages of the Christian recovery of land. The overall impression is of a somewhat mixed narrative style, one that switches between the inexorable language of Christian crusade and victory, familiar from other chronicle accounts such as the *Estoria de España*, and a more nuanced, sympathetic, and smaller scale insight into ongoing ties between the two groups. In this context, the pursuit of truth and accuracy in the narrative evidently involves both a greater level of overview and interpretation, even ideology, as much as a continued attention to realistic detail.

The Christian defeat at Alarcos, where the Almohads overcame the armies of King Alfonso VIII in 1195, changes the tone and content of what follows in the chronicle by introducing a strong emphasis on Christian knighthood and crusading. In the chronicle's reasoning about the causes of the loss, matters of knightly behavior come to the fore, calling into question the shortcomings of the Christians in that respect but also making the broader theme of knighthood central in these late stages. The defeat is explained by a lack of support from the Kings of León and Navarre, as well as from the nobles *fijosdalgo* because the king suggested that the knights from the Extremaduran towns were as good as they: "que tan buenos eran los caualleros de las Estremaduras de las villas commo los fijosdalgo e tan bien caualgantes commo ellos, e que tanto

buen farían como ellos” (280). In keeping with its layers of meaning, the chronicle makes this factual explanation into a more interpretative, moral point that “no lo ayudaron en aquella lid como deuén que non eran caualleros sus coraçones” (280). This gains further momentum in the commentary that Christian disunity displeased God: “non quiso Dios que los christianos saliesen onde onrrados, que non eran de un coraçón nin ayudaron a su señor como deuén, e fueron vençidos” (280). The narrative of divine punishment, furnished by the chronicle’s own explanation, comes to represent a kind of master language, designed to direct the readers’ attention to a secondary level of interpretation of events, one that transcends the various political wranglings. In this vein, the account of Alarcos ends with reflection on Alfonso’s attitude to this divine punishment; his willingness to accept it as such, his dedicated service to God, and the mercies shown him as a result. The King’s piety leads seamlessly into the language of crusading that emerges in connection with this rout. The Infante Fernando, mortified by his father Alfonso’s dishonor, sends word to the pope to ask for a crusade. The chronicle then relates how Archbishop Jiménez arrives in Toledo to preach a crusade throughout the region; the city is shortly filled with “grandes gentes cruzadas de todas las tierras de Europe” (280). The presentation of a city literally swelling, “enchirse,” to capacity with people is a powerful vision of a unified Christian force, and seems to suggest a polarization in the chronicle’s perspective on Christianity and Islam. However, it is also an impractical bloating of the city’s boundaries and resources. The pitfalls of this arrangement are made surprisingly clear by the chronicler, whose depiction of crusade reflects its crude practical realities, detracting somewhat from the ideological weight of the enterprise. For example, the varied customs and characters of the crusaders sees them commit all manner of misdeeds in Toledo, “fazíen muchos males e muchas soberuias por la villa e matauan los judíos e dezían muchas follías” (282). Such is their behavior that the king is forced to trick them into leaving it for the shade of the orchard (282). Moreover, the crusaders are continually distinguished from the peninsular troops, as “gente de allende, cruzados” or “los franceses e gente cruzada” (282), giving them a sense of inherent difference that is not strictly positive. It is perhaps this outsider status that leads them so easily to succumb to the rigors of the peninsular landscape, falling sick, dying, and disbanding, “que enfermaron muchos e muríen, que los prouó la tierra e el agua de Guadiana” (283).

The chronicle moves between this surprisingly honest vision of crusade and the description of battle against the Moors as a religiously sponsored feat, demonstrating in the process concern for plausibility and veracity as much as authoritative overview. At times, however, it seems hard to

imagine this is anything other than an ideologically loaded narrative. The development of a deeply symbolic mode of description contributes to this impression. For example, Miramamolín is depicted going into battle dressed in black with the Koran before him (285), while the image of the Virgin Mary on the king's standard appears to affect the military confidence of the Moors more than anything else, "desque...viéronla los moros, negro fue para ellos ese día" (285). This symbolism reaches a crescendo in the campaign for Jerez when the Christians are aided by the appearance of Saint James (Santiago) to the Moors on a white horse, carrying a white standard in one hand and sword in the other, and with a legion of heavenly knights all dressed in white (308). That said, the chronicler does not detach the narrative from the realm of plausibility. In an interesting combination of historical witness and textual authority, Archbishop Jiménez de Rada is situated within the narrative, when the chronicler notes that he and the other prelates preached and issued indulgences to all those who were disposed to fight the Moors (284), and then his chronicle is cited as authority for the description of a beautiful, golden cross appearing in the sky as a sign to the Christians (284). Moreover, the chronicle does not solely attribute Christian success to divine favor but roots it in human endeavor. Much attention is devoted, in the same chapter that deals with the appearance of heavenly bodies, to feats of knighthood, including the listing of names, orders of knighthood, and individual deeds, which are explicitly lodged in the collective memory: "Muchos caualleros ouo y que se esmeraron a fazer mucho bien por sus manos aquell día e lo fizieron" (308).

As King's Fernando's incursions into Moorish territories develop, the narrative overview engages increasingly in summary, courtesy of a recurrent idiom of defeat and destruction. The chronicler tends to end each chapter by emphasizing the ruthless effect the King's actions have had, for example "fincaron los moros muy quebrantados e maltrechos e muy espantados" (300), "por toda esa tierra non fincó sierra nin llano nin lugar que non fuese escodruñado" (302), "tornóse el rrey para Castilla e dexó corta e astragada a Jahén e a Ubeda e toda esa tierra" (304). Despite this unforgiving language of "mal" and "quebranto" (309), however, this section of the narrative retains a more realistic, and even more sympathetic, representation of Islamic figures which, albeit in a more subtle way here, is still vitally important to the *Crónica's* aim of affirming a Castilian identity. In the midst of Fernando's conquests on the Granadan plains his relationship with the king of Baeza emerges as an example of Christian-Moorish cooperation. The Moorish king hands over the citadels of Martos and Andújar to Fernando, after which he retains a position on the frontier, as a "frontero" (302) or frontline warrior, alongside Fernando's men, joining in the sacking of the lands around Seville.

When news arrives that Garçies has been sieged by the Moors, the king of Baeza supplies three thousand knights, made up of Almohads, Arabs, Andalusians, and Turks, and a further three thousand footsoldiers to support the Christian counterattack. He is joined by the other "fronteros" Alvar Perez and Alfonso, securing the impression of his collaborative role on the frontier. Fernando's warm reception of the king is followed by a further pact: that the Moor render the castles of Salvatierra, Capillas, and Bulgarymar to Fernando with the citadel of Baeza as security. When the Moors of Córdoba realize that the king of Baeza has been assisting the Christians in these conquests by sending supplies they revolt and try to kill him. Although the king tries to flee to the castle of Almodovar he is caught by the Moors and beheaded by two of them, who send his head in tribute to King Abullaleque of Seville (302–03). The Sevillian King's reaction is not what these two men expect, he considers their doings treachery, an understanding the chronicler approves of "mas él entendió mejor" (303), and in turn orders that their heads be cut off and they be thrown to the dogs. Fernando's reaction to the king of Baeza's death is even more telling. He is described as deeply sad, "pesóle muy de coraçón" (303) and quickly starts to fear the discord that has been unleashed, "Temiéndose de lo que començaron, dexaron la villa" (303). The king of Baeza's story is not just an example of cooperation on the very frontier itself, but symptomatic of the problems of treachery and division that are rife among the Islamic groups during this phase of the chronicle, highlighting the frontier as a place of contact and crossover but also one of division. Ironically, this division is very often internal, taking the form of betrayal and disloyalty among the Moors themselves, while relationships between Christians and Moors are able on occasion to flourish. Only a short while after the Baezan King's murder, for example, the tale of the just and courageous Moorish King Abuhath culminates in his being beheaded by one of his own vassals (303). The chronicler is not afraid to acknowledge that this division plays a major role in Christian conquest, prompting a different meditation on the role and status of the frontier: "después que murió Abuhath, partióse la tierra por muchas partes de rreyes. Este ayudó mucho a los christianos" (304).

The siege and conquest of Córdoba constitutes the longest chapter in the entire chronicle and is understandably written with enormous pride. Having represented the earlier history of the city as a place of civil unrest and political insecurity, the chronicle now turns to the success of the Christians in obtaining this "madre de las otras çibdades" (309–10). Although in broad terms the narrative is triumphant, and laced with religious content in its final stages, it is striking that even here a sense of cooperation and contact between Christians and Moors is evoked, and depicted as a contribution, albeit on a smaller scale, to Christian victory.

The first example comes in the shape of the ruse by which the Christians enter the outlying district of Córdoba, Axarquía. The Arabic speakers among them ascend rope ladders dressed as Moors to take one of the principal towers. One of the Moors guarding it recognises the voice of Alvar Colodro but takes the Christian by the arm and whispers, “Yo só de aquellos que tú sabes punaré de vengar destos otros, e yo te ayudaré” (310). His assistance in throwing the other Moorish guards from the tower is important and quickly leads to the Christians gaining this and other towers until they are able to occupy the entire district of Axarquía. This represents an initial and significant inroad into the conquest of Córdoba itself, and part of that is indebted to Moorish support, and an ability to mimic their appearance and language. The renegade Moor on the tower is not the only one to provide support during the Cordoban campaign. A Moorish *alcayde* of Bienquerencia, described as “buen caualero e buen omne” (311), comes out to Fernando’s camp to bring him bread, wine, meat, and barley. The relationship can also work in reverse, however, as in the case of Aben Hut, king of the Moors of Morocco, and his dealings with the Christian Lorenzo Suarez. The Moor is supported by Lorenzo Suarez because Fernando exiled the Christian from his land for his misdeeds; indeed, Suarez’s ill-will toward the Christian fuels the bond between them, “E Aben Hut fiáuase mucho en Lorenzo Suarez, que quería mal al rrey don Ferrando, que avia querella dél” (311). The chronicle reports in direct speech an exchange where the Moor asks Suarez for advice, followed by Suarez’s trip to the Christian camp to seek out Fernando, where he switches his loyalty back to the Christian king, “Señor, vos me echastes a tierra de moros por mi mal, e aquell mal tornóse en bien para vos e para mí” (311). Suarez proceeds to use his knowledge of the Moorish camp to advise the king on tactics and Fernando pardons him and receives him once again as his vassal (312). The episode turns on the theme of advice, *consejo*; that given by Suarez to the Moor first, then to the Christian, then again, treacherously, to the Moor when Aben Hut solicits it continually on Suarez’s return. As Suarez reverses his loyalty to Aben Hut, leaving him perilously exposed, it is actually another close member of his inner circle that brings about his death, for the king is drowned in a water butt by his own adviser (*privado*) Aben Arramamni (312) before he even starts to attack the Christians. Once again, the chronicler affirms that this internal act of betrayal has divisive consequences on a much broader scale, splitting the dominion of the Moors into many parts: “pues que Aben Hut fue muerto, fue el señorío de los moros de aquíen mar partido en muchas partes” (312).

The crucial role played by internal betrayal in causing the collapse of Islamic strongholds and dominions, coupled with the clear evidence of

fraternization and changing liaisons between Christians and Moors in the run up to the conquest of Córdoba, calls into question how absolute the *Crónica's* stance really is on Christian victory. Further evidence comes in the form of Fernando's relationship with the king of Granada. When the latter becomes his vassal, Fernando greatly appreciates his humility and in return does not ask excessive dues of the Moor, "rresçibióle muy bien e fizole mucha onrra e non quiso dél otra cosa, saluo que fincase por su vasallo con toda su tierra" (327). The depiction of mutual moderation and prudence is mirrored in the chronicle's obviously balanced phrasing when describing the relationship between the pair: "El rrey don Ferrando mandó al rrey de Granada que se tornase para su tierra, e fue muy pagado de quanto bien le siruiera en su comienço. El rrey moro se tornó, segund le fuera mandado, muy pagado del rrey don Ferrando" (328). It is fitting, therefore, that when the chronicle closes with the widespread lamentation on the death of King Fernando it does so acknowledging that the king of Granada places his entire kingdom in mourning (348).

In summarizing Fernando's conquests, the chronicler emphasises his territorial reach with the term *ensanchar*:

ensanchó su rreyno de grandes tierras que non solía ante aver e metiólas en su seruidumbre: e rreyes e rreynos que le consintieron señorío e le fizieron su vasallage de que lleuó rrentas e tributos, e de que ouo los pechos, señoréalos todo de la mar acá quanto desa morisma bien era metido en el su señorío e fue venido a rrendimiento de la su merçed. (345)

What becomes apparent at this closing stage of the *Crónica* is that the narration of Fernando's territorial expansion does not involve nor imply a narrow view of cross-cultural relations, but quite the opposite. This tale of territorial spread has also involved a broadening of the understanding of truth in the historiographical context. The chronicle has continually delved into the details and nuances of relationships between Christians and Moors, even in the contexts where this would least be expected, namely the epic legends of Castile and the major Christian conquests in Andalusia, all in service of the kind of veracity that not only aims to persuade as plausible, but also to convey the sort of truths that transcend the particularities of history. The idea of reconquest, often rendered impenetrably triumphalist in other literary and historical contexts, is thus broken down into a series of idiosyncratic episodes which build a vision of Castilian identity that is founded on the minutiae of cross-cultural contact, exposing shared anxieties over loyalty, trust, counsel, and constancy in the political setting. These anxieties, at one remove from the primary matter of historical events, are the very building blocks of meaning in the chronicle.

CHAPTER 3

THE CLERIC AND THE FRONTIER IN THE *MESTER DE CLERECÍA*

The *mester de clerecía* (clerical art) was a mode of poetry produced in medieval Castile by clerics, primarily during the thirteenth century.¹ The poems are characterized by monorhymed quatrains of 14 syllable lines known as *cuaderna vía* or “four-fold way,” and by their use of the vernacular, rendering them precious vestiges of a new poetic form, and of the transition to a new literary language. As the product of Old Castile in the thirteenth century, these are works forged in an intellectual and political atmosphere where former certitudes and orthodoxies were meeting with change, and so they bear witness not just to a richly inventive clerical environment, but to political and social change at a broader level, bridging the innermost spiritual concerns of the cleric and a geopolitical picture where the Islamic presence in Spain was being gradually forced to retreat in the wake of the crushing defeat of the Almohads at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 and Christian pressure thereafter.² Toward the middle of the thirteenth century Córdoba (1236), Jaén (1246) and Seville (1248) were won by Fernando III, providing three strategic bases from which to put pressure on the Muslim emirate (Bazzana et al. 1992, 53). This political situation might suggest an upsurge in triumphalist sentiment in the literary output of Christian Castile, particularly that emanating from monastic environments but the *mester* texts are fine evidence of what Gabrielle Spiegel calls “the literary text as the site of multiple, often contradictory, historical realities” (1997, 26).

This chapter concentrates on three poems, two works by Gonzalo de Berceo (c.1196–c.1259), the early thirteenth-century saints’ lives *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos*, and the anonymous *Poema de Fernán González* (c. 1250).³ Berceo is the first named poet in Spanish literature; brought up in Berceo and San Millán de Suso,

Berceo almost certainly studied Canon Law at Palencia before returning to the cenobium of San Millán in a clerical capacity, perhaps as a confessor. His poetry evinces the intellectual rigor of the educated cleric, yet at the same time demonstrates familiarity with the particularly local context of La Rioja, including in his language.⁴ Both aspects of his biography have, however, been exaggerated by critics; Anthony Lappin describes how “a whole series of mythifications regarding Gonçalvo’s relationship with the monastery have been created since perhaps the fourteenth or fifteenth century and have continued to be elaborated and embroidered down to the present” (2008, 9) while, conversely, a tendency to read his poetry as that of a simple rustic priest has also been in evidence.⁵ All we know of the author of the *Poema de Fernán González* is that he was probably a monk or cleric closely associated with the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza, in the province of Burgos. Although all three poems could be accused of vilifying the Moors in fairly aggressive terms,⁶ my view is that their imaginative and constructive depiction of the frontier between Christians and Moors invites us to reconsider boundaries and borderlines in the context of both physical and symbolic space. All three poems raise the question of what the term *frontera* really means in the context of thirteenth-century literature; whether it is a physical entity or an imagined space, a fixed or peripatetic divide, permeable or impermeable.⁷ The relationship between Christians and Moors has to be read, therefore, in conjunction with a multifaceted, enigmatic representation of land, space, and frontier.

If the subject matter of the poems is much concerned with what lies between two groups, so too does their poetics occupy a middle space. The nature of the *mester de clerecía* is such that the poems are distinguished, both in form and content, by an ability to combine religious teaching with a worldly touch, their authors acting “as intermediaries between the lay world of the unlettered and the secular wisdom and spiritual values which they had acquired through the privilege of their literacy” (Weiss 2006, 1). The hagiographical nature of all three poems, together with the presentation of their saintly and secular protagonists, Dominic, Aemilian, and Fernán, with heavy use of epic style and content means that these poems offer a combination of epic and hagiography that renders them accessible, active, and steeped in the ways of the world, but also deeply spiritual, liable to probe the depths of human error and sinfulness, and to offer reflection on the transition between this world and the next, thereby encouraging a fear of judgement, and the hope of grace through intercession.⁸ Theirs is a unique vista on religion, one which seems to be in keeping with spiritual currents that developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of “sensible devotion to the humanity of Christ and especially to the mysteries

of his earthly life that most appeal to the human heart" (Leclercq 1968, 243). Berceo's awareness of the shortness of human life, both as a personal concern and a didactic principle, is evident in the two *Vidas* in question in this chapter, and is an essential means of encouraging devotion in his audience. Joël Saugnieux has discussed Berceo's relationship with apocalyptic tradition, based on the assumption that San Millán de la Cogolla was one of the religious centers where this tradition was most strongly upheld, following the influence of Beatus of Liébana (1982, 153). He suggests that Berceo brings this tradition to a more human level, while developing a poetics of fear: "una técnica deliberada de acrecentamiento de espantos y pavores" (163). Berceo's arresting combination of church teaching on the Final Judgement and affinity with the human condition is closely echoed in the *Poema* and indeed epitomizes the range of the *mester de clerecía* more generally, where its authors sought to edify a public which included, but extended beyond, the clergy and, in so doing, combined didacticism with a distinctively personal and accessible touch.⁹ Thus, the determined dualism of these works in combining *clerecía*, learned and literate content, with *juglaría*, the minstrels' art.¹⁰

The middle position occupied by these poems is also accentuated by their ability to move between the literal and the symbolic. Their vision of land and space is a good example of this technique, as they use territorial boundaries and sacred spaces to establish a common, imagined past that can inform present identity, as well as providing signposts to, and reminders of, the kingdom of the next world. This is a form of geopiety, in the sense of a fusion of geographical and religious notions concerning their environment.¹¹ The work of Amy G. Remensnyder on monastic foundation legends in medieval southern France is particularly relevant to the *mester de clerecía*'s use of landscape to symbolic ends. She uses the term "imaginative memory" to describe a constructive relationship between past and present:

For imaginative memory implies a dialogue between then and now, a dialectic relationship of continuity between these two temporal spaces... Sharing an imagined past can establish and reaffirm the cohesion of a group. It provides a common set of symbols that help create the boundaries delineating and containing the community or society. Furthermore, as part of this symbolic set of boundaries, the past creates an identity that is relational, differential, even oppositional. Implicitly or explicitly, this identity situates the group in relation to others and defines it as different. (1995, 2)

Remensnyder goes on to observe, in the context of medieval southwest France, how: "Rooted in place, the monastic legends thus fashioned a

larger vision of space, one centered on the abbey, to be sure, but one that at the same time embraced and created a broader landscape" (1995, 6–7). The *mester de clerecía* shares this ability to embrace and create a broader landscape, raising the question of the relationship between the monasteries, their saintly patrons, and a broader national context. Patronage, writes Stephen Wilson "frequently had a political element... First, within the Church, cults were used to promote and defend the interests of individual monasteries and churches, of religious orders, of dioceses and of the papacy" (1983, 26). He describes how "important shrines were nearly always kept by monasteries, and the fortune and well-being of the monastery depended on the prestige and success of the shrine" (26). Brian Dutton linked Berceo with this practice to the extreme, suggesting that he was involved in the creation of forged documents which asserted the rights of the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla to receive annual tributes from the people (Berceo 1967). These so-called *votos de San Millán* were supposedly given as thanks for Saint Aemilian's contribution to the Christian victory over Muslim armies at Simancas in 939. For Dutton, the *Vida de San Millán*, which narrates how Saint Aemilian earned this offering, was a strategic and propagandistic document: "Narra la vida y milagros del santo fundador y sirve de vehículo para difundir la historia de los votos y animar a las gentes a pagarlos" (Dutton in Berceo 1992, 122). Since Dutton, critics have refuted this claim; Ian Michael and Juan-Carlos Bayo refer to Berceo as not necessarily a forger "interesado pero no necesariamente falsario" (2006), while Lappin suggests that while it cannot be doubted that Berceo composed the *Vida de San Millán* with the aim of encouraging the *vota*, "one should not stretch the point too much"; Berceo "was attempting to convert the payment of the *vota* from a legal obligation, that had stood as long as anyone could remember but was honoured more in the breach than the observance, to be considered a work of devotion" (2008, 113–14). Marta Ana Diz supports the idea that devotion and propaganda may go hand in hand: "El error reside en pensar como contradictorios la fe sincera y el deseo de hacer propaganda."¹²

In the case of the *Poema*, there are strong voices in support of its primarily economic interests concerning the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza (Harvey 1976, 77, Lacarra 1979, 41). Miguel Ángel Muro Munilla refers to "la manifiesta función propagandística a favor del monasterio de Arlanza," noting the similarity of the work in this regard to Berceo's *Vida de San Millán* and *Vida de Santo Domingo* (1994, 13–14). Equally compelling, however, is the poem's obvious patriotism (Menéndez y Pelayo 1914, 221, Davis 1948, Nagore de Zand 1987–89). For Alan Deyermond, the combination of the two "leads to some weaknesses in the poem's effect on its audience, since emotion tends to be divided between Castile

and Fernán González" (1971, 38). Clearly, economic interest is a factor in the *mester* works, as in cults of saints more generally, but it is not the sole motivation and ought not to overshadow the artistic value of these works, their unique poetics of the middle ground—in social, spiritual, and formal terms—and their imaginative and constructive depiction of the frontier between Christians and Moors.

The "Vida de Santo Domingo": Bonds and Borders

Gonzalo de Berceo's verse account of the life of Saint Dominic of Silos follows in a rich and evolving tradition of hagiographical writing about Saint Dominic, who enjoyed cult status in medieval Castile. The *Vida de Santo Domingo* is based on a Latin source, the late eleventh-century *Vita Dominici Exiliensis*, ascribed to a monk named Grimaldus who was a contemporary of the Saint. Berceo's Dominic is a figure of the frontier; strategic references at the beginning and end of the *Vida*—"el que dicen de Silos que salva la frontera" (3d), "teniése la frontera toda por más segura" (750d)—frame this poetic representation of the saint's life with a clear association between his sainthood and the securing of the physical border between Christian Spain and Moorish al-Andalus. The term *frontera*, which was first documented in the will of Ramiro I of Aragon in 1059, did not enter widespread use until the start of the thirteenth century, when it came to represent a firmer idea of the frontier between Christian and Muslim territories than had hitherto been the case.¹³ Pascal Buresi describes how early appearances of the term concerned the frontier with Islamic territory, while it was used much later in the rest of the Peninsula, where other words like *fines*, *extremum*, *extremitas*, *confines* were employed, and often referred to a territory rather than its limits (2001, 54–55). André Bazzana, Pierre Guichard, and Phillipe Sénac suggest that the Castilian term "frontera" encompassed three new notions: first, the awareness of the existence of a precise limit beyond that which one would associate with a foreign country; second, the permanence of conflict between states, and finally a desire to render material which would little by little become a true frontier via a framework of fortresses (1992, 53).¹⁴ Peter Linehan confirms that "it was not until the 1220s that Castilians coined a word to express the concept of a territorial 'frontier.' It is the duty of kings to defend their frontiers, Fernando III declared in 1222—*frontarias* constituted by series of fortresses or the course of rivers" (2003, 46).

In Berceo's sophisticated depiction of Dominic as a negotiator of physical borderlines and boundaries, the frontier is more than a land border. Another early reference to the "frontera" in the *Vida* expresses how

Dominic keeps the devil and his tricks at arm's length with the use of the idiom "tenerli la frontera," to keep him at bay:

De quanto nos decimos él mucho mejor era,
por tal era tenido en toda la ribera;
bien sabié al diablo tenerli la frontera,
que non lo engañasse por ninguna manera. (48)

The same idiom is used in the *Vida de San Millán* (53b) in connection with the devil's attempt to sabotage Aemilian's life as a hermit and in both cases it evokes a setting of frontier warfare to express a spiritual clash. Here, the conflation between the spread of Dominic's saintly fame throughout the geographical "ribera" and his spiritual distancing of the devil illustrates perfectly how Berceo moves between literal and symbolic representations of the frontier.¹⁵ He invites a more figurative reading of the frontier as a boundary between good and evil, alerting Berceo's audience to the overlap between the geographical frontier and the frontier between man and God; the notion that the devil may lurk on the other side, so to speak, does not, therefore, begin and end with the Moors, but uses them to concretize fears and anxieties of a more eschatological nature. Michael Gerli's observations about the Granadan frontier in the context of the *Romancero viejo* make for a suggestive comparison:

Each event, each encounter on the frontier carried within itself the potential to rehearse one or more biblical plots, or to invoke and enact a larger eschatological lesson, pattern, or text. Put simply, the Granadan frontier was a human zone steeped in all manner of textual memory and textual ancestry where every event and every circumstance pointed to the continual renewal of prior narratives. (2005, 162)¹⁶

For Berceo, the frontier also invites reflection on captivity and constriction. This is both a literal theme, enacted in actual imprisonments of both Moors and Christians, and a symbolic one, a means of playing on the biblical idiom of freedom and captivity in order to explore Dominic's relationship with God, and establish his role as one whose dominance over the Moors seeks not just to restore Christian control over the land, but to promote pious devotion from ever-extending corners of it. Thus, the saint's particular connection with the liberation of captives is united with a broader geographical ethos of attracting devotion from across the land: "por ond de luengas tierras li embían bodivos" (352d).

Manifestations of borders and bonds in the poem create the impression that frontiers are not hard lines but inherently flexible, representing both proximity and distance. This is a factor in historical studies of the

frontier; José Rodríguez Molina describes the Islamic frontier as “zona de separación y encuentro entre dos estados, dos sociedades, dos culturas, dos mundos diferentes e ideológicamente bien definidos” (2007, 9).¹⁷ Pierre Toubert’s views of the frontier uphold this point more broadly:

La frontière exprime une situation contradictoire... la frontière politique par excellence... apparaît comme la plus parfaite illustration de cette contradiction. Elle est à la fois le produit de la guerre et le gage de la paix, le lieu extrême où une volonté de transgression territoriale vient buter contre la volonté contraire d’un État voisin ou contre un milieu naturel, inerte ou hostile. (1992, 12)

The relativity of the frontier perspective has important spiritual and political repercussions. In a spiritual context, it manifests as a painful awareness that man is both close to, and divorced from, God, a paradox which sainthood seeks to address for the benefit of mankind by way of mediation and miracle. Saint Dominic, a devotee of the Virgin Mary in the *Vida*—who was herself hailed as an intercessor or mediator between mankind and God in twelfth and thirteenth-century Europe (Pelikan 1996, 131–33)—performs a mediatory role that is constructed to a significant degree through miraculous intervention, where he is the means of revealing God’s power, but not the source of it, “es un valedor, un intermediario de doble dirección entre los fieles y Dios, que tan sólo propicia los milagros. El poder sobrenatural de realizar los prodigios únicamente lo ostenta el Creador” (Baños Vallejo 1986, 23). Dominic’s status as “confessor,” which is continually stressed by Berceo (160a, 359b, 440a, 442d, 669d, 705b, 761a), is further evidence of his mediation. In the political sense, the paradoxical distance and proximity inherent in ideas of the frontier presents in the creation of group identity, where the frontier defines separateness, but does so in relation to that from which it is separating itself. This is a staple of critics’ assessments of the political frontier: “Boundaries are marked because communities interact in some way or other with entities from which they are, or wish to be, distinguished” (Cohen 1985, 12); “national identity, like ethnic or communal identity, is contingent and relational... in many ways the sense of difference is strongest where some historical sense of cooperation and relatedness remains” (Sahlins 1989, 270–71). Applied to the political context of the *Vida*, this suggests a very different reading of the notion of the geographical frontier between Christian and Muslim Spain, one where the Moors are not just the objects of distancing and denigration, but are, in structural and symbolic terms, essential to the creation of an imagined, and imaginative, collective identity.

Saint Dominic's life is a series of connections with geographical space in both literal and symbolic terms. A set of associations are built up at the start of the *Vida* around the saint's early life in his home town of Cañas (in La Rioja Alta) and its hinterland, a setting whose limits, both spatial and spiritual, Dominic quickly begins to realize. Dominic is referred to as "natural . . . de Cañas" (5b) at the outset, an obedient boy who tends the family flock in all weathers and extremities. Berceo uses Dominic's role as family shepherd, however, to draw comparisons between his earthly diligence and watchfulness (22b), and the constant vigil of God over mankind, "El Pastor que non duerme en ninguna sazón" (24b). He also connects Dominic's endeavors with the holy Patriarchs, all of whom were shepherds (27). These connections serve to preface Dominic's development from a tender of sheep into a steward of human souls:

Señor Sancto Domingo de primas fue pastor,
después fue de las almas padre e guiador;
bueno fue en comienço, a postremas mejor. (31a-c)

It is at the geographical limit of Cañas, interestingly, that Dominic decides he wants to become a cleric: "andando con so grey por término de Cañas, | asmó de seer clérigo, saber buenas façañas" (34bc). This emphasis upon the town's limit provides an early example of the importance of border spaces, as the place where his spiritual ambitions are concretized and realized. This is the beginning of Dominic's casting as one who crosses a frontier into wild and isolated space to live the life of a hermit and, in so doing, follows in the footsteps of the early saints—John the Baptist, Anthony, Paul, Mary of Egypt, Aemilian, Felix—who went to live "por los yermos, mesquinos e lazrados" (60bc). Berceo emphasizes the incompatibility of a comfortable life, among people, with spiritual freedom, thus asserting in general terms a relationship between geographical space and spiritual grace and, in more specific ones, suggesting that it is in the wild, open spaces away from civilization that sin and sanctity are negotiated. Of course, distance from the security of the *poblado* in terms of thirteenth-century Spain cannot but evoke its alternative, the Moorish frontier, described by historians as an inhospitable and underpopulated place: "For the Christians, the dominant image of the frontier was a desert—*locus desertus*—a place that was uninhabited, due to the conditions following from the Islamic conquest, and uninhabitable given the prevailing conditions of insecurity and threat of incursion" (1979, 58). Linehan describes its salient "lack of manpower" (2003, 42) while Rodríguez Molina confirms this image of the frontier as a desert space as emanating from the Asturian chronicles, but questions

the materiality and permeability of the frontier “¿Era una línea física de separación o un muro ideológico? ... ¿Estamos ante una frontera abierta o una frontera cerrada?” (2007, 12). The matter of the permeability of the frontier is, for Berceo, a relevant one, as his vision is not so much of a desert, but of a neighboring and porous border, which the historical frontier, by its very nature, must have been:

Eran en essi tiempo los moros muy vezinos,
non osavan los omes andar por los caminos. (353ab)¹⁸

The first miracle associated with Saint Dominic occurs when the Moors raid Soto and take a young man named Dominic captive, exposing him to great physical hardship:

Metiéronlo en fierros e en dura cadena,
de lazar e de famne dábanli fiera pena. (355ab)

The taking of captives was a near daily occurrence on the frontier and captives were subject to rather precarious conditions, often involving hard physical labor (Rodríguez Molina 2007, 83, 88). The capture is chiefly an economic manoeuvre on the part of the Moors, who demand a large ransom from the family (357b), again a common occurrence on the historical frontier (Rodríguez Molina 2007, 86). The relatives of the boy are unable to pay the ransom in full, and much of the narrative involves an idiom of payment and quantification that refers both to monetary value and a more intangible assessment of worth. We see this when the narrative moves from the relatives' concern with payment, “ca non podién por nada los dineros ganar” (357d) to them approaching Saint Dominic in his capacity as “confessor onrado” (359b). The verb “valer” takes on a more symbolic quality here, “si él no lis valiesse todo era librado” (359d). The miracle continues in this vein. Saint Dominic alludes to his own lack of money and possessions, “nin oro nin argent” (364a) with which to assist, save a horse that he is willing to donate, but invites God to supply the difference, “cumpla lo que falliere el Rey omnipotent” (364d). This idea of a transaction that is at once economic and spiritual is confirmed when Dominic's help is later described using terms expressing provision, “lo basteció” (373c).

While the relatives go off to sell the horse, Saint Dominic intercedes on their behalf to God with great success as the prisoner manages to escape. In narrating the release, Berceo diminishes the Moorish threat in the eyes of the audience as if in this individual act of defiance a greater power struggle is won. The Moors are reduced to a passive role as

inadequate jailors overpowered by divine intervention; a Moor standing guard is quickly bypassed (370c) while, summarizing the miracle, Berceo expresses how Dominic, acting through God, is empowered with grace to overcome their threat:

que faze ennos moros grandes escarnimientos,
quebrántanlis las cárceres, tórnales sonolientos,
sácalis los cativos a los fadamalientos. (374b-d)

The description of the Moors here undermines their military might and also seems to make them more familiar, fallible, and human. Not only are they described as sleepy or drowsy, however, but they are also “fadamaliento,” literally possessing of ill fortune, a term which leans toward the providential and the eschatological.¹⁹ The Moors remain close enough to see in human terms, but close enough also to fear as a source of generalized upheaval.

Saint Dominic’s miraculous powers are connected with captivity once again in the account of some cunning, but somewhat jittery, Moorish escapees. These Moors are initially imprisoned within Saint Dominic’s church: “avié en su elesia moros herropeados” (433b).²⁰ One night they fool their guards and, hiding in a very isolated cave to avoid being spotted by shepherds at dawn. In a fascinating twist on the usual habitation of caves by Christian hermits, Berceo stresses the removal of the cave from civilization, “Sabiénla pocos omnes ca era apartada” (435a). Instead of being the locus of faithful Christian piety, however, this cave is a temporary home for treacherous Moors, “metiéronse en una cueva los traïdores” (434d). It is interesting to observe that in this episode the Moors play the role of the cornered, “gente aquedada” (435c), fearing intrusion and discovery, a role that contrasts with the mood of the poem of keeping the Moors at bay, as expressed in the phrase *tenerli la frontera* discussed previously. Having escaped their church prison, they find the cave no less of a restrictive environment. The Moors are ill at ease in their hideout; they keep a keen lookout and wish to leave in favor of a different, less fearful, location. It seems to be the rural landscape that makes them so nervous, in contrast to which Saint Dominic is portrayed in close harmony with his natural environment. Dominic’s divine intuition as to the location of the escapees is represented in direct connection with his traversal of the landscape:

Andava el buen padre fuera por sus degañas,
entendiólas por Dios estas nuevas estrañas . . .
e sopo do entraron, la foz e las montañas. (436ab,d)

Dominic's unobstructed movement through the land runs in parallel to the seamless passage of knowledge to him from God and helps to build the picture of a geographical space innately associated with divine grace. We see this develop when Dominic tells the friars of Cruña of the situation, backed by a message from the monastery of Silos, and a host of them set off in search of the Moors and the prospect of bountiful material reward (439ab). While nobody can find the escapees, who remain firmly hidden, "muy quedados las cabeças arteras" (439d), Dominic sets out with his own party in pursuit. Dominic is described as heading straight into the mountains, with which he is familiar, "metióse por los montes, quedo a su sabor" (440b), and in the manner of a skilled hunter, who heads straight for his prey following the correct trail: "fo derecho al cabo como buen venador, | que tiene bien vatuda, non anda en error" (440cd). Berceo then proceeds to depict him as a kind of epic warrior in religious garb, effectively a Christian knight, "Su escápula cinta, el adalil gozoso" (441a) who successfully finds the escapees and takes them back to the monastery. This is a feat recorded as miraculous by the poet. The description of the recovery of the Moors resonates with a Christian idiom of joy and glory: "la casa gozoso" (441b), "a onra del Glorioso" (441d), "el confessor glorioso" (442d) that underlines the rightfulness of their return to incarceration in a Christian edifice where, embarrassed by their behavior, they resume a life of service to Saint Dominic, never daring again to make their escape.

The point of this episode seems to lie in asserting Dominic's penetrating intuition as to the whereabouts of the Moors as a product both of divine grace and affinity with the landscape, where the two are closely connected. Moreover, it is Dominic's abilities as hunter and religious warrior that successfully thwart the guile of the Moors, which they continue to employ, despite their trepidation, by hiding so adeptly in the cave. These aspects of Dominic's portrayal add to the impression of the frontier saint by affirming a connection with the world of borderland warfare of the Castilian epic, and by anchoring his character in the remote, mountainous landscapes associated with the hunter, landscape which he has mastered through his own personal drive to escape the restriction of Cañas. Successful Moorish containment comes with this composite frontier character.

The connection between frontier warfare, incarceration, and miraculous intervention continues in three further examples where Christians instigate attacks against the Moors and are taken prisoner. As well as promoting Dominic's saintly profile and particular connection with freeing captives, these examples all deal with *cavalleros* and thus connect the saint with the world of the Christian knight, to the extent that the narratives

take on an increasingly epic flavor. It is also important to note Berceo's emphasis on war and violence. Francisco García Fitz reminds us of the violent reality of the thirteenth-century frontier:

Los conflictos bélicos, las formas de hacer la guerra en la frontera, adquirieron el perfil de una guerra de desgaste paulatino, pero constante, de los soportes económicos, políticos y psicológicos de las poblaciones de frontera, una guerra de baja intensidad pero que generaba una sensación de desasosiego permanente, de violencia habitual, de inseguridad obsesiva, de frontera caliente, perfiles que sin duda contrastan agudamente con las imágenes de tolerancia y convivencia que a veces se ofrece de ella. (2001, 178–79)

The first example describes a man named Serván who, in bravely attempting to “fer mal a moros” (645d), falls instead into their hands and is taken in chains to Medina Célima. The particularly oppressive nature of the prison is stressed, “logar muy estrecho, de tapias bien cercado” (646a), and bolstered by the emphatically disapproving tone on the part of the author: the prison is “mala” (647a), the locks “malos” (647d), the clutches of the Moors are “malos manos” (646a), while the prisoner is subjected to “malos motes” (648b). The Moors are explicitly barbaric; described as “renegados” (647a), they inflict floggings on the captives, calling the Christians dogs, heretics, and rogues (648c). The conjunction of this oppressive physical space and the continued verbal slander of the Moors drives Serván to the limits of his tolerance, a state of “grand coita” (649a), where he entreates God to acknowledge his sorrowful situation. The religious divisions that are apparent in this episode, as stressed primarily by the Moors’ slander, harden in Serván’s prayers:

So de los enemigos de la cruz afontado,
porque tengo tu nomne so dellos malmenado. (651ab)

His prayer complete, reference is made to Serván falling into an exhausted but brief sleep shortly before dawn, “cerca era de gallos, media noche trocida” (652b). The allusion to the cockerel, combined with Serván’s overwhelming anguish and desperation, “desperado de salud e de vida” (652d), recalls Christ’s Agony in the Garden, the testing of a soul “sorrowful even unto death” (Mt. 26.38). In doing so, it raises the status of this prison episode, turning Serván into a true servant of Christ suffering for his faith, and reminds us once again of the way the frontier inspires the rehearsal of narratives of an eschatological nature (Gerli 2005, 167).

Serván’s anguish starts to be alleviated when a terrifyingly bright light fills the prison cell, out of which a man all in white, seemingly an

ordained cleric, appears. Serván is so frightened he falls on his face but the figure, Saint Dominic, informs him not to be scared, since his prayers for release have been heard by God (654–55). Serván is at first sceptical, asking for confirmation that this is not a deceitful apparition by the devil, “fantasma mintrosa” (656c). Dominic then takes a wooden implement and miraculously removes all of the prisoner’s irons with this “dulz madero” (659c), as if he were crushing garlic in a mortar, “non moldrié más aína ajos en el mortero” (659d). This charmingly domestic comparison underscores the accessibility and humanity of Dominic, despite his awe-inspiring entrance. Saint Dominic then throws a rope down to Serván to allow him to scale the prison walls and pulls him by his chains as if he were turning a spindle, “como farié un fuso” (662b), a further simile from the domestic realm. On releasing the prisoner, Dominic underlines that “abiertas son las puertas, duerme la muzlemía” (663b). This has both symbolic and literal inflection; the sleeping Moors recall the example cited here of the drowsy Moors, but also evoke the more particular biblical trope of expectant waiting for the coming of Christ.²¹ Here and in the ensuing stanzas Dominic particularly stresses the open physical space now facing Serván in terms which reflect the flow of divine grace. We see this in the repetition of the term “embargado” and its cognates, first alluded to when Dominic tells him “embargado non seas” (664a) and later repeated: “non abrás nul embargo” (664d) and “non sovo embargado” (665c), and “nul embargo non ovo” (666c). This is employed in conjunction with an emphasis on the more esoteric idea of guidance, as Dominic tells him “non avrás nul travajo ca avrás bona guía” (663c), an idea later repeated “tanto fo bien guiado” (666c). That we are intended to read this on a more symbolic level is confirmed by the allusion to Serván keeping to the right path, and not straying. The path physically leads to the monastery at Silos, and more specifically to Dominic’s tomb, on which Serván is instructed to leave his chains (664bc). However, the reference also denotes his adherence to the “path” of his faith: “nin perdió la carrera, nin andido errado” (666b).

The treatment of Serván’s imprisonment and release in terms which have a strong symbolic and biblical resonance prepares the ground for the reception of the miracle. It is a Church Feast Day when Serván arrives at Silos and a cardinal, Ricart, is visiting from Rome, with an entourage of bishops and abbots (667–68). Berceo paints an entertaining picture of Serván arriving in the midst of these festivities, carrying his chains, in poor clothes and shoes, his hair matted, his beard straggly, and falling at the foot of Saint Dominic’s tomb (669). He addresses the Saint, thanking him for freeing him from prison and offering his chains (670). The entire city quickly resounds with noise as the news of Dominic’s latest

miraculous feat spreads (671a). The presence of the papal legate is fortuitous; Cardinal Ricart carries word of this miracle back to Rome where Dominic is proclaimed a saint by the pope (674d), a perfect example of the way in which this frontier narrative is anything but parochial, but seeks to generate fame and devotion from an extended territorial reach. It is interesting to note that the surge in Dominic's perceived sanctity as a result of this feat is also articulated in spatial terms, "dicién que tal tesoro, candela tan lumnosa, | devió seer metida en arca más preciosa" (673cd). The allusion to the chest here, combined with the tombstone setting evokes, perhaps misleadingly, a sanctity sealed, contained, revered from the outside, "complido" (674d) yet the presence of the chains recalls Dominic's more itinerant, guiding role through barriers and obstacles endemic to religious life at the frontier.

In the following example, there is marked increase in epic flavor, both in the style of the narration and the language used. Berceo begins in clear story-telling mode, "Un cavallero era natural de Hlantada," while the protagonist, Pedro, is given an epithetical introduction as "cavallero de precio, de fazienda granada" (700ab), and "Pedro, el de Hlantada" (704a). The tale is also set in Alarcos, despite the fact that the Latin source names *castrum Alaietum*, the castle of Aledo, the difference being that while there had been a great battle between the Christian army and the Almoravids at Aledo in 1091, the battle of Alarcos had been the site of a heavy defeat to the Almohads by Alfonso VIII and the Castilians in 1095, which saw them retreat to Toledo. Given that Pedro is part of a Christian attempt to attack Alarcos which backfires and sees him imprisoned, it seems reasonable to surmise that Berceo sought to accentuate the feeling of subjection to Moorish forces by substituting Aledo for the slightly more recent and perhaps more strategically damaging Christian defeat at Alarcos. Adding to the epic flavor is Berceo's lively use of structural repetitions, inversions, and paranomasia: "Cuidaron traher prenda e fueron ý prendados, | cuidaron fer ganancia e fueron engañados" (702ab).

The Moors are once again depicted as treacherous "renegados" (702c, 705d) although the capture of Christians is connected with their lack of good guidance, preempting Saint Dominic's later direction, "non fueron guiados de sabio avorero" (701d). Once the Christians are taken, they are dispersed across the Moorish territories as prisoners serving different Moorish masters: "fueron por el morismo todos mal derramados, | nunca en esti mundo se vidieron juntados" (703cd). The motif of capture and dispersal is a realistic, disquieting image of the sheer isolation of Pedro in foreign territories, and serves a figurative purpose too, in the sense that the Christians, scattered across hostile lands, are enduring a perceived separation from God, in the remedy of which Dominic will be instrumental.

Pedro ends up in Murcia, not in a prison but heavily guarded in irons in a deep cave (704cd). The cave introduces a motif of blindness not present in previous prison narratives, referred to with the transferred epithet “tan ciega prisión” (706b). In Pedro’s prayers, meanwhile, he implores God to assist him before he ends up “ciego o muerto” (706d). The emphasis here on blindness forms a poetic prelude to the illuminated figure of Dominic who appears to Pedro at night, “una lucencia grand e maravillosa | por medio de la cueva que era tenebrosa” (708ab). Dominic appears again in monkish garb, this time with a staff, informing Pedro that he will end his anguish and, as in the previous example, Pedro is sceptical and frightened, fearing that this is a test from his master that will see him beaten and beheaded if he tries to get up (711cd). Pedro’s fear of reprisal from his Moorish master underscores the violent treatment associated with the Moors, which he dreads so much it risks inhibiting his trust in God, and sees him continually seek verification from Dominic as to his identity and benevolent intentions: “si cosa de Dios eres, que me fagas creído” (714b), “descúbrite qui eres por ond certero sea” (715b). When he reveals his identity, Saint Dominic is described by Berceo as a “trotero” (716a) or messenger (and later as a visitor, 719ab); this strategic reference to his mediatory role between humanity and God seems particularly apt in the case of Pedro, a story about geographical exile as much as an unwillingness to make a leap of faith without support. The narrative continues to emphasize Dominic’s middle position, filling the terrifying gulf between man and God, “non son, bien me lo creas, en vazío caídas” (718d). In the case of this Christian knight, therefore, Dominic’s mediatory role comes strongly to light, added to his now clearly formulated status as guardian of Christianity and liberator of prisoners (717bc).

The escape plan takes advantage of the Islamic holy day, Friday (720a–c). Dominic describes how Pedro’s master will want to show him off and make him dig with another two prisoners while he enjoys a feast. Pedro will be invited to rest and a Moor will lay his head on him and fall asleep (Berceo 1992, 438). At this point Pedro is to make a stealthy escape, putting something at the back of the Moor’s neck to rest on, and he will see that the chain around his ankle will have come unattached (723). It is fascinating to see that sleep and drowsiness on the part of the Moors are once again associated with a Christian being able to slip out of prison; while moments of rest may be the most logical time to escape, they also recall the initial description of Dominic as ever-wakeful: “El Pastor que non duerme en ninguna sazón” (24b) and seems to be set up as a deliberate contrast to highlight an innate deficiency on the part of the Moors. This is certainly supported by Dominic’s establishment throughout the narrative as a watchful guardian. Dominic’s role as guide, as seen in the

previous miracle, is also stressed in connection with the escape: “por do Dios te guiare cuídate de andar, | abrás bien guionage, non te temas errar” (724bc). We may usefully refer to his initial description as first a shepherd, guiding his flock through the physical landscape, then a guider of souls, leading the faithful through the pitfalls of life (31a–c). The escape comes to pass exactly as predicted, including the element of guidance on the journey on the part of Dominic, “dioli por la carrera guionage e vito” (727d), until he reaches Toledo.

While the beginning of this miracle is touched with epic style, the successful escape of the knight and his arrival at Toledo is recounted in a fittingly triumphant manner and in such a way that the geographical frontier between the Moors and Christians is brought back into view with reference to “toda alién sierra e por Estremadura” (730a), and with direct allusion to the securing of the land border, “teniése la frontera toda por más segura” (730d). The atmosphere remains epic, evident in the detail of the fame of the “ventura” (730b) spreading throughout Castile. However, Berceo sees fit to emphasize the relationship between Saint Dominic and the *infanzones* (lower nobility) in most explicit terms:

Quiquiere que lo diga, o muger o varón,
que el padrón de Silos non saca infançon,
repiéndase del dicho, ca non dize razón,
denuest al buen confessor, predrá mal galardón. (731)

Dominic's status as saint of Christian knights serves to emphasize the usefulness of his capabilities as liberator of captives, given the high proportion of which must have been captured in battle with the Moors, but it also strengthens his overriding image as saint of the frontier, in all of its senses.

Should the connection between Saint Dominic and the warrior class not be convincing enough, Berceo adds a further tale of a knight who is saved from a tight spot, “logar muy estrecho” (732d). Alfonso VI controls the town of Guadalajara, which is populated by Moors, “estonz de moros era, mas bien assegurada, | ca del rey don Alfonso era enseñorada” (734cd). The Christian knights of Fita, possessing of no respect or fear for the king, unlike the seemingly subjugated Moors, seek to take possession of Guadalajara for themselves and mount an overnight siege (737ab). One of the wrongdoers handed over, a knight named Juanes, is singled out for his ability to lead others, “por quis guiavan otros e fazién su mandado” (747b), and distinguished by his loyal behavior to his relatives, “sobre las otras mañas era buen parentero” (748b). The connection between the qualities of Juanes—guidance of others and family loyalty—and those of

Saint Dominic himself are clear, and place him in a favorable position for his many prayers to God and to Dominic, as well as those of his many supporters, to be answered. Juanes is released but owing to an apparently missing page in Berceo's source, to which he alludes, we are not told how, and Berceo refuses to speculate (751d). The final miracle moves, therefore, rather abruptly into the ending of Berceo's *Vida* where he states "la gesta del confessor en cabo la tenemos" (754c), referring directly to the narrative as a work in the epic model, a *gesta*, and confirming the connection between Saint Dominic and the warrior-like world of the frontier. This is complemented by a number of references on the part of Berceo to himself as a *joglar* (759d) and a *joglar* of God at that (775b, 776). As well as evoking the might of Dominic through an epic lens, these references to minstrelsy highlight Berceo's ambition to broadcast the saint's fame far and wide and to stimulate devotion from an extensive territorial range, a point proven by his inclusion of pilgrims, "peregrinantes" (773c), in the list of those deserving Dominic's grace.

In his final assessment of Saint Dominic, Berceo uses the epic, martial flavor of the preceding miracles to connect warfare between Christians and Moors with conflict between righteousness and sin. The frontier between man and God comes sharply into view again as it becomes clear that the bellicose themes of the *Vida*, and the representation of the Moors as frontier opponents serves both a literal and a symbolic purpose. There is no doubt that Berceo is seeking to stimulate devotion to Saint Dominic for his endeavors in liberating Christian captives from Moorish control, thereby building a logical association between the saint, his monastery at Silos, and the expansionist ambitions of the warrior classes. However, Dominic's epic stature serves to bring the "regno celestial" back into view (777d). Thus we see him ask for Dominic's defense against the onslaught of sin, here conceived of in terms of an attacking arrow:

Señor Sancto Domingo, confessor acabado,
temido de los moros, de christianos amado,
señor, tú me defiende de golpe de pecado,
que de la su saeta no me vea colpado. (761)

Berceo also recreates the feudal model of service and reward to serve a religious framework: "Atal señor devemos servir a aguardar" (756a). Saint Dominic's capabilities of defending mankind are, therefore, a culminating theme of the poem, and seem to best unite his associations with geographical and spatial frontiers, and the frontier between man and God. Dominic is like a triumphant warrior, "tú passesti por todo pero fust vencedor" (768c), now in a position to defend mankind in all its

weakness from the devil: “tú nos defende délli ca es can traidor” (768d). The epic atmosphere evoked by Berceo in the latter stages of the *Vida* therefore goes beyond the representation of Christian–Moorish conflict; the Moors become part of a flexible vision of spatial frontiers which ultimately serves important devotional and spiritual ends. Through the theme of Moorish captivity, one very important aspect of imprisonment is highlighted, one that has a wider application for the human condition; the ability of the limited environment to force man to look outside and elsewhere, fixing his gaze and ambitions on the seemingly unattainable, just as Saint Dominic did from his early life.

‘Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla’: What Price Sin?

Like Saint Dominic, Berceo’s Saint Aemilian is also a figure of the frontier, whose saintly life is closely tied to the representation of land and territorial space. In this composition, Berceo adapts the *Vita Beati Emilianii* by Saint Braulius of Zaragoza (590–651), dividing his work, in accordance with his source, into three sections: the life of Saint Aemilian, the miracles worked during his life, and posthumous miracles. After the last miracle told by Braulius, Berceo adds a long episode describing the so-called Votos de San Millán, as well as two further, traditional miracles. The addition of this description of tribute to Saint Aemilian strengthens the impression that sainthood, for Berceo, is implicitly connected with notions of territory, loyalty, and community, and that the representation of the Moors is an essential means of drawing attention to the way in which land borders function both to circumscribe and to define a collective identity, as well as to trace the limits between this life and the next.

Saint Aemilian’s early life is cast in distinctly geographical terms as Berceo pinpoints his birthplace:

Cerca es de Cogolla de parte d’orient’,
dos leguas sobre Nágera, al pie de Sant Lorent’,
el barrio de Verceo Madriz li yaz present’,
y nació sant Millán, esto sin falliment’. (3)

This allusion to his birth locale becomes an important coordinate of his saintly identity in the first stage of the narrative. It sets the scene for his early activity as a shepherd in the local hills in terms which suggest both an inherently provincial identity, “Andando por las sierras, su cayado fincando” (10a) and a metaphorical custodianship over human souls: “nin lobo nin res mala no li podié fer mal; | tornava so ganado sano a so corral” (8bc). Like Saint Dominic, Aemilian is motivated to change his

vocation and become a hermit. In Aemilian's case, however, God is more obviously instrumental in bringing about this change of heart, and the shift in vocation is backed by a strong emphasis on teaching and instruction, reflective of the pedagogical ethos of the *mester de clerecía*. In an irresistible sleep ordained by God Aemilian dreams an inspiring dream; on waking he is "maestrado" (11c), in the sense of being taught a divine awareness that the world is a domain of trickery, "Entendió que el mundo era pleno d'engaño" (12a). Thus a crusade against *engaño* is a central part of his religiosity as evidenced by his prayer that men be not tricked by the devil, "qe del mal enemigo non fuessen engañadas" (38d).

Seeking to become a hermit, Aemilian takes instruction from the knowledgeable Saint Felix. It is striking that throughout Aemilian's passage from shepherd to hermit, two vocations innately associated with the land, Berceo's description of the developing education and understanding of the saint is consistently interwoven with references to physical space. Thus, on first approaching Saint Felix, Aemilian professes to know nothing of the scholarship pertaining to his faith (18ab); his identity is instead wholly tied to his birthplace: "en Verceo fui nado, cerca es de Madriz" (19b). As Aemilian's learning grows, and he develops into "maestro profundado" (22c), his faith gains impetus, "en la creencia era más encendido" (23b), and he seeks to detach himself from the geographical coordinates that have hitherto shaped his identity: "por tornar a los montes, vevir más escondido" (23d). The borderline between Aemilian's provincial identity and the geographical remoteness that will mark him as a saint is expressed when Berceo alludes to the ancient valley to which the saint travels. Although his birthplace of Berceo is mentioned once more, this time it serves to distinguish the wild, snake-infested territory Aemilian now inhabits:

Cerca es de Verceo ond' él fue natural,
 encontra la Cogolla un anciano val;
 era en essi tiempo un fiero matarral,
 serpientes e culuebras avien en él ostal. (27)

In acknowledgment of his saintly aura, wild beasts bow their heads and retreat from the caves in which Aemilian seeks to establish his new dwelling, caves whose forbidding nature Berceo strongly emphasizes (31).

If Aemilian's early life is characterized by no learning and knowledge, but a strong geographical identity, as hermit and cave-dweller he continues to be defined by the reverse: *maestría* and geographical isolation. Unsurprisingly, the same applies to his family identity as he loosens local attachments to both territory and community. Initial reference to his

family upbringing and the role of his father is now rejected as “Parientes e vezinos aviélos olvidados” (35a, 45d). Aemilian continues to study ardently but is appalled when his fame spreads and people begin to disturb his prayer by processing toward his cave, preferring as he does to live with the serpents than to see such commotion in the vicinity (44–45). As Berceo describes Aemilian removing his rocky barrier and retreating further into the mountains to live with the wild beasts and to continue his harsh life of abstinence, in continuation of his promise of God (46–47), it becomes clear that his stubborn insistence on isolation is associated with a particularly powerful refutation of the devil, and that therein lies a key part of his saintly identity. After Berceo describes the onslaught of dreadful weather conditions—snow, ice, deadly winds, extremes of heat and cold (50)—that he endures, he alludes to the resentment this causes in the Devil (51d). Moreover, Berceo describes the saint as waging a form of ardent war against the Devil, “Guerreávalo mucho por muchas de maneras” (53a), keeping him at bay in the telling idiomatic terms that we have seen before with Saint Dominic, “teniéli las fronteras” (53b), which cannot help but evoke the frontier between Christian and Moorish lands as both a natural and a spiritual phenomenon.

Berceo’s description of the saint’s asceticism reaches a physical and rhetorical pinnacle when he describes Aemilian scaling the heights of the mountains and, at the same time, forging a path toward perfection, encapsulated in the verb *pujar*: “iva enna Cogolla todavía pujando, | e quanto más pujava más iva mejorando” (54cd). Suitably, Berceo invokes the inexpressibility *topos* at this very point, asking more of language that it can give: “De la sue santa vida ¿quí vos podrié dezir?” (55a). Continual references back to La Cogolla in this context place local and realistic coordinates on the scene once again, showing that a sense of local, Riojan identity in connection with the saint never really disappears, but is, in fact, an important measure of his sanctity. It seems, therefore, that Aemilian is a truly composite figure, made up of a profoundly local birth identity, rooted in the environs of La Rioja, and an ability to completely transcend that local milieu and, in so doing, change it, rendering it holy, sanctified, and special:

Benedictos los montes do est’ santo andido,
 benedictos los valles do sovo ascondido,
 benedictos los árbores so los quales estido,
 ca cosa fue angélica de bendición complido. (64)

This flexible relationship with the land, at local and more expansive levels, is a feature of hagiography more generally: “saints’ cults could...strengthen communities as broad as Christendom itself,

or...foster loyalties as specialized as those of a new town or craft. The life of the saint was closely intertwined with the community, and above all community had a territorial dimension" (Weinstein and Bell 1982, 166–67). The combination of place names and a more symbolic interpretation of the land as a locus of privation and prayer comes together again in a reference to Moncayo where, once again, Aemilian is associated with the verb *pujar*, in the combined sense of to climb higher, and to strive to be greater: "siempre en bien pujava, andando e seyendo" (67d). This represents the eastern limit of his wandering before he is called back into public life.

Berceo's description of Aemilian's return is replete with borderline associations, literal and symbolic. The city of Tarragona, the seat of Bishop Dimio who sends for Aemilian, is described as bordering the three kingdoms of Aragon, Castile, and Navarre thus making it a powerful reminder of the difference between interior limits between the Christian kingdoms and the border with Muslim Spain: "yaze entre tres regnos, de todos en frontera, | Aragón e Castiella, Navarra la tercera" (71bc). Tarragona is also a conduit for more symbolic readings of the frontier. A letter issued from this frontier city prompts Aemilian to descend from the mountains and cross a more conceptual boundary back into the city sphere: "descendió de los montes en qui solié seer, | empeçó la carrera de la cibdad tener" (77cd). One of the first things the bishop asks Aemilian is his place of birth and, despite feeling cornered by the questions, Aemilian is obliged to respond: "Dissolo los parientes, de quál villa los ovo" (83a). This return to a discourse of birth and family begins to root Aemilian in the local context once again, which serves as an important preface to his request, once ordained by the bishop, to return to the district of Berceo: "pora Verceo, a sue propria posada" (93d).

Once back in Berceo, Aemilian's contemporaries do not recognize him (94b), indicating his unique saintly combination of proximity and distance from his birthplace. Although he is described again as a shepherd, this time it is firmly one of souls, "pastor derecho" (95c), and his holiness and *maestría* make it impossible for his return to reflect the simplicity of his early life. Berceo uses the image of the wheel of fortune to describe this ostensibly cyclical phase of Aemilian's life:

Si ploguiesse a Christo, al sue vertut sagrada,
qe corriesse la rueda com' era compeçada,
la villa de Verceo serié bien arribada,
mas fue a poco tiempo la cosa trastornada. (99)

The opportunity for Aemilian to return to Berceo, and for the place to benefit, is fleeting for the wheel swiftly moves again. The envy of fellow

clerics sends the metaphorical wheel spinning, such that the locale of Berceo is associated with the lowest point “*envidia . . . la que fizo a Lúçifer en infierno caer*” (100d). In another reversal of circumstance, therefore, Aemilian returns, with God’s blessing, to the secret mountain caves from which he descended (106d) although this time he constructs a chapel, known in Berceo’s day as San Millán de Suso, a place which marries the harshness and privation of the saint’s career with the notion of something tangible and foundational, a place between two worlds and, as such, the perfect middle ground: “*maguer era la casa angosta e poquiella, | de precioso tesoro estava bien pleniella*” (107cd).

Although the Moors do not as yet appear directly in the narrative, the characteristics which determine Aemilian’s saintly career and personality—a profound understanding of *engaño*, stubborn persistence (both as hardy local shepherd and enlightened pursuer of a divine plan), renunciation of physical comfort, independence and isolation, learning and *maestría*, loyalty to the “voto”—are all essential preconditions to understanding the role of the Moors in the later stages of the *Vida*. Saint Aemilian is, moreover, a point of convergence of borders and frontiers both geographical and conceptual, and a site of oppositions and contradictions. This flexible identity, able to move in a local context and beyond it, makes him a fitting figurehead for interpreting the conflict with the Moors in the ensuing narrative as one with specific geographical coordinates, but also as a more symbolic narrative of crossover, contact, and collective identity making.

In the second part of Aemilian’s life story, which recounts the miracles worked by the saint during his earthly life, Berceo develops the connection between sainthood and geographical space to introduce the role of sin, starting with nothing less than the appearance of the devil to Aemilian, an encounter which is heavily bound up in allusions to territorial space. Assuming human form, the devil presents himself to Aemilian and accuses him of being inconsistent by continually changing his location:

Quando primeramiente venist’ en est’ logar,
non te paguesti d’elli, ovist’ lo a dessar;
entrestí a los montes por a mí guerrear,
diziés que al poblado nunca querriés tornar. (114)

He reproaches Aemilian for only returning to Berceo for a very short time before wanting to move again (116). The devil then suggests a battle for territorial rights: “*que la luchemos ambos qual terra la posada*” (117b) reminding us that the Islamic frontier could be conceived of as a place where control of space was fundamentally at stake (García Fitz 2001,

162–63). Aemilian deftly vanquishes his foe with a powerful prayer, the devil's pride (*soberbia*) crumbling, we are told, to dust before he flees in the shape of a strong whirlwind (120–21). The relevance of this episode, situated at the start of the second book, is significant. The exchange with the devil serves to provide us with a core definition of sin and sanctity in the *Vida*, on which the following narrative is predicated. Sin is defined as *soberbia* and *engaño*; the role of deceit is highlighted when the devil is introduced as Beelzebub, who managed to deceive Adam, “Belzebup, el qe ovo ad Adám decevido” (111a), and is repeated when he is defeated by Aemilian who, we are told, “non dio en sí entrada a nulla vanagloria . . . qe no lo engañasse la vida transitoria” (123bd). The ability to see through the fleeting, material trickery of the world epitomizes Aemilian's sanctity and motivates his apparently restless transition through geographical spaces. The devil's attempt to criticize this continual movement serves, therefore, to highlight the proud, possessive, static nature of his own relationship with the land, which he dogs with his diabolical presence. Thus, Aemilian's victory over him is cast in decidedly locational terms,²² where Aemilian's stronger, lasting hold over the land is brought into view: “Fusso e desterróse a la tierra estraña, | el confessor precioso fincó en so montaña” (122ab). This is confirmed in his success in blocking all entrances for the devil: “teniéli al diablo bien presas las callejas” (124c).

This triumph over the devil sets the scene for Aemilian's following miracles—healing the sick, blind, and possessed; providing for the poor—all the while connecting his sanctity to the geographical context, “qe nunca nasco tal omne en España” (252d). It is fitting, therefore, that as Aemilian realizes that his life is ending, he has a revelation that Cantabria has fallen into a state of sin which, if not addressed, will lead to its destruction through God's anger (218a–c). Despite Aemilian's ardent preaching, men turn a deaf ear to him preferring to remain deceived by their Arian heresy, “embevidos todos en eresía” (283d). Aemilian predicts that foreign armies will besiege and raze the city (286c), a prophecy that comes true with the arrival of Leovigild, the last Arian Visigothic king (568–86), and his armies, who leave the place in near total destruction (292b). It is continually emphasized that this is the “price” of sin: “oviéronlo en cabo caramente a comprar” (282d), “costáronlis bien caras las rehiertas qe dieron” (293d). The narrative then turns to another conception of value, the fate of the precious body of Saint Aemilian after his death, buried into a cave of the monastery of Suso (313ab), and the correlative increase in the worth, both monetary and in religious terms, of the monastery: “fue el so monesterio ricamente eredado, | ond' es Dios y servido e sant Millán nomnado” (319cd). Both the invasion of the foreign armies of Leovigild and the focus on an economics of sanctity in

connection with Saint Aemilian's death and burial act as forerunners to the substance of the third book of the *Vida*, where the invasion of Abd al-Rahmān's troops and the "votos de San Millán" see the notion that collective sin comes at a price to the land truly find its most powerful expression.

Reading the miracles worked by Saint Aemilian at the start of Book Three, one could be forgiven for thinking that his posthumous feats fit into a relatively recognizable, albeit impressive, mode of miracle-working, the reversal of unfortunate circumstance: he restores the sight of two blind men, replaces the oil in a church lamp, and brings a dead three-year-old girl back to life. In Berceo's delicate literary representation of these miracles, however, lies the key to understanding how to interpret the ensuing Islamic invasion; how to read Saint Aemilian's role in that regard, and how to appreciate the full strength of the conquest in political and religious terms. Marcus Bull reminds us that when interpreting miracle stories, "The miraculous is embedded in the whole narrative, shaping the story's structure, plot development, description and characterization, language and imagery" (1999, 15).²³ Common to all three miracles is a theme of provision; whether it be light, sight, oil, or health, the miracles all contain, and describe very clearly, the act of supplying a lack, or filling a loss, in the case of the young girl's parents. This idea is encapsulated in clear descriptions such as God "providing" (348c) but is more specifically tailored to fit the description of Aemilian as "de toda la tierra . . . salud e manto" (326c), restorer and provider for the entire land, a description which finds literal correspondance when the parents of the three-year-old place her by Aemilian's tomb, "pusiéronlo en tierra cubierto so su manto" (350c).

Carried over from the miracles is the importance of Aemilian's tomb both as a site of "transaction"—in the generosity that flows from it, in the providing nature of Aemilian's miracles, and in the form of offerings from grateful recipients—and as a focal point for the boundary between the physical and the spiritual worlds. The tomb, as indicated by the miracle of the dead girl, is both an absence and a presence at the same time. It is, in general, the location which marks the departure of spirit from flesh, and prompts reflection on the value and status of the physical remains: "dust to dust," nothing returning to nothing. However, it is also a place to which people are drawn by the memory it evokes and, in the case of the saint, the spiritual aura and contact it may yield. The way we see, in highly emotive terms, the parents of the dead girl almost lose everything—their daughter, their minds (347a)—and the way this is negotiated at the tomb itself, forms a fitting and carefully worked prelude to the Islamic invasion. It is not just the idea of provision and *largesse* that

is carried forward, but also some important wording used to express loss. Berceo introduces a key term to describe the parents' situation which is similarly invoked to refer to the effect of increasing Islamic power on the Christians: "desarro." This translates as "aflicción" and denotes an extreme state of distress, undoubtedly with connotations of group disorder and individual mental consternation. The parents are described as undergoing "todo el desarro qe lis era venido" (348a) and as being "desarrados" (344a), while the term comes up repeatedly in connection with the effects of Islamic dominance over the Christians: "andavan los mesquinos tristes e desarrados" (381c), "Fue christianismo todo en desarro caído" (392a). Interestingly, it also recurs when Abd al-Rahmān's troops are defeated and desert the battlefield, "cadieron en desarro como pueblo vencido | Cadieron en desarro, la memoria turbada" (451d-452a), as if to illustrate the complete reversal of circumstance effected by Aemilian and to concretize his role as protector and provider. Provision, meanwhile, is expressed as "caridat," a term which equally moves between literal and symbolic meanings. It is used, for example, to describe the charitable invitation of the friars in asking the dead girl's parents to eat with them in the refectory after they have left their daughter at the altar (352) but it also describes God's generous intervention during the upsurge of Islamic power through Abd al-Rahmān when, after giving signs of his anger, God is likened to a fount of mercy that never runs dry and "quiso tornar en ellos, fazerlis caridat" (394d).

Berceo's ability to focus the mind on loss and provision in both literal and symbolic terms is central to his representation of the invasion of Abd al-Rahmān's forces, and the role of the "votos" in defending against it. Even by the end of the opening miracles in Book Three, explicitly economic transactions are mentioned; the girl's jubilant parents "fizieron sus ofrendas largas e generales" (361c) and in the following stanza Berceo professes to take the narrative to another level, "ir a lo más granado" telling of how Aemilian won the "votos" (362cd) or, put another way, "quando ganó el precio, rico de grand manera" (363d). The language at the interface between the miracles and the tale of the "votos" is thus clearly set on aggrandizing, both in terms of the narrative content, and the description of substantial economic tribute: "un don grand e onrado" (364d). It is against this striking background of loss, provision, and tribute that the Islamic invasion takes place, meaning that it cannot be extricated from this particular model where sin is associated with a loss or retraction of some kind, and the sanctity of Aemilian with provision, protection, and bountiful grace.

The build up to the clash with Abd al-Rahmān and his armies strongly emphasizes spiritual and moral deficiency on the part of the Christians,

who are announced as sinners, albeit in rather broad terms at first. All we initially discover is that a communal, Christian spirit has broken down, “eran unos a otros malos e malfechores” (366b), and that they have fallen into sinful ways (367b). Whatever sin this is, Berceo stresses how persistently and deliberately the people continue in it: “non querién mejorar-se de sus malos errores” (366c, also 367c). The nature of the sin concretizes, and is expressed singularly as a great evil, “nemiga sobejana” (368a), which leads God to grant great power to the so-called pagan peoples: “dio grand podestadía Dios a la gent’ pagana” (368b). Found wanting in spiritual terms, the Christians form an absolute contrast to Abd al-Rahmān who, from the outset, is characterized in terms of possession, not least the apparently indomitable, metaphorical clutches in which he holds the land, “non avién nul consejo por exir de sus manos” (369d). The inversely proportional relationship between Christian insufficiency and Islamic might soon reveals its logic when we discover that the cardinal sin of the Christians has been to send 60 women per year, of whom half are noble, and half lower class, in tribute to Abd al-Rahmān (370bc). This explains both the failure in communal mentality as a result of this disrupting pact, and the persistence of the offence. The chronological regularity of this offering troubles the author deeply, explaining the earlier, vaguer allusions to an ongoing commitment to sin:

Yazié toda España en esta servidumne,
dava esti tributo cadaño por costume;
fazié anniversarios de muy grant suciedumne,
mas por quitarse ende non avié firmedumne. (371)

The notion that the tribute creates “anniversaries of defilement” accentuates the perennial, entrapping nature of the arrangement. The clear reference to clock time here also evokes eschatological anxieties, the sense that quantitative time will be judged qualitatively. This perennial, pervasive sin is consistently portrayed as a contractual and economic arrangement, “conviento” (373c) (arrangement, pact), and “sosacamiento” (373d) (elicitation), with damaging wider effects: “era muy mal exemplo, mucho peor el fecho” (374c).

In keeping with the notion that the women are contractually supplied to Abd al-Rahmān, a coherent idiom of lack and deprivation characterizes God’s punitive response to the Christians. The notion of “desamparo” forms something of a keynote in this regard. The verb “desamparar” is repeated in connection with God’s reaction to Christian sin so that it forms the first and last word of a quatrain, with strong mnemonic potential: “Desamparólos Dios, ca éralis irado” (367a); “como pueblo qe

era de Dios desamparado" (367d).²⁴ As God gives great power to Abd al-Rahmān and his forces, so does he remove protection and defense from the Christians, who are left "mezquinos, pueblos desamparados" (393c). Aemilian's role as custodian or shepherd of souls, and as "salud e manto" (326) comes into mind, preparing us to value his role as provider and protector in a context when the Christians are resoundingly associated with lack, that is, territorial loss, moral deficiency, and spiritual abandonment. God's "signs" of his anger are inherently depriving. The natural world becomes the stage for this as we see an eclipse of the sun characterized very clearly in terms of it losing its light: "perdió el sol la lumne, estido embargado, | de todo so oficio afita despojado" (378cd). This is compared to Good Friday when the crucified Christ was temporarily taken away from mankind (379). This is followed by the actual destruction of named places, when a fierce wind blows from North Africa, accompanied by a raging fire, which does untold harm in the frontier regions with Muslim territories, "Por las Estremaduras fizo daños mortales" (388a), proceeding to devastate Santfagunt (Sahagún, León), Carrión (León), Frómesta (Frómista, S. E of Carrión), Castro (Castrogeriz), Forniello del Camino (Hornillos del Camino, Burgos), Oterdajos (Tardajos, Burgos), Monesterio (Monasterio de Rodillo, Briviesca), and Pancorbo (Miranda de Ebro) (388–91). As observed by Dutton (1992, 224), the list of places corresponds to the route of the Camino de Santiago, but the fire blows from West to East, taking an alternative, damaging trajectory along this sacred route. The language of abandonment, *desamparo*, takes a more introspective turn as the Christians finally realize their failings before God and the verb *fallir* (to err, to fail) and its cognates comes into view: "entendién qe lis era el Criador fallido" (392c), "Connocién su fallencia" (393a). There is also a sense of physical deficiency as the longevity of their punishment has exhausted their reserves, "non avién nul esfuerzo ca lo avién perdido" (392b).

In the face of spiritual capitulation and physical rendition, God's charity comes to the fore, like a fount of mercy that never runs dry (394b). When it seems that the Christians have almost nothing left to lose, and even their kings are found wanting (395c)—"fallieron los reys, tan grand fue el pecado" (395c)—God is portrayed as the bountiful provider of Fernán González. The deficiency of the Iberian monarchs is a theme that appears in the *Poema de Fernán González*, as we see, to justify Fernán's campaign for an independent Castile but here Berceo appears to be employing *fallir* in a dual sense, both as failure to accomplish something, and as expiry, synonymous with "fallecer," hence Dutton thinks that it signifies the end of the Visigothic monarchy (1992, 226). What is being presented here is a fresh alternative to the sin-ridden Castile and León of the past by which

Fernán González, count of Castile and King Ramiro of León offer an alternative order, even in terms of a new chronological debt, this time to prayer—"deviemos fer cutiano por ellos oración" (396d)—and put an end to the economic relationship with Abd al-Rahmān, "más valdríe seer muertos qe dar tal furción" (397d).

The decision to end the tribute arrangement ushers in a new phase of the narrative, one with a notably epic character, in which the Christians recover their martial and moral strength, and face the Muslims directly in battle. The physical bringing-together of the two sides, in lieu of their economic negotiation, allows for a closer, more idiosyncratic representation of the Islamic forces, and of their leader, Abd al-Rahmān. Our first insight into their behavior concerns their reaction to the Christians' cessation of payment, as they exhibit a combination of pride and frustration: "por poco con despecho non se comiēn las manos, / diziendo grandes befas, dichos muy sobejanos" (400cd). This is followed by a description of the Islamic court counsellors issuing advice based on what they perceive to be astrological signs in their favor, but which are in fact signs sent by God to punish the Christians. The association of the Moors with astrology and Berceo's deprecating description of their faith in this practice reflects the condemnation of astrology on the part of the Catholic church but also brings to mind the context of prophecy and futurity associated with the frontier, the sense that each event or battle thrashed out in this liminal setting carries a longer-term significance.²⁵ The acceptance of this advice also ties into the burgeoning epic narrative insofar as it adds to the already clear sense of Moorish bullishness and pride (in lieu of true *esfuerzo*), a lack of wisdom or *sapientia*. The Moors therefore represent a deficient version of the heroic formula of *fortitudo et sapientia*, as stressed by Berceo: "toviéronlo por seso e qe deziēn cordura" (408b).²⁶ In tandem with their misalignment with Christian models and practices, the Moors also suffer the more universal fault of listening to bad advice. This brings the theme of good (and bad) counsel into the narrative with some prominence, paving the way for the audience to compare the value of the advice given to King Ramiro and Fernán González.

In keeping with the epic spirit of the work's concluding section, King Ramiro is portrayed as "un noble cavallero" (412a), given the epithet "de la buena ventura" (420a) and compared with the French epic heroes Roland and Olivier (412b), and a warriorly idiom of "cavallería" and confrontation pervades, hence references to "cavallerías" (409d) and a sense that the battle will be an absolute clash between two diametrically opposing sides: "qeriēn ir de buen grado en esta romería... entablar la batalla con essa muzlemía" (417bd). The substantially larger size of the Muslim armies is also stressed (413b, 410), confirming that Berceo's narrative is

deeply concerned with quantity and scale, as a means of calibrating moral worth. Where the Moors fall short of *fortitudo et sapientia*, Ramiro possesses both attributes but Berceo skillfully tempers Ramiro's courage with fear, connecting the terms "espanto" and "esfuerzo" at the end of lines in two separate stanzas in order to show where God's intervention is needed without denigrating the physical and moral fortitude of the king:

maguer son leoneses firmes e esforçados,
fueron con estas nuevas ferament' espantados. (411cd)

El rei don Remiro, maguer era espantado,
el so corazón firme fue aina tornado . . .
ca sedié todas oras en Dios bien esforçado. (418)

Ramiro is also wise. He comes up with the "buen consejo de pro o de cordura" (420b) to give tribute to Saint James to secure his help in battle.²⁷ However, he first asks his counsellors, both lay and ecclesiastical men, "varones" and "ordenados" (421a), what they think of his idea. Their support is unanimous, and stresses both the innate wisdom of the king, "tovieron bien qe era buen consejo probado" (425b), and the supportive role of good counsel, not to mention the harmonious, cooperative mentality now existing within the Christian polity. Just as this scene of thoughtful cooperation reverses the chaotic, isolated, and sinful nature of the Christians earlier in the narrative, so too does the timing of the tribute address some of the anxieties about time connected with the tribute to Abd al-Rahmān. Thus, Ramiro suggests that they donate money to Saint James annually and forever, "por siempre e cadaño" (423c), creating a new perpetuity to erase the sense of permanence attached to their former tribute to the Muslims, which was "cadaño por costumne" (371b). The new donation is also to take place "en destajado día" (423c), creating a new anniversary to counter the defiling "anniversarios de muy grant suciedumne" (371d) of former times. Thus the Leonese ensure perpetuity of protection "Podriemos adebdarlo pora todas sazones" (424a).

Ramiro is, of course, not the only leader of epic stature. Fernán González also displays his heroic credentials when he adapts the Leonese tribute to Saint James to the Castilian context, suggesting that the Castilians pay an equivalent tribute to Saint Aemilian. Fernán recognizes the good in what the Leonese are doing, "fizieron leoneses como buenos christianos" (427d) and thus proves his wisdom in the process. In fact, the passing-on of good example is clearly highlighted as a feature now defining the Christian polity: "dexaron buen exiemplo a sus generaciones" (428b), a corrective to historical faults in the Visigothic genealogy. Like Ramiro, Fernán also takes advice from his men and in strikingly honest

terms, “abrirvos quiero todo mi corazón” (429a). There is something almost penitential about his bearing of his heart to his men, but it also stresses his credentials as an epic hero who is wont to work in a collaborative fashion. Fernán’s praise of Aemilian is similarly effusive, both in form and content. Describing him as “Confessor . . . precioso, de Dios mucho amado” (430a) Fernán stresses Aemilian’s association with provision by alluding to him literally as gifted, “adonado” (430b), and then suggesting that they give a gift to him, “demosli esti dado” (431c). Interestingly, Fernán shares this association with “don” and its cognates when he too is described by Berceo metonymically as “unas donosas manos” (437b) which is very much in keeping with the communicative, cooperative mentality Fernán displays with his troops, and which is fundamental to his heroism, and also with the notion expressed earlier in the poem that Fernán is a gift from God to the Christian people.²⁸

The battle with the Moors continues the epic flavor of the poem’s later stages, announced by the inceptive turn of phrase “Ya eran en el campo entrambas las partidas” (434a) but no sooner does it start than the adverbial “ya” broadcasts that the Moors are already losing order in their ranks, being the subject of Christ’s wrath: “las azes de los moros ya eran embaídas” (434c). Berceo appears to take delight in evoking the immediacy of the scene hence his use of the minstrelsy formula: “Señores e amigos, quantos aquí seedes, | si escuchar quisiéredes, entenderlo podedes” (435ab), and his presentation is overtly visual: “mezclavan las feridas las lanzas abaxadas” (436b). The visual field is most strongly exploited in his description of the angelic appearance of Saints James and Aemilian shining more brightly and more white than new snow (427) and descending on white steeds (438a). Their weapons, a magnificent crozier and cross, are such, we are told, that man has never seen before (438b). The appearance of the saints gives the Christians “esfuerzo”—“foron más esforzados” (440a), “aforzaron christianos” (442b)—in keeping with the poem’s emphasis on the heroic quality of fortitude. The Saints also lead by example, earning their remuneration through effort and toil: “Non quisieron en baldi la soldada levar, | primero la quisieron merecer e sudar” (448ab). Berceo extracts from this a principle of good military leadership based on a leader acting quickly in the face of communal crisis: “tales señores son de servir e onrrar, | que saben a la cuita tan aína uviar” (448c). By extension, among the Moors fear, “espanto,” is sown (441d), detracting from their earlier pride and associating them, rather than the Christians, with this affliction.

Just as Berceo associates the Saints with different types of provision and endowment such as economic tribute, spiritual grace, and a physical presence in crisis, the representation of the Moorish armies is couched

in a language of lack, loss, and undoing, hence a profusion of negating adjectives to describe them, such as “descreídos” (443a), “desmembrados” (443b), “desmedridos” (443b). The Moors are also characterized by the theme of reversal, from the notion that they regret entering into battle (443c) to the fact that their arrows turn back on them (444bc), this phenomenon being interpreted as a physical manifestation of them “paying the price” for their own actions: “la fonta qe fizieron carament’ la compravan” (444cd). The theme of a reversal of circumstances, and a paying of dues, culminates in the Moors returning the women they formerly required as tribute, “Ya quitarién las dueñas qe solién demandar” (445a). The pervasive mood of loss, lack, and reversal of circumstance sets the scene for Abd al-Rahmān’s rather inglorious exit from the battlefield, once again couched in negating constructions which stress his withdrawal of help or *amparo*, the very quality lauded in the Saints: “desamparó el juego” (449c), “Desamparó el campo” (450a). As earlier, the description of the Moors getting their comeuppance is cast in decidedly economic terms: “a malas dineradas pagó el ostalage” (450c). The language of lack extends to the description of the Muslim armies, who are “descosido” (451b), and lose the sum total of heroic *fortitudo et sapientia*, “perdieron tod’ esfuerzo e todo so sentido” (451b). The device of *leixaprén* is employed to stress the phrase “cadieron en desarro” at the end of stanza 451 and beginning of stanza 452; the concept of *desarro* was invoked earlier in the *Vida* to summarize extreme Christian distress and now here expresses the epitome of Moorish anguish. The sense of an epic battle coming to its conclusion is clear from the repeated ablative absolute construction “la fazienda rancada” (452d, 457a) and reference is made again to the pride of the Moors coming to nothing (452c), furthering the impression of a total reversal of circumstance. Alongside more symbolic expressions of loss and lack, the narrative highlights the actual evacuation of the battlefield, on which few Moors remain (453d), drawing particular attention to the absence of two key figures: Abd al-Rahmān and their Islamic *alfaquí*, referred to as their equivalent of an honorable bishop (455c). In addition, the Moors lose the Koran (455d). The fate of the Moorish king is couched in mystery, “Del reí non sabemos si estorcíó o non” (454a), reminiscent of legends of King Rodrigo disappearing in the early throes of the Islamic invasion and perhaps subtly broadening the implications of this defeat by calling to mind the broader geopolitical picture. When it comes to the loss of the *alfaquí* and the Koran Berceo acknowledges that this causes more than just economic damage, it spells a larger scale, communal demise, “sue gen’ración fue siempre fatilada” (455b), a perennial affliction, signalling a further reversal of circumstance where it is now the Moors who are spiritually bereft.

It is of little surprise that a narrative fluctuating like this between extremes of loss and gain revels in Christian acquisition. Berceo places great emphasis on the fulfilment of the “votos” to the Saints, so much so that we are provided with an extensive list of places which pay the tribute. Geographical location, whether in river valleys, coastal spots, or fertile hills is of great interest given that this affects the content of the donation: “Unas tierras dan vino, en otras dan dineros | en algunos cevera, en alguantas carneros” (466ab) and Berceo’s specificity over which towns are involved in the payment has a decidedly legalistic air to it, including some repeated juridical formulae: “los que por poblar eran tan bien com’ las pobladas” (464b), “villas menudas e granadas” (464a). Berceo’s attention to geographical detail creates the obvious impression of widespread, unanimous tribute but it also serves to dignify the local context, raising the status of these towns and villages by association with a holy act, the gravity of which is evident in the threat of excommunication and damnation awaiting anyone who refuses to pay (464d, 477d). Berceo acknowledges the weight of his own geographical references, which seem to strain the *cuaderna vía*: “Los nomnes son revueltos, graves de acordar, | no los podemos todos en rimas acoplar” (475b), drawing explicit attention to his role as poet in a part of the text which is otherwise concerned with the minutiae of who pays the “votos.” Although this is part of Berceo’s wider concluding technique of moving back from his material and stressing his role as author (eg., “siguir nuestra istoria, nuestro corso guardar | con unas pocas coplas nuestra obra cerrar” [482bc]) this sudden overview prompts the audience to take a step back too, to consider geography as detached from the immediate context of the “votos,” in which case the proliferation of geographical placenames serves to remind us of the broader connection between saint and land, where Aemilian is guardian of the border spaces “Frontero...del regno” (431a) and “padrón de españoles” along with Saint James (431b). The work concludes, therefore, with the very broadest of territorial connections, between Aemilian and the Christian kingdoms of Iberia, but Berceo also offers the more modest assertion that he is “natural de Verceo ond’ sant Millán fue nado” (489c) emphasizing the capacity of the saint to be at once an entirely personal and an entirely national guardian.

The “Poema de Fernán González” and the Forgotten Land

Given the prominent appearance of Fernán González in the *Vida de San Millán*, it is no surprise to find that the anonymous poem in his name upholds features of Berceo’s characterization, not least Fernán’s epic stature, martial prowess, and divine backing.²⁹ In the *Poema*, however, the

governing idea of the Moorish invasion of Spain of 711 is that it represents a descent into a form of collective amnesia.³⁰ In the poem's initial historical sweep we are told that the preaching of Mohammed moved the hearts of the Christian people to the extent that they "forgot" the death of Christ: "la muerte de Cristus avian la olvidado" (8d). The term "olvido" itself and, more broadly, the notions of forgetting and remembering, are central to the poem's vision of the loss and restoration of Christian territory and values, and are continually replicated and reinforced by its poetic craft, one that is explicitly mnemonic in its verse structure and rhyming patterns, influenced by the medieval arts of memory, and wedded to the idea of bringing historical material to light for a thirteenth-century audience.³¹ The representation of Moorish conquest in the poem, frequently discussed by critics in terms of its ardent anti-Moorish language and tone, is looked at from a different angle here, one which refuses to see this rhetoric as an endpoint in itself and, as such, the poem's definitive statement on the invasion.³² The conquest is, I contend, couched in a dynamic of forgetting and remembering, which is evident both literally and referentially, in the poem's preoccupation with the themes of presence and absence, permanence and impermanence, and speech and silence, themes which are discussed in this section. The broader effect is of a narrative built upon dualisms, a mode of discourse which goes beyond the tropes and postures of "public hostility" (Burns 1979, 252) to lend itself to contrasting effects and encourages the reader to think creatively about the relationship between them. While the *Poema de Mio Cid* also exhibits a technique and content rich in dual and binary structures, as noted by Francisco López Estrada in his allusion to "una composición básica de índole binaria que desde el esquema del argumento se transmite a los componentes del *Poema* a través de los recursos de la Poética hasta numerosos aspectos de su expresividad" (1982, 226), the difference is that these binaries center around the axis of the Cid, encouraging concord and unanimity of perspective. In the *Poema*, the middle space is, in keeping with the discourse of *mester* poetry more generally, an attenuated and emphasized realm in its own right, often a conflictive space, which challenges both the hero himself, within the narrative context, and the reader's interpretation of the narrative.

The term "olvido" is also strikingly used to describe the deficiencies of the Christian rulers of Iberia; in a notable pronouncement by Fernán we discover that "Los reyes de España con derecho pavor | olvidaron a ti que eres su señor" (396ab). This ensures that it is not just the Moors who meet with strident disapproval in the poem, and also helps us to interpret the invasion as, at least in part, a self-generated event. The representation of Moorish conquest cannot, therefore, be understood without taking

into account the questionable behavior of Fernán's fellow Christian rulers, the way in which they highlight internal political frontiers between the Christian kingdoms, as well as annexing themselves, as "vassals" of Almanzor, to the "external" and religious frontier with Islam. These variegated frontiers are the battleground in which Castile's independence and identity are forged.³³ The notion of "olvido" is also employed in a more positive light in the poem to describe how the shining example of the Goths will endure in the collective memory: "fueron de todo el mundo pueblo muy escogido | quanto el mundo durare non cadran en olvido" (24cd). This is indicative of the importance of the concept of *fama* to the poem's vision of military activity, and of the way its particular angle on history is one which aims to square the circle of identifying and criticizing past failings in the Christian polity, while upholding the inherent exemplarity of the Gothic people and their descendants.

Remembering and forgetting is the poem's unique way of talking about territorial loss, specifically a loss that is never complete nor absolute. In its initial description of the Moorish invasion, the *Poema* highlights how despite the destruction that is wrought over the land, the mountainous area of the North, termed "Castilla vieja" by the poet, is never captured by the Moors:

Era Castiella vieja un puerto bien çerrado,
non avie mas entrada de un solo forado,
tovieron castellanos el puerto bien guardado,
por end' de toda España esse ovo fincado.

Fincaron las Asturias un pequeño lugar
con valles e montañas que con çerca la mar;
non podieron los moros por los puertos passar
e ovieron, por tanto, las Asturias fincar. (87–88)

This allows the Moorish invasion to be represented as a destructive force, one that brings about concealment and isolation but, crucially, not obliteration. Thus, Spain's Christian peoples "forget" and are forgotten, even it seems by God, "partiendo nos de Dios, ha se de nos partido" (100c), but there is a piece of the land which preserves and represents their enduring moral and physical might, and from whence their predominant characteristic of *lealtad*, loyalty to their God and their land, will emerge again, as if from hibernation. By extension, the frontier with Islam can be deemed impermanent.³⁴

The theme of "olvido" implies a specific kind of forgetting inextricably connected with land and space, where permanence and perpetuity are always at stake. Although the poem is predicated on the notion that Spain

is not altogether lost, the dynamic of “*olvido*” is instrumental in evoking the fear and danger associated with the Moorish invasion. In fact, the poet does an excellent job of evoking a people teetering on the brink of a disastrous plummet from the wheel of fortune: “*si esta vez caedes, non vos levantaredes*” (445d) Fernán warns his men at the Battle of Hacinas.³⁵ Indeed, Fernán’s awareness that one false move could cause total annihilation is forged from the historical example of his Castilian ancestors. He describes to his men how much suffering their forefathers endured before stating that it is precisely this acute fear of death that ensured their success, and asking, how could this lesson be forgotten?

Fueron nuestros abuelos muy grand tienpo afrontados
 ca los tenien los moros muy fuerte arrenconados...
 por miedo de la muerte yerro nunca fazieron,
 todos sus adversarios por aquí los vencieron.
 ¿Commo se nos oviera todo esto d’olvidar?
 Lo que ellos ovieron a nos es d’heredar
 viniendo a nos en miente non podremos errar. (218–220)

The invitation to remember the circumstances of the initial invasion and the reaction of the Castilians resonates through the poem. Continually, the poet evokes extreme pressure from the Moorish troops replicating the feeling that Castile and the Castilians are being “cornered.” Hiding, protecting, visibility, and invisibility become frequent tropes, testing the connection between the Castilians’ difficult physical situation and their capacity to constructively “remember,” and creating an important, and challenging, connection for the audience between what is physically seen or unseen, and what is remembered or forgotten.

Retreats into the mountains, prompted both by the initial invasion and subsequent assaults, are one way of seeing “*olvido*” closely mapped onto the land. In the context of the 711 invasion, the pillage, sacrilege, and even purported cannibalism of the Moors has the Christian people fleeing to the mountains to hide: “*non sabien, con grand miedo, adonde se asconder | Assi ivan foyendo de las gentes estrañas*” (93d–94a). This highlights how the mountains become a natural frontier, a place of “*olvido*” and sanctuary.³⁶ We see this again when Sancha and Fernán come across what they think could be Almanzor’s standard and seek to hide there, “*non veian montaña do meter se pudiesen*” (674b), “*quisieran, si podieran, alçar se a la montaña, | que se asconderian siquiera en cabaña*” (675bc).³⁷ Fernán’s very persona and leadership are, of course, also forged in mountainous spaces, from his initial upbringing by a *carbonero* (charcoal merchant) to his retreats to the hermitage at Arlanza, so

steep it cannot be accessed on horseback (229a). In this context, remembering and forgetting, and the correlative dynamics of seeing or not seeing are closely united. The invisibility of the hermitage could not be more clearly stressed; it is covered in ivy to the point of being totally obscured, “d’una yedra techada, | por que de toda ella non parescia nada” (228ab). Fernán is urged not to forget the hermitage, nor what it has done for him, “aqueste lugar pobre non lo echés en olvido” (242b). The economic imperative to give back to the hermitage is clear—“non se te olvide el pobre ospedado” (244d)—but by no means the only way of interpreting the hermit’s invitation to remember, given the gravity of what Fernán discovers there, that he will have God’s guidance in defeating Almanzor (237cd). It is through the hermitage that Fernán comes to forget the trials of the world and focus on the guiding principles that will ensure Christian success. The mountains are, however, also a place of danger by virtue of their isolating characteristic, a point Juan Pablo Valverde Morán stresses in relation to the Archpriest episode, stressing that the same factor that makes the mountains a place of sanctuary for the fugitives, namely isolation, also renders this a dangerous terrain (1996, 261). We might add evidence from the Battle of Lara, when the noise of Moorish troops penetrates this ordinarily untroubled space: “todos venien cobiertos los oteros e llanos” . . . “los montes e valles semajavan movidos” (252c, 253d). Recourse to mountain refuge, in the light of the example of the early Christians who resisted the 711 invasion, is always to be interpreted symbolically.

Prison spaces are another useful example of how the poet connects physical location and mnemonic principles. Prisons become a useful symbolic motif for reflecting on permanence; ordinarily places of hopeless perpetuity, in the poem they become the testing ground for possession and memory. For example, the Moorish invasion is represented as a form of symbolic imprisonment, “Castiella, quebrantada, quedara sin señor . . . sera en cautiverio del moro Almançor” (549ac), testing the limits of whether it has been “forgotten” by its leaders and its God. In parallel, the literal imprisonments of Fernán at the hands of the Christian monarchs also prompt Fernán to perceive that God has “forgotten” him, “Señor del mundo, ¿por qué me has fallecido?” (600d), “me tengo de ti desanparado” (601d). Although prison spaces seem to epitomize a dreadful permanence and isolation from political and spiritual leadership, the poem offers, via Fernán, a positive view of the prison experience. When Fernán is held by the Navarrans in Castro Viejo, it is clear that his lack of visibility has only enhanced his notoriety and fame, ensuring that he is never forgotten (612ab), particularly by the Lombard count who is instrumental in Fernán’s release, “al conde castellano nunca le echo en olvido”

(620b). After this, the language and imagery of the poem play a restorative role, associating him with solidity and fixity and, by extension, visible presence, notably through constructive metaphors like “un hermoso castiello” (488b), and “çimiento de nobleza” (516b) which are complemented by the Castilians’ strategem to construct an actual stone effigy of their leader in his absence (661bc). By extension, Spain’s “imprisonment” at the hands of Almanzor can be understood as an impermanent one owing to Fernán’s unforgetting dedication to leading it out of captivity, charged with the historical example of his Gothic predecessors.

Moorish invasion, understood as it is within the poem’s overarching narrative of “olvido,” is represented via two notable subthemes: the spoken word, and governance. The *mester de clerecía* mode makes the first theme somewhat inevitable, given its potentially educative ambitions and its inherently oral, publicizing nature where voice—whether that of author, narrator, *juglar*, or character—plays an integral role in providing a unique take on preexisting written and oral sources. That said, speech and the spoken word are emphasized in the poem’s description of both the initial invasion of 711 and subsequent attacks by Almanzor, all the while bringing to light how the verbal domain is an important arena for contesting “olvido,” and how control over spoken language is a major contributing factor in Castilian success. In the context of the 711 invasion, proficiency in language seems to reside firmly with the Moors, starting with the initial description of Mohammed’s “wrongful” but effective preaching: “predico por su boca mucha mala sentençia” (7d), and continuing in the absorbing description of Count Julian’s verbal exchanges with the Moors of North Africa. The narrator reports how Julian’s treason takes verbal form as he engages in dialogue with Vusarvan (43ab).³⁸ After a summary of what Julian said, to the effect that Christian Spain can easily be breached (43d), the narrator’s voice shifts to direct speech, reproducing Julian’s very words in a conversation in which we only hear one voice, that of Julian. In what might be assumed to be a natural break in conversation, where Julian moves from his broad promise to deliver Spain, to the manner in which this will be achieved (44–45), Vusarvan’s voice never comes in, as if to underline the severity of Julian’s betrayal, as well as the sheer proficiency of his rhetoric. His approach to Vusarvan is notably colloquial and idiosyncratic; addressing the Moor as “amigo,” Julian makes his promises in an idiomatic manner befitting of a less than formal relationship: “si non te do España, non coma yo mas pan, | si non, de mi non fies mas que si fuesse can” (44cd). The impression given is of a character so consumed by enthusiasm for revenge he is prone to directness of speech, and keen to forge new allies in the task ahead. This is accentuated by his emphatic use of the future tense in the next phase of

his speech: “travessarás el mar con todo su fonsado . . . refez miente podras conquistar el reinado” (46bd).

Julian’s return to Spain sees him enter swiftly into dialogue with King Rodrigo, this time a two-sided exchange and one in which Julian’s rhetorical skills come to the fore. His address to the king is characterized by humility and obedience; the phrase “cunpli tu mandado” (48c) in which Julian describes how he has brought back the tribute Rodrigo requested is, however, deeply ironic, given that only a couple of stanzas earlier he was telling Vusurvan “sabras de mi mandado” (46a). Irony also oozes from the king’s welcome “¿Commo vos ha ido, el mi leal amigo?” (49c) reminding the audience of Julian’s amicable overtures to the Moor. What follows is a rhetorical *tour de force* in which Julian persuades Rodrigo to disarm the kingdom, to turn swords into ploughshares, given that there is no present need to fight. With balanced phrasing and gentle rhyme (“Todos labren por pan, peones e caveros, | sienbren cuestras e valles e todos los oteros” [52ab]), rhetorical questions (“las armas, ¿qué las quieres?” [50c]) frequent negating constructions (“non has contra quien poner otros fronteros” [52d], “Non has a los caveros por que les dar soldadas” [54a]), hypothetical modes (“si non con las que aren, otras bestias non ayan” [53d]), and a cunning evocation of a kind of bucolic idyll (“labren sus eredades, vivan en sus posadas” [54b]), Julian presents his “razon” to the king, at which the narrator ratifies its excellence as a piece of spoken rhetoric: “Quando ovo acabada el conde su razon | mejor non la dizeran quantos en mundo son” (55ab). One piece of spoken rhetoric prompts another, as Rodrigo delivers his own “razon” to his court (58b), a piece resonant with dramatic irony as he speaks of Spain’s secure ownership of the land: “por que es toda España en el nuestro poder, | mal grado a los moros que la solien tener” (59cd), and of the peaceful tribute relationship with North Africa. Rodrigo’s speech echoes some of the content of Julian’s such as the phrases “vivan en sus posadas” (61d) and “que viva cada uno en las sus eredades” (62d) but he indulges in even greater detail and emphasis as to how the arms ought to be smelted. In the cardinal piece of irony, Rodrigo orders than anyone who disobeys the edict to disarm will be deemed a traitor and dealt justice accordingly (67). Not everyone is convinced by the king’s speech; learned men curse those who have counselled the king in this fashion but nothing can be done (69cd, 70a).³⁹

That the invasion of Spain is mapped out by the poet in strikingly verbal fashion makes spoken language the battleground of “olvido.” This is supported by the emphasis throughout the poem on the preemptive, preparatory language of conquest: the messages, battle cries, and orders which act as conduits to battle. Although undoubtedly an inevitable part

of the preparations for any military clash, such verbal methods seem, in the wider context of emphasis upon speech and language in the poem's vision of conquest, to play an additional symbolic role. Messages continually go back and forth between the parties concerned. For example, as soon as the arms are smelted down, news travels to the Moors of Morocco, "fueron aquestas nuevas a Marruecos passadas" (71b), forcing Rodrigo to put out a call to battle, "mando por todo el reino andar el apellido" (75b) and an urgent one at that, "pregones aquexados" (76a). After Almanzor loses Carazo and mounts a counterattack we learn of the "nuevas" that reach Fernán, advising him that Almanzor's forces are gathering, there too relying on verbal means of assembly, "de toda el Almaria traia el apellido" (199). Almanzor's later preparation for what is to be the battle of Hacinas reaches Fernán in similarly vocal terms, "commo avia oido otros malos mandados" (383d). The Moorish leader is represented, meanwhile, as gathering his forces from across Africa via oral means: "mando por toda Africa andar el apellido" (385c), the power of his call is so great that his troops are composed of the widest possible range of Muslim peoples, a terrifying grouping of Turks, Arabs, Almohads, Marinids, "los moros todos de Oriente vezinos" (387c).⁴⁰

As the speech of the two main actors in the first invasion, Julian and Rodrigo, is given a prominent role, so too is that of Fernán González, and it forms a clear comparison with that of his Moorish opponent Almanzor. Fernán is to be found continually in verbal exchange with his men, a communicative role reminiscent of his portrayal in the *Vida de San Millán*, although it is not always harmonious in the *Poema*. Following the taking of Carazo and the news that Almanzor is on the warpath, for example, Fernán seeks his vassals' advice: "Fablo con sus vassallos en que acordarian, | querie oir a todos que consejo l'darian" (201ab). When Gonzalo Díaz speaks up, however, to suggest that they strike a deal with Almanzor to prevent a battle, Fernán verbally refutes his suggestions in terms which reinforce the powerful role of speech in the wider setting of invasion and conquest: "maguer que fue sañudo, no l'fablo desaguisado, | mas contradixo l'todo quanto avia fablado" (208cd). The impression that the first contest to be won is always a verbal one is made clear from Fernán's lengthy, powerful "razon" (225a), in which he urges loyalty and bravery, and which succeeds in winning his men over, "con estos tales dichos su gente conortada" (225b). When the Navarrans attack Castilian territory in his absence, Fernán once again has recourse to counsel and "razon" (311a) before launching his offensive. That Fernán is a gifted orator is further emphasized when his men criticize his ceaseless, exhausting activity and he responds with the wisdom of Solomon and the spirit of Alexander (348cd); the vassals

literally have nothing to say in response, “a cosa que el dezia non sabien responder” (358b).⁴¹ By the same token, unanimity of action is denoted as speaking as one, “todos por una boca fablaron muy priado” (448b). Fernán’s association with the gift of speech makes it particularly noticeable when that voice is stifled; thus the Battle of Hacinas is given added weight when we find that “tenie llenos de polvo la boca e los dientes, | abes podie hablar por confortar sus gentes” (507ab).

Almanzor’s spoken contributions pale in comparison. After the defeat of the Moors at Lara the Moor utters words of extreme despair: “Todo el mi grand poder es muerto o cativo; | pues ellos muertos son, ¿por qué finco yo vivo?” (271bc). The flat, renunciatory tone of his language forms a stark contrast to the energizing speeches of Fernán, while his questioning of the point of continuing to live calls to mind Fernán’s obsession with seizing the day, forging a legacy, evading the downward drop of fortune at every turn. Almanzor is also quoted as saying “Ay, Mafomat, en mal ora en ti fio | non vale tres arvejas todo el tu poderio” (272ab).⁴² Almanzor’s criticism of Mohammed and loss of faith in his power is startling in itself, and phrased in a surprisingly flippant way, the equivalent of saying that he does not give a fig for his power. It is true that Fernán has his moments of excruciating doubt about his own God, but the difference is that the poet always depicts the Christian faith as heralding its rewards, literally receiving an answer. It is particularly notable that Fernán’s dialogue with the heavens is not one-sided, as Almanzor’s is here. Heavenly voices talk back to Fernán, whether through Fray Pelayo the hermit (237–42), or in celestial vision, as when Fernán talks to God before Hacinas (405a) and Saints Pelayo and Aemilian appear in a dream and give him encouragement and advice (406–18), words he later repeats *verbatim* to his men (429). Likewise, when Fernán appeals to his God for aid, starting to doubt his support, the booming voice of Saint James is heard, telling Fernán that “Fernando de Castiella, oy te crece grand bando” (556d). In the face of the bolstered Christian forces, Almanzor’s speech once again serve to reinforce his relative weakness via his sheer consternation at the swelling of the Christian armies:

Dixo el rey Almançor: “Esto no puede ser;
do l’recreçio al conde atan fuerte poder?
Cuidava yo oy sin duda le matar o prender,
e avra con estas gentes el a nos cometer.” (560)

This muted response is a far cry from the ground-shaking voices associated earlier in the battle with the “gentes descreidos”: “dando muy

grandes voces e grandes alaridos | los montes e los valles semejavan movidos" (512cd), confirming the impression that the clash between Christian and Moors is more than just a physical one for the Arlanza poet, but one fought on the plain of the spoken word.

The representation of Moorish conquest is also developed through the poet's keen interest in the workings of governance and here too the theme of "olvido" is palpable. When the 711 invasion is first described by the poet he refers, perhaps predictably, to the Moorish conquerors as a mortal enemy, but does so with a distinctive rhyme scheme, which allows for the ready association of invasion and kingship by connecting "Rodrigo" and "enemigo": "commo se dio la tierra al buen rey don Rodrigo, | commo la ovo a ganar el mortal enemigo" (6bc). This is a pairing that endures in the poem, some stanzas later we find the terms rhymed again, albeit with a different emphasis: "Fino se Vautiçanos, reino rey don Rodrigo: | avien en el los moros un mortal enemigo" (35ab), and the phrasing occurs a further two times, "la ora que perdieron a mi ermano Rodrigo: | avien en el los moros un mortal enemigo" (182bc), "Assi aguiso la cosa el mortal enemigo: | quando perdio la tierra el buen rey don Rodrigo" (217ab). That we are intended to associate conquest and kingship is very clear; in particular, Rodrigo's attributes and failings set the tone for the way in which all subsequent Christian kings and leaders in the poem are treated. Rodrigo's most positive role is that of protector; he is lauded by the poet as "sonbra e grand abrigo" (35c) of the Christian people. The metaphor is important; the notion that he provided some form of protective, concealing shelter inspires the poem's strong emphasis on dynamics of visibility / invisibility and publicity / concealment in relation to governance which is, in turn, connected to the idea that the Christian presence in Spain may have become obscured but it is never lost completely, and that a form of protective shelter is a necessary counterpoint to the invasion.

Rodrigo's death in the poem occurs in mysterious circumstances when he goes missing in battle, "del buen rey essas oras non sopieron mandado" (83d), and his grave is later found in Viseu in Portugal.⁴³ The Christians are in despair but some flee with precious relics to the mountains, valleys, and passes of Asturias, which the Moors are unable to enter, thus establishing a "forgotten" phase in Castile's narrative. Rodrigo's demise is notable not just for its juxtaposition with the establishment of this recon-dite Asturian stronghold in the sequence of the narrative, but for its very mystery, which allows Rodrigo to fall firmly into the realm of the hidden. The theme of the hidden ruler, or the ruler plucked from obscurity, is a constant feature of the poem's historical introduction. Rodrigo's ancestor Wamba is the epitome of the reluctant ruler, preferring obscurity, "por

que el non reinasse, andava ascondido | nonbre su puso Vanba por non ser conoçido" (28cd), but turns out to be an exemplary leader. Similarly, Pelayo has to be sought in a cave and is reluctant to rule: "Resçibio el reinado, mas a muy grand amidos" (117a). Like Rodrigo, he comes to be synonymous with defense and protection, "tovieron se con el los pueblos por guaridos" (117b), "guardo tan bien la tierra que non pudo mejor" (121b), to such a degree that when the Moors try to assail his mountain refuge, their arrows miraculously turn back on them (119).⁴⁴

Fernán's trajectory to leader of the Castilians is also shrouded in secrecy. Kidnapped in his infancy by a *carbonero* and brought up in the mountains, Fernán is quite literally kept from public view, and remains for a time in ignorance of his true lineage (177–78). When he discovers who he is, and hears that the Moors are assailing Castile, he speaks of leaving his secret life behind and entering the public sphere:

Señor, ya tienpo era de salir de cavañas,
que non so yo osso bravo por vevir en montañas;
tienpo es ya que sepan de mi las mis compañías
e yo sepa d'el mundo e las cosas estrañas. (181)

Fernán's emergence from his mountain cave and joyous reception by the Castilians, who deem their leader exemplary, prefigures another movement from *olvido* to freedom, that of Castile itself. Castile is described by Fernán as existing in a state of "antigo dolor" (185d) and "premia" (190d); it is oppressed and captive, "yazemos cativos de todos los d'España" (188c), and those who ought to lead are reduced to vassals, "los señores ser siervos tengo lo por fazaña" (188d). This topsy-turvy and oppressive state wherein they are "mucho apremiados de la gent descreida" (187b) is a darker version of "olvido," one of lengthy torment, taking the Castilians to the limits of their endurance (189a). Fernán's campaign, however, requires him to return, time and again, to a state of isolation. Physical distance from his troops is, somewhat counterintuitively for the vassals, necessary for Fernán to achieve closeness to God, to whom he is a sworn vassal. Implicit in this solitary journey is great danger, reinforcing just how vulnerable Fernán is to Moorish attack:

era de su mesnada arredrado e partido;
si por pecados fuesse de Almançor sabido,
non fincaria tierra donde escapasse vivo. (234b–d)

During his first encounter with the hermitage, Pelayo warns him that this distance from his men will be misunderstood by them on precisely

this basis, that they will worry about Fernán being killed by the Moors, and imagine their fate without him as a leader:

Por lloro nin por llanto non fazen ningun tuerto,
 ca piensan que eres preso o que moros te han muerto,
 que quedan sin señor e sin ningun confuerto,
 coidavan con los moros por ti salir a puerto. (243)

Fernán's trips to the hermitage for advice are his means of renouncing the world, of finding a creative kind of "olvido" in which to reflect and prepare for battle but his men are very much in the world, terrified of being left alone and vulnerable (422). To reconcile these two seemingly conflicting positions, Fernán has recourse to a manifesto of Castilian loyalty, where "lealtad" is the tie that binds them together, stretching across physical space:

Non deve otra cosa de vos ser olvidada:
 por que el señor fiziesse cosa desaguisada,
 ellos nunca le ovieron saña vieja alçada,
 mas sienpre lealtat leal mentre pagada. (216)⁴⁵

Fernán's physical movements away from, and back into, public spaces serve to highlight his intrinsically isolated position, and the extent to which the Christian monarchs of Iberia are allies of the Moors, exacerbating the state of "olvido" in which Iberia languishes by forgetting their own God (396b). When the Navarrans rob Fernán's land during his absence fighting the Moors he describes the king as a friend of the pagan peoples (291b). The monarchs are summarized by Fernán as vassals of Almanzor (396c), leaving him "entre todos solo desanparado" (398a), alone in his fight against the Moors (399d). Even Sancha is initially accused of helping the Moors (624ab).⁴⁶ In this way, Fernán's leadership retains the air of secrecy and isolation from which he emerged, a creative forgetting of the world in higher service to a forgotten Castile.

The notion of "olvido" is also cast in a more positive light through the poem's preoccupation with *fama*. It is here that the Moorish conquest takes on a more existential role in Fernán's assertions that he and his men are creating a legacy. The most complete perspective on *fama* comes, however, during the Battle of La Era Degollada against the Navarrans. Fernán's pronouncements on fame are elegant and edifying: "quedan los buenos fechos, estos han de vesquir, | d'ellos toman enxiemplo los que han de venir" (352cd), "si tan buenos non fueran, oy serien olvidados, | seran los buenos fechos fasta la fin contados" (356cd), and refer to great

men of the past like Alexander (354a). This discourse on memory and legacy sets the scene for the Castilians' later trials and successes against the Moors to be eternally lodged in the collective memory: "en los puebl-los paganos grand mortandad fizieron: | fablaron d'ello sienpre todos quantos lo oyeron" (535cd), "quanto el mundo dure, sienpre ser contado" (553d). The very fact that the poem is a stated commemoration and celebration of Fernán's feats, "commo cobro s'la tierra toda de mar a mar" (2d), and operates an explicitly oral poetics, rich in juglaresque turns on phrase, serves to highlight once again the primary connection between the oral domain and the realm of "olvido."

It remains to say that the oppression and "premia" suffered by the Castilians as a result of Moorish domination comes full circle so that by the end of the poem in its existing state, in a reversal of the "olvido" theme, it is the Moors who make themselves scarce:

Dexaron y la prea toda a su mal grado,
quien mas fuir podia, tenie s'por venturado:
el rey de cordoveses finco ende en malfado,
¡bien bendizie a Mafomad quando d'end fue escapado! (729)

In this version of the poem, discounting the narrative continuation from the *Estoria de España*, the very last words of the poem are "Quiso Dios al buen conde esta gracia fazer | que moros nin cristianos non le podrian vencer" (760ab). Although "moros nin cristianos" is potentially a set phrase meaning "everybody," in this final context, by fortuitous accident, or perhaps in the sense that a Spain where Moors and Christians live in strict divide is not imagined by the author, it comes to stress how Fernán has been attacked by Moors and Christians alike and how both parties have contributed to the overarching sense that the protagonist is fighting off oblivion, both of the physical kind in death, and of the kind that would tarnish the collective memory of the Goths and their ancestors in perpetuity. The greatest role of the Moors, therefore, is in placing Fernán on the verge of "olvido" of many different modes, not least in making the Christians their symbolic vassals and forcing Fernán to reenact the retreat and regrouping of the original invasion of 711, demonstrating once again that motifs of hiding, retreating, and isolation are essential to the forging of strong Castilian leaders, but take the Christian people perilously close to oblivion. It is this doubleness of perspective, one that delves into the darker, conflictive, and contrasting spaces of the narrative, as well as its more superficially conservative, celebratory, and communal aspects, that makes this poem such a good example of the variety of effects and impressions the invasion had the power to evoke.

In all three *mester* texts the representation of Moorish conquest has to be understood as part of their creative interpretation of land and space, especially the sense that frontiers can be relative, imagined, sanctified, and highly symbolic. In this way, the texts are close to present-day descriptions of the medieval frontier as a highly complex, multifaceted, and by no means easily definable thing:

Es difícil dar una definición de la frontera que abarque toda su innata complejidad. Porque, efectivamente, las fronteras medievales fueron, sin duda, *limes*, *marcas* o suma de *marcas*, franjas, membranas más o menos permeables a la influencia mutua, deslindes “políticos” de territorios, pero también fronteras culturales, lingüísticas, religiosas y mentales; fronteras reales e imaginadas; individuales y de grupo; estatales y domésticas; pero, ante todo, fronteras que separan mundos distintos y antagónicos (González Jiménez 2001, 293)

What is more, the poems seem to evoke the important point that a frontier zone often highlights turmoil and change in a home society, and the need to address problems within, as much as it does the danger of what lies beyond.⁴⁷

All three poems place significant emphasis upon crossing, mediation, and intercession in their narratives of conquest, thereby illustrating that it is precisely at the moments when group identity is under stress that the space between this world and the next comes most sharply into view, making of the physical world a contingent, changing place. As Joaquín Gimeno Casaldueño phrases it in relation to the *Poema*: “Los planos se yuxtaponen, el mundo se convierte en un fantástico camino en el que lo sobrenatural y lo natural borran sus límites” (1975, 64). This attentiveness to the symbolic potential of space is replicated in the poems’ form, a poetic middle ground of popular and clerical traditions, oral and written modes. Just as they represent boundary spaces, so too do the poems focus to a large degree on cornered, beleaguered, closed-off spaces, the apparent backwaters of mountains, caves, and prisons. This appears to give visual form to a spatial idea more prominent and paradoxical than any geographical border with al-Andalus, that is, the terrifying necessity of a step into *olvido*, the borderland between creative isolation and oblivion, to forge the careers of their heroic and saintly protagonists, an idea in complete harmony with the poems’ genesis in the pilgrim heartlands of Northern Spain.

The remit of these clerical poems is naturally a spiritual one but they cannot help but serve a political purpose, in the sense that their vision of a shared, superlative Christian territory would have struck a particular

chord, and held a constitutive power, in the context of Fernando III's gains in Andalusia. Samuel Armistead notes the author's clear enthusiasm for, and pride in, the victorious Castile of Fernando "el Santo" (1961, 9). Luis Fernández Gallardo alludes to Fernando's campaigns as evoking a feeling that a resounding victory, a definitive end, was near (2009, 2). Lucy K. Pick also observes that Fernando's reign marked a second phase of political transformation in the thirteenth century, one in which "the change in Christian fortunes and objectives is paralleled by a change in their confidence about their situation" (2004, 29). Satisfying as it is to connect the imaginative power of these narratives to the triumphant context of the so-called Great Reconquest of the thirteenth century, that cannot be their only determining feature. Their artistic representation of land, space, the frontier and, ultimately, the Moorish conquest, is so creative and fluid that it holds a power always to move beyond the apparent certitudes of chronology, context, and rhetoric, and the answers they seem to provide in relation to the meanings of these poems. The cleric, it seems, recognized many different frontiers but saw in all of them narratives of creation and recreation apt for consumption by future generations.

CHAPTER 4

CROSSING AND DOUBLE CROSSING: ISLAMIC CONQUERORS IN THE *CRÓNICA SARRACINA*

Acosta and the Great Schism

The death of King Acosta opens the *Crónica sarracina* (c.1430), Pedro de Corral's historical narrative of the fall of King Rodrigo and the Muslim invasion of Spain:¹

En el tiempo que el buen Rey Acosta, Rey de toda España, murió en Toledo, fijo que fue del Rey Antanta, fincaron del Rey Acosta dos fijos pequeños, al uno dezían don Sancho, e al otro Elier. E a la ora que fue muerto e lo sopieron por toda España, fue la buelta tan grande que todas las más gentes e de los más altos onbres de toda España se començaron luego a guerrear unos contra otros. (2001, I, 93)²

The keynote of the work is schism, and our introduction to Rodrigo, who is called to take the throne by the most authoritative men of the kingdom, set against a background of vicious and unsustainable civil strife. The narrative describing Rodrigo's downfall was well-known at the time Corral was writing, having been widely diffused in the chronicle tradition, and readers of his work would have been anticipating Rodrigo's terrible sexual misdemeanor and its dramatic consequences. However, Corral's text starts with rather surprising attention to a generalized climate of strife predating Rodrigo's kingly career. Rodrigo emerges as an exemplary character, chosen for his qualities as an "onbre bueno y muy sesudo, y esforçado e ardid" (I, 94), yet he is brought into the center of a polemical world, where tensions between hereditary and elected kingship are rife while the sons of Acosta remain too young to govern, and where he is left quite literally to amend the climate of thieving and violence left by

Acosta's death (I, 96). We are encouraged to view Rodrigo's personal narrative of sin and castigation within a broader frame of strife and division, and this highly original element of Corral's work has important repercussions for our interpretation of the text. This broad narrative frame reappears at other strategic points. The death of Acosta is re-evoked in the context of a lament about the internecine war that has broken out among the Goths, "¡Ay qué malo fue el día que el Rey Acosta murió para venir tanto de mal por su muerte!" (I, 139). The motif of schism then reappears in striking figurative terms at the very end of Part One when the queen pronounces a wish that the earth would open up and form a chasm in which she might hide: "¡O tierra, abre a ti misma! E tú, Señor del mundo, faz una grand sima que abaste a las más baxas partes de la tierra en que se esconda esta desconsolada reina vista de toda crueldad" (I, 652). The placement of schism at key structural points is confirmed by the ending of Part Two, a recounting of the written denigration of treachery on Rodrigo's grave, where Count Julian is denounced as the instrument of division: "matador de su señor, destruidor de su tierra, e aleuoso contra los suyos" (II, 405).³

The governing motif of schism shapes the portrayal of Islamic figures in the work and prevents them from being read in the binary terms favored by some critics, and common in scholarship on the presence of Islam in Spanish literature, as either the maligned "other" or with guarded praise, as a means of reflecting further glory on Christian success.⁴ A text that announces its matter as splitting and strife requires a more nuanced consideration of the relationship between two entities, be they Christian or Islamic. In this chapter I argue that Islamic conquerors are depicted in a setting that is divided, sorrowful, and sinful. In this setting, the role of the Moorish characters is not that of the "other" against which the Christians define themselves, but as central actors in a tale of flexible and shifting loyalties where the crossing of the Straits of Gibraltar is only the most literal demonstration of crossing, and crossover, in a work that explores the creation and repercussions of schism and betrayal. Henry Berlin's articulation of the role of the Moors in the chronicle as revealing "much more interior disquiet than hatred of the invaders" is a helpful correlative to this view, linking the suffering staged in conquest scenes with "not a case, then, of radical otherness, but rather of the exteriorization of an internal discomfort, a projection" (2009, 120). However, his contention that the Moors undergo objectification, and are "imbued with autochthonous values and fears" (2009, 120) seems to undervalue their active presence in the text, and particularly in establishing and asserting the very subjective dynamic of loyalty and betrayal. The fact that this dynamic is the very axis of the work also means that the reader

is encouraged to be less partisan; rather than having us empathize with Christian concerns, which is a precondition for the objectification argument to hold fast, the chronicle ingeniously manoeuvres the reader's position so that the focus always lies on the very boundary between loyalty and betrayal, and we too are sceptical, mutable, interested in the points of crossover. In short, it is the process of division that is always our focus, leaving us reticent to commit to one or another side but primed to exist in a state of disbelieving distance from the main actors in the narrative.

The title of the work gives an ironic indication of this. The term *Crónica sarracina* suggests an Arabic frame of reference; it might be the case that "Saracen" is employed in the sense of a chronicle about non-Christians, unbelievers, infidels and so forth. However, this is not convincingly demonstrated in the substance of the text, forcing a closer consideration of how and why it might apply to the narrative. The late Latin term *sarracēni*, originally from the Aramaic *sarq[īy]īn*, meant inhabitants of the desert and may, in turn, evoke thoughts about exile and displacement. The chronicle is replete with just such motifs, not least the presence of hermits and the memorable image of Rodrigo's isolated grave outside Viseu. Moreover, at the end of Part One, the fictitious chronicler Eleastras poignantly describes the Muslim invasion as a process of displacement for the Christians:

¡Ay mezquinos, cómo el añafil escuro sonará!; e los disipadores cercarán las cibdades, e a sus fuerças las tomarán, e consigo mismos de nosotros farán partición. E como nos avrán presos cada unos para sus tierras nos embiarán; e quanto más iremos más sentiremos la grand destrucción perpetual que estamiento será esta ora de nosotros miserables... E dirán allá onde vedes que el sol se pone allí es España. E los desaventurados de españoles con aquesta señal mirarán e verán la su propia tierra, de la qual son desterrados. (I, 648)⁵

That the Christians are associated with exile ties, of course, into the over-arching religious tenor of the work since the destruction of Spain is explicitly linked with Noah and the Flood, and the reconquest with the Israelites escaping persecution (II, 324, 345). However, the exile motif also indicates that this is not a tale of Christian dominance but rather one of displacement on many different levels: literal, biblical, and figurative. With the fall of the Gothic kingdom, we see the Christian actors enter a hermeneutical no-man's land that is open to the reader's interpretation. Juan Goytisolo realized the potential of the exile motif in creating a mood of literary instability and flexibility in his *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* (1970), where his narrator, a modern-day Julian, rails

against Spanish orthodoxy from across the Strait of Gibraltar and dreams of another invasion of the despised homeland:

tierra ingrata, entre todas espuria y mezquina, jamás volveré a ti con los ojos todavía cerrados, en la ubicuidad neblinosa del sueño, invisible por tanto y, no obstante, sutilmente insinuada: en escorzo, lejana, pero identificable en los menores detalles. (1970, 11)

With exile forming another dominant motif of the chronicle, the position of the reader is rendered more ambivalent, and strict binaries quickly become irrelevant. This is also supported by some key aspects of narrative technique.

It is not just the content of the chronicle that trades in strife and displacement; it is also inherent in the structural organization of the work, which chronicles both the downfall of the polity in the waves of Muslim attacks and the personal demise of the king, but also involves a narrative strain about the court and the world of the medieval knight that questions the very heart of Christian and chivalric identities. However it does so without a chronological framework, only referring to a precise date in annalistic style, with the different calendars, for the first time in Chapter 254 of Part One. Language and imagery also support the themes of strife and division. Gone is the euphemistic style of the earlier historiographical tradition, to be replaced by an exaggerated, emotive, and often lugubrious representation of Christian demise, prone to use of fantastic and diabolical elements. Moreover, the work is very conscious of its own position at the borderline between history and fiction, further adding to the reader's need to be on their guard. Corral strives for an effect of historical authenticity and his sources include many respected historical accounts: the Arab historian al-Rāzī's *Crónica del moro Rasis*, the *Estoria de España*, the *Crónica de 1344*, Pero López de Ayala's *Crónica de don Pedro*, and the *Crónica troyana*. Corral also invents two historiographers, Eleastras and Alanzuri, brothers from Rodrigo's court. Alanzuri is mortally wounded at the end of Part One, leaving Eleastras to chronicle events. When Eleastras dies in the battle for León a new chronicler and member of Alfonso III of León's court, Carestes, comes in and provides the account of Rodrigo's penitence, having discovered his tomb and a manuscript inside it. What is presented as historical record by these chroniclers quickly emerges as a more slippery matter.⁶ In the very sentence where we are told that Eleastras was asked by Rodrigo to write down everything as it happened, we find that there is a more selective approach at work:

E dize Eleastras, a quien el Rey don Rodrigo mandó poner por escripto todas las cosas como pasavan, que más de veinte donzellas de grandes

linajes, que aquí no faze mención dellas por quanto no eran del linaje de los godos, dieron este día muchas joyas a sus cavalleros. (I, 261)

The accuracy of his record is also challenged by its deficiency in accurate dating, a matter highlighted in Part Two, “E esto era en el año de la Encarnación de Nuestro Señor Jesu Christo de setecientos e veinte e un años segund maestre Pedro, fraile menor, lo sacó por la era de César, por quanto en este libro no fallava era nin año ninguno” (II, 322). Moreover, an omniscient narrative voice above and beyond that of the chroniclers reminds us that they are characters in the drama, commenting for example that Rodrigo instructs Alanzuri to chronicle the events of battle (I, 352). Some information also comes via anonymous, prying witnesses, such as details of a secret meeting between Fávila and Luz, the parents of Pelayo, where “no avía ombre ni muger sino ellos ambos, e así eran bien seguros que sus poridades no las entendiese ninguno” (II, 123).

The work is thus replete with sources of historical information but leaves us questioning the truth and the provenance of the account. In this way we are invited to consider a new and more subjective category of “truth,” one akin to the “truth of fiction,” very appropriate to the fifteenth-century context.⁷ Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua describes how Corral used the tension between chronicle and fiction to go beyond the traditional techniques of his day, which caused division in his readers’ responses:

Para algunos de los más ilustres hombres del siglo xv, la obra no podía relacionarse más que con los libros artúricos o neoa rtúricos, o ser considerada como una auténtica patraña, convirtiéndose en eje de las primeras declaraciones teóricas sobre la historia en el siglo xv, cuando ya se planteaban los problemas de la verosimilitud o de la veracidad desde posturas más modernas... Otros lectores la consideraron como auténtica historia. (1992, 54–55)

Michael Agnew proposes that the chronicle enshrines “the idea that self-conscious fictiveness can convey truth” (2002, 29) and he draws attention to the metafictional credentials of the work as “a representation of a representation—a fictional chronicle that parades itself as a true one” (36). Marina Brownlee takes this a stage further, describing the chronicle as “invested in dramatizing complexity, thereby casting into doubt the artifice of normative medieval generic categories, which tend to oversimplify the representation of history and the implementation of ideology” (2006, 128). If objective truth, or generic norms, cannot provide stable ground for judging the work then it seems that the fictionality of truth,

and indeed the truthfulness of fiction, become key factors in discerning how to interpret the work, and more specifically the representation of the Islamic conquerors within it. Both the content and the form of the work condition the reader to consider the boundary lines traced by strife, division, exile, truth, and fiction as focal points and the Islamic figures are essential to the production of precisely these lines.

Textual Transgressions

The keynote of strife struck by the death of King Acosta is closely connected to the representation of sin in the chronicle, insofar as sin is the root cause of strife. Representing sin is one of the principal ways in which Corral ensures that his text is stripped of certitudes and firm ideological positions, both in terms of form and content, but rather exists as a space of exploration of borderlines and boundaries. Corral's vision of sin is very much one of transgression, in the truest sense of the word. Sin is perfectly aligned with the etymological root of the Latin *transgredior*, emerging as a form of "stepping across," or "crossing-over," or excess. All of the sins brought to light in the chronicle—pride, covetousness, anger, lust—involve excess, wanting more, crossing, or exceeding boundaries. Linked to this is the representation of the Islamic invasion, the consequence of sin, as a literal crossing-over. King Rodrigo's lustful desire for la Cava, daughter of Count Julian, after seeing her frolicking in the palace garden with her female companions, revealing her leg and the contours of her breasts in the process, is the primary demonstration of sinful behavior in the chronicle. The rape of the girl by the king directly causes the invasion of Spain which means that the invasion can be read as a literal representation of transgression, mimicking the aetiology of sin, and its disastrous effects, on a larger and more collective scale. Thus, the invasion of Spain, and the representation of the Islamic conquerors is always read in the context of Christian sin. As the chronicle concerns itself with boundaries, borders, limits, and relationships made and broken as a means of exploring the meaning and effects of sin in fifteenth-century Spain, the Islamic presence becomes central to defining Christian selfhood.

The deadly sins held an important role in the Middle Ages, both in life and in literature, as Morton Bloomfield explains:

Medieval man was fascinated, as we are, by the Sins, but more than that, he believed in them. For most men in the later Middle Ages, the Sins were as real as the parish church itself, and really entered into everyday life.

From theology they passed into art and literature, associating themselves with and linking themselves to various strands in Western thought and life. (1952, xiv)⁸

The root of all sin was deemed to lie in *cobdiçia* (covetousness) as highlighted in Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor* (c.1330), "Fue con él la cobdiçia, rraíz de todos males" (1988, 218, st. 540), a direct allusion to the biblical edict "radix omnium malorum est cupiditas" (1 Timothy 6.10). Johan Huizinga confirms the particular relevance of covetousness to the later Middle Ages:

the conditions of power had been changed by the increased circulation of money, and an illimitable field opened up to whosoever was desirous of satisfying his ambitions by heaping up wealth. To this epoch cupidity becomes the predominant sin... A furious chorus of invectives against cupidity and avarice rises up everywhere from the literature of that period. (1955, 28)

Pride (*soberbia*) also attracted special attention, as evident from the Spanish *Libro de Alexandre* (c.1200) whose protagonist Alexander moralizes on the sin of pride yet is unable to recognize his own sinfully overweening ambition (1988, 520, st. 2317). The omnipresence of sin in the *Crónica sarracina* reflects the conflictive tenor of the late medieval period, particularly true of late medieval Spain, and is further evidence of a work poised at borderlines, as Huizinga puts it "between the fear of hell and the most naive joy, between cruelty and tenderness, between harsh asceticism and insane attachment to the delights of this world, between hatred and goodness, always running to extremes" (27). For Elizabeth Drayson, the thrust of the work is not wholly religious and didactic, however, as "the plain Christian moral that sin will be punished, and can be atoned for through contrition is challenged by Corral's insistence on elements of eroticism, violence, and even sadism in his account of the relationship between Rodrigo and La Cava, and of the king's exile" (2005, 196). It is my contention too, although in very different terms, that the representation of sin is not a matter of straightforward Christian didacticism. Although the traditional lexis of sin and sanctity pervades the work, its function is to prompt reflection on the idea of crossing limits and boundaries, which in turn is intended to evoke a society divest of clear coordinates and constantly renegotiating its identity, and is delivered via a text that does likewise in straddling the boundaries of history and fiction. At the heart of the matter is the flexibility and fictiveness of truth, and what that would have meant to a fifteenth-century readership.

The episode of the House of Hercules provides the first opportunity to see this representation of sin as stepping over or beyond an established boundary. Rodrigo is summoned to Toledo by the guardians of a mysterious house referred to only as “plazer con pesar, guarda complidera, secreto de lo por venir” or “*Honra Dei*” (I, 172). The house is founded upon four metal lions which tower above the ground and the house is entirely circular, encrusted with colorful gems, and so high that no man in the world has ever been able to throw a stone above it. Rodrigo is informed that now that he is king of Spain it is his duty to place a padlock on the outer door, just as Hercules, the founder of the house, and all his successors have done. The guardians of the house warn Rodrigo that Hercules left an edict that no king nor lord should know the contents of the house. No sooner has the edict been explained than Rodrigo displays other ideas, ignoring the warnings of the guardians:

E el Rey don Rodrigo oyendo dezir las cosas maravillosas desta casa, e cobdiciando saber lo que en ella avía, e otrosí como era ombre de gran corazón, quería saber de todas las cosas cómo eran e por qué guisa. Respondióles que tal canado no pornía en esta casa, e que en todas maneras él quería saber lo que dentro desta casa estava. (I, 174)

Against the best advice of the nobles, Rodrigo goes ahead and enters the house acting, we are told, at the instances of his heart, “como su corazón gelo demandava” (I, 176), only to discover inside a luxurious bed. On the bed is a statue of an armored warrior with a script in his outstretched hand that informs the reader that Spain will fall because of this action, and great harm will be unleashed, in direct contravention to the founding labors of Hercules. The king is perturbed but proceeds to the interior rooms where he comes across a silver coffer, closed with a pearl lock on which is inscribed the prediction that the king in whose reign the chest is opened will see wonders before his death, just like Hercules saw into the future: “El rey en cuyo tiempo fuere abierta esta arqueta non puede ser que non vea maravillas ante de su muerte; así Hércules señor de Grecia e de España sopo algunas cosas de las que havían de venir” (I, 179–80). Rodrigo breaks the lock of this delicate chest in rather brutish fashion, with his bare hands, to find inside a white cloth which, when unfolded, depicts Arabs holding pennants in their hands and with swords held high and crossbows in their saddles, above which is written the dictum that when the figures on the cloth are revealed, such men will conquer Spain and become masters of it: “Quando este paño fuere estendido e parescieren estas figuras hombres que andarán así armados conquistarán a España e serán della señores” (I, 180). Rodrigo’s reaction is deep sorrow

“pesóle mucho de corazón” (I, 180), showing how the motif of the mysterious house, “plazer con pesar” or pleasure with pain, picks up the emotional axis that runs right through the chronicle.

The process by which Rodrigo comes across the Arab figures on the cloth is one of many layers and the king breaches a number of actual or symbolic boundaries to reach it: the edict of the guardians, the outer door of the house, the inner doors, and the lock on the coffer. The effect is concentric, fitting for the circular house, and means that the menacing picture, a kind of proleptic tapestry, is the very nucleus of the drama. The fact that we reach the Arabs as a result of Rodrigo's continual demonstrations of covetousness means, of course, that they are linked to his inevitable punishment at the level of the narrative. However, the picture and its lettering play a more sophisticated role, holding up a mirror to the chronicle itself by thematizing the process of representation and calling attention to the fact that this history is but a rewriting of past writings and, in a sense, a mirror into the future too. The House of Hercules is like a hall of mirrors for the reader, each internal layer reflective of the passage of authority and of our own difficulty in establishing a firm interpretative position. As Rodrigo journeys toward the image of the Arabs, so too does the reader traverse different levels of textual authority and house and text begin to emerge as quite similar structures. Israel Burshatin refers to inscribed texts such as that on the cloth as *sobrescriptas*, “the tags and message that mediate between the visible and the invisible, the earthly and the divine, the literal and the allegorical. Both rhetorically and in the more strictly hagiographic sense they furnish the necessary translations between collected object and overarching realm of the sacred” (1990, 23). Once the picture is discovered the effect seems to radiate outward in a process of translation akin to that described by Burshatin. An eagle soon swoops down and sets the house alight, reducing it to ash. Some black birds then flock in and walk over the ash, their movement scattering it across Spain and condemning those it touches to death. In this scene the Islamic conquerers move from the symbolic realm that is the house, via the picture as mediating device, to the wider setting of Spain itself, where the effect is felt in “real” terms “muchos dixieron después que a todas las gentes que aquellos polvos alcançaron morieron en las batallas” (I, 181), and is subject to another level of interpretation where it is deemed to be the first sign of the destruction of Spain, “e éste fue el primero signo de la destrucción de España” (I, 181). This scene is representative of the change of dominion, *señorío*, as is illustrated when Rodrigo's cloak is brought by an eagle to the Moors and falls to Musa (the governor of the Muslim province of North Africa, Ifriqiya) (I, 617–18).⁹

From this point, the Moors start to become a more tangible threat, once more via the written medium, as Count Julian sends a letter to the king outlining the danger he perceives from Ceuta and describing a heavy loss of men after a fateful storm at sea while he was attacking Moorish lands in God's name (I, 234–37). The letter represents a powerful emblem of translation, both the carriage of news from one part of the kingdom to the other, and the conversion of the Arabs from a symbolic entity to an imminent reality. The details of the letter are factual, outlining numbers of men, types of vessels, locations, and courses but the king's instinct darts back to the House of Hercules as he interprets the loss in less literal terms; “allí le vino al corazón lo que en la casa de Toledo avía fallado” (I, 236). The strong emphasis in Julian's letter on the sea also confirms it as another important mediating device in the phase of the chronicle where the prophecy and the actual repercussions of it start to merge. It is both the stage for conflict, “que pasásemos la mar a fazer guerra e daño en tierra de los alarabes” (I, 234), and for more providential intervention, “todos dentro en la mar levantóse un viento ravisio e fortunado” (I, 234). It is important to Corral's overarching vision that the sea be associated with sin and that the crossing of the Straits by the conquerors be readily associated with the transgressive, boundary-breaking behavior of the king. To achieve this he not only invests it with this mediatory role but also associates it with sadness, *pesar*. It is the sea that constitutes the site of the first heavy losses as described by Julian, which in turn render the king “muy triste” (I, 236) on hearing of them. Consequently, once Rodrigo informs the queen and ladies of the palace of the losses they strike up a lament, which Corral describes most emphatically:

E por toda España fue fecho tanto planto que fue cosa estraña, e non era maravilla que mucha buena gente eran que pasavan de veinte e dos mil cavalleros e de ochenta mil hombres a pie, e éstos fueron los que aquella ora murieron. E por toda la corte fue fecho muy mucho llanto, e lloradas las muertes destos cavalleros por grand tiempo. (I, 236)

The theme of *pesar*, initiated by Rodrigo's covetousness and the first evidence of mortal losses here at sea, will from this point on be closely associated with the Islamic conquerors, and will provide a means of establishing a conceptual borderline that helps to shape Christian identity. The literary exploitation of *pesar* and *plazer* is not original, emerging prominently, for example, in the *Poema de Mio Cid* as an axis used to articulate the Cid's gradual reversal of fortune and innate confidence in providence. Here the theme is more unsettling; it is a binary structure that traces the destruction of Spain, but it is not as simple as a movement

from joy to sorrow. It is tempting to consider that Corral builds to an apogee of courtly success, before knocking it down and it appears that this might be what he wants us to believe, "E sin dubda podedes creer que aquella ora el bien de todo el mundo era junto en aquellos palacios, e la flor de la cavallería, e la hermosura de las mugeres; que nunca tan rica corte ni tan complida de todas las cosas ombre fue nascido que pudiese ver cómo ésta era" (I, 219). However, the Christian polity is riven from the start by internal divisions and any attempts to reinstate an atmosphere of jollity, such as the *fiestas* and dances organized by Rodrigo in Part One, smack of superficial happiness and ironize the use of this binary structure to envisage the developing Christian situation as a fall from happiness to despair and the Islamic conquerors as the external agents of this sorrow. Where Corral appears to explore collectivity, he also explores division at the same time, as Berlin proposes in his insightful judgement of ritual mourning in the *Crónica* as "a social rather than a personal phenomenon with the potential either to divide or to unite the populace" (2009, 109). And division is already at the heart of Christian identity.

Rodrigo's *pesar*, ironically, opens the gates for the next demonstration of *codicia* on his part, the rape of La Cava.¹⁰ It is some time since any festivities have taken place at court and courtiers begin to comment on the dejected aspect of the king, "dezían las gentes que el Rey que solía ser el más alegre hombre del mundo que ora no era así" (I, 447). After two months, and the organization of some feasting and fun, the gloomy atmosphere at court starts to lift and the courtiers go back to their formerly happy ways. It is in this context of frivolity that the king sees, from his balcony, La Cava playing with other women in the palace orchard. As their games become more audacious the girls undress to their smocks to compare bodies, and their garments cling to their breasts, tempting the king toward La Cava: "E entró tal imaginación en el Rey que ál no codiciava tanto como averla a su voluntad" (I, 449). The scenario has reminiscences of the House of Hercules insofar as the king is once again breaching a secret, enclosed space through his covetousness. The orchard is described as heavily walled and guarded, "muy guardada e cercada de grandes tapias, e allí do ellas andavan no las podían ver sino de la cámara del Rey" (I, 448), while the girls' playfulness is explained by their assumption that nobody can see them, "fazían lo que en plazer les venía así como si fuesen en sus cámaras" (I, 448). Once again, this covetous action is closely connected with the impending destruction of Spain: "E esto acarrea la malandança que le havía de venir, e la destrucción de España" (I, 449).

The reality of internal schism within the Christian polity is well-exemplified by this episode, adding weight to this whole sinful prologue

to the appearance of the Islamic conquerors, one that underscores that they are not the maligned agents of division and destruction but a useful conduit to self-examination. For example, La Cava warns the king as he makes his feelings known to her that what he is proposing would be betrayal on her part, “merescía ser muerta como persona que faze traición” (I, 454) and fears the reaction of the queen whom she loves and respects. Rodrigo, on the other hand, goes ahead with his desire despite the consequences for anyone else, “e no parava ojo a la grand maldad que fazia a Dios ni escuenta su muger, ni a la desonra que a la donzella, e a su padre, e a su madre fazia por esta razón” (I, 449). The marriage between Rodrigo and his queen seems to become an emblem of the broken polity; the detail that while she is being raped La Cava cannot shout out in case the queen hears her keeps the queen in mind while the dreadful act is taking place, an act of illicit union that drives the polity part.

The aftermath of the rape sees the pleasure of the court turn to *pesar*, as La Cava, then Count Julian, then Bishop Orpas (Oppa) all succumb to intense sorrow; La Cava starts to lose her beauty as a result, and on hearing the news Julian and Orpas are distraught, the former “nunca [él] ovo pesar que a éste se comparase,” and the latter “dexóse caer medio muerto en tierra con grand pesar” (I, 459). We also see the episode start to become the focus of interpretation; first the letter La Cava writes to her father to inform him of what has befallen her, and then the advice of Orpas to Julian on how to react. A process of translation occurs at this point, mediating between the site of the rape and the location of the victim. The distance between Ceuta and Toledo starts to open up first with the physical motif of the letter, sent by messenger at speed, and then with Orpas’ instruction that once La Cava is safely back in Ceuta Julian ought not to forget the incident, planting the seed of treason in Julian’s mind: “traelda con vos, e así como fuerdes en Cebta no se vos olvide la desonra que vos fizo; antes buscad manera como le fagades perder el reino” (I, 460). The conceptual space between mainland Spain and the tip of North Africa widens as a result of Rodrigo’s covetousness, an essential consideration in the shifting panorama of loyalties that ensues.

To Rodrigo’s covetousness several other sins may be added, increasing the sense of crisis in the Christian polity in the lead-up to the invasion. This is never more clearly apparent than when the king is visited by four figures who descend from a dark stormcloud on the eve of one of the battles against the Moors to represent his sins. A hermit, knight, monk, and a girl resembling La Cava appear and the girl explains to him that the hermit represents *codicia*, the knight *soberbia*, the monk *avaricia* (greed), and herself *luxuria* (lust) (I, 592). Strange visitations like this provide a means of connecting Christian sin to the punitive role of Islam,

as seen prominently in the sequence of apparitions in Part One where the devil emerges as catalyst to the conquest. While the Moors deliberate over strategy one evening an old man, tall and with a dark beard and shining eyes, appears to give them the instruction in Arabic that they must attempt to kill the Christian leaders and captains first. Musa interprets this as the work of God in sending them the prophet Mohammed and they take strength from the advice (I, 497–98). In the next chapter the figure, now described as “aquel bestigo que apareció a los moros” (I, 499), appears to the Infante Sancho. The figure provokes Sancho by saying that he will have his head tomorrow and when Sancho goes to strike him he beheads Abín instead. The Christians realize that this is the work of the devil but are left in sorrow, and deeply unsettled (I, 501). A similar occurrence comes in the following chapter when the devil appears to Sancho in a dream and makes him think he is in the midst of a battle against Musa wielding blows against his foe. When he wakes up he is horrified to discover that he has actually killed a Christian knight who was beside him. The theme of Christians killing Christians that emerges here harks back to the overarching motif of internal strife which informs the chronicle, and the sinful reasons for this, demonstrating that the fall of Spain is essentially an internal crisis. This much is confirmed by Sancho’s ensuing dream where he sees the beastly figure, now accepted to be the devil, remove Rodrigo’s crown and Spain burn in a diabolical inferno (I, 502–03).

The lineage of the Goths, lauded as the finest and most honorable in parts of the chronicle, also comes under fire for its propensity to pride. *Orgullo* is regularly cited in Part One as the reason for infighting and the concomitant loss of good knights. As early as Chapter 13 the narrator laments this fact: “En fuerte punto nació tanto orgullo en el noble linaje de los godos que unos a otros así se han de matar” (I, 139). It reappears in the first battle of the invasion, “E otra osa non fue sino la grand sobervia que creció en el linaje de los godos que se pensavan señorear el mundo todo por sí mesmos; e a Dios no le plaze de la sobervia, e la abaxa” (I, 495). Furthermore, it is the theme of Rodrigo’s long speech from the mountain before finally departing from the scene of battle, where in the vein of *vanitas mundi* he warns of the dangers of trusting in power and position:

Todo ombre que posa su confiança en reinar y señorear que tiene el ceptro del palacio real e inperial, e non bive en temor del Soberano Senor que es un solo Dios, e toda su creencia pone en las cosas ligeras e mundanales, mire e vea a mí, ay de toda España; ca la fortuna en todo tiempo trae mayores exemplos e doctrinas, mostrando en qué forma los ombre altivos

e soberviosos están en lugar fuerte e peligroso... E en la dicha destrucción son la multitud de los alarabes e bárbaros que son gentes que no moran en casas ciertas, antes traen tiendas e múdanse de una tierra en otra, e continúan la ribera de la mar. (I, 635)

It is interesting to note that the Islamic conquerors are here cast as the *exemplum* of humility, carrying their tents rather than trusting in the false protection of opulent surroundings. This represents a significant shift in ideological position from that which traditionally regards them as the cruel and rapacious agents of diabolical destruction. This intrinsically biblical ethos, that the proud be brought low and the humble exalted, is applied to the invasion in terms which affirm the constructive role of the Islamic forces in relation to the Christian polity. The idea is developed in Part Two by the hermit who, in conversation with Musa, speculates on how the conquerors did not expect to be in the position in which they now find themselves, but suggests that pride now grows among them: “Y esto nasce de aquellos que nunca se pensaron estar en el grado que agora son e olvidar los que solían ser, lo qual acarrea la sobervia que en ellos cresce que es enemiga de la humildad que es madre de piedad” (II, 282). By extension, their lack of mercy or “piedad” is generated by their growing *soberbia*. Thus, in the way their humility is also lost, we witness a further lesson in the political danger of pride.

Borderlines and Betrayals

In a chronicle whose subject matter is schism, the theme of betrayal takes on exceptional importance, and provides another compelling means of thinking about crossover and crossing, a theme consistently employed by Corral as a means of exploring the fluid process of identity creation. The idea of handover and exchange is intrinsic to the definition of betrayal; the Latin *traditio*, from which the Spanish term *traición* derives, had a clear association with *infidelitas* after being used in the Bible to describe the duplicitous exchange of Christ for 30 pieces of silver by Judas (Iglesia Ferreirós 1971, 94–95).¹¹ In the context of the *Crónica sarracina* betrayal is another form of transgression, a crossing-over of loyalties that is focused around the physical border between Christian Spain and Islamic North Africa. Its strong presence in the text is closely connected with the Islamic conquest. As legend would have it, this was the site of a double betrayal, the rape of La Cava by the king entrusted with her care by his own vassal, Count Julian, then the treacherous liaisons between Julian and the Moors to facilitate the invasion of Spain and bring down the Visigothic king in revenge. The story, Spain’s foundation myth, is shrouded in mystery, and

Corral's version, together with the anonymous *Refundición toledana de la Crónica de 1344* (*Revised Toledan Chronicle of 1344*) (c.1440), was largely responsible for much of the legendary invention associated with it that was carried forward into late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹² The fact that for Corral the Islamic conquest is the direct result of betrayal reinforces the idea that the conquerors are not to be regarded as exteriorized threats, as the "other," but rather as active elements in the determination of Christian identities and in the process by which true loyalty is distilled from the network of self-interests that defines the Visigothic polity in decline.

The chronicle closes with details of an inscription on Rodrigo's grave that heaps opprobrium on Count Julian for his betrayal:

Maldita sea la saña del traidor Julián que fue mucho perseverada; maldita sea la su ira que mucho fue dura e mala. Ca sandió fue con su ravia, corajoso con su sobervia, e antuviado con su locura, e quitado de lealtad, desacordado de la ley e despreciador della, cruel en sí mismo, matador de su señor, destruidor de su tierra, e alevoso contra los suyos; amargo es el su nombre, e la boca del qual nombre duelo, e pesar faze la su remembrança en el corazón de aquel que lo mienta. E el su nombre siempre será maldito de quantos dél fablaren. (II, 405)

Julian is the character who attracts the most severe criticism in the entire work on account of his negotiations with the Moors, much more so than the sinful King Rodrigo, and this is partly owing to his ambivalent position, poised between mainland Spain and North Africa. When first introduced, his power and command are evident but his dominion is liminal, on the coast of the Mediterranean and North Africa, "era muy poderoso y estava en Cepta, e tenía por sí todos los puertos de la mar Medio Terráneo, e del estrecho así los desta parte como allende del mar hasta Túnez" (I, 175). It is Julian who is most affected by Rodrigo's intrusion into the House of Hercules, and here that we see his uniquely exposed position on the border with Moorish territory, come to the fore: "Si verdad es que España se ha de perder a mí viene la primera destrucción, e yo seré aquel que primero seré muerto, e destruida la mi tierra, e enseñoreada de los enemigos; ca yo tengo toda la frontera de aquellas gentes, así la de allende el mar como la de aqueude" (I, 182). The identity of Julian is also a rather ambivalent one, as historians have verified; Luis García de Valdeavellano describes him as:

un misterioso personaje al que los historiadores musulmanes llaman casi siempre Ulyan y que probablemente se llamara Julián or quizás Urbano, Ulbán or Bulián...en realidad no sabemos si era berberisco, godo o

bizantino, si gobernaba Septem como conde porque la plaza dependía del Reino visigodo, si era un exarca o gobernador que dependía del Imperio de Bizancio o si, como parece más probable, era un bereber señor de la tribu católica de Gomera. (1952, 345–46)

Julian features in all the Arabic chronicles of the period, but not in early Christian ones, and the Arabic sources emphasize how he opposed Rodrigo's accession to power and collaborated in his downfall, alleging that his hostility came from Rodrigo's mistreatment of his daughter (O'Callaghan 1975, 52). Corral's account exploits this mysterious background; once the treachery of Julian is accomplished we discover that he, and indeed the perfidious Bishop Orpas who encourages him in his revenge, are not actually of Gothic lineage, but "del linaje de los Césares" (I, 600, 635), the lineage of the Caesars denoting a less distinctive breeding, "número de la gran multitud" (I, 635).

Julian's ambivalent identity and borderline status mean that he is, at least initially, a firm opponent of the Moors. In a letter to Rodrigo in Part One he announces himself as "el Conde don Julián, guerreador de los alarabes, e sofridor de las batallas contra los incrédulos" (I, 234) and liaises with the king for backup in his efforts. The situation in North Africa leaves Julian under pressure (I, 267) and he is grateful for material assistance from Rodrigo. He emerges as a force of encouragement and support to his men in the fights against the Moors, and proves to have the winning edge, "ferió en los moros tan bravamente que lo no podieron sufrir, e ovieron de bolver espaldas e fuir" (I, 270). Julian even finds himself up against the great Musa and is able to knock him out with a blow to his head; when Musa recovers it is Julian's strategic thinking that prevents Christian defeat: "E si no fuera por avisamiento del Conde don Julián, sin dubda los christianos perdieran la batalla; más como el Conde iba tras un recuesto con su batalla, los moros no lo veían" (I, 272). When the battle is over, Julian both encourages his men and recovers territory from the Moors by force and by striking up tribute relationships, and is grateful for his success, "tóvose bienaventurado en vencer tanto poder" (I, 273). When the news reaches Rodrigo's court, the king cannot speak of anything else for ten days "estovo el Rey unos diez días que en otra cosa no fablava sino en los fechos del Conde, e como era buen cavallero" (I, 273). With a flourish of impressive dramatic irony, Corral even has Rodrigo warn Julian about trusting the Moors: "mandóle que dixese al Conde que se guardase de los engaños de los moros, e que se non fiasse dellos" (I, 273–74).

Julian's borderline status means that he is able to mix with the Moors, first deceitfully to enable Christian gains, then treacherously, to the

detriment of the Christians. After the second great battle with Musa, Julian's military prowess is praised again, this time directly by the narrator who calls him "cavallero mucho esforçado, e sabidor de guerra más que cavallero de toda España" (I, 327). In demonstration of this, Julian orders those of his men who are dressed in Moorish clothes and who can understand Arabic, to go into the Moorish camp and spy. Once Julian is apprised of Rodrigo's deed by letter from his daughter, this liminal status starts to work against the Christians and to be converted into a means for betrayal. Secrecy quickly starts to build; Julian's journey to court is undertaken "muy encubiertamente" and Orpas advises him to see the king without revealing the true reason for his appearance (I, 459). Once at court, there is a striking scene of mutual disloyalty when Julian invents the pretext of removing his daughter to see her sick mother, and Rodrigo lavishes his vassal with praise, "Conde amigo, Dios sabe que yo he muy gran plazer de cómo avedes bien parado vuestra fazienda con los moros, e con Muça" (I, 461). Dramatic irony comes to the fore again in Rodrigo's assertion that owing to Julian's work he no longer has to fear Musa, "pues de Muça no avemos que temer" (I, 461).

There seems to be the genuine impression that Rodrigo holds Julian in the highest regard, "fuele fecha mucha honra así del Rey e de la Reina como de todos los cavalleros de España, que mucho lo preciavan sobre todos los hombres del mundo" (I, 461), as if to better illustrate his culpability in siding with the Moors. The narrator even states as much, claiming that were it not for the "misfortune" of Rodrigo sleeping with his daughter, he has done Julian no other harm, but rather raised him above all men:

Empero sabed que si no fuera esta desventura que al Rey acaesció en dormir con su fija por donde le hovo de errar que nunca tanta honra el Rey fizo a hombre del mundo como al Conde; ca no fazía dél menos que de sí mismo, fuera la corona quel Rey avía tomado, la qual él tomó por consejo del Conde por lo qué le aconsejara. E nunca el Rey fizo cosa que sopiese que al Conde pesaría fueras ésta... e desta guisa le avía dado tanta honra en España allende de la qué tenía que no avía hombre al mundo tan grande que rey no fuese. (I, 462)

Despite the narrator's efforts to shift the blame for what is about to happen from Rodrigo to Julian, there is something deeply unsettling about the parity between the two men described earlier. Rodrigo's pride and taste for political power, the focus of much of the first part, seems diminished when we are confronted with the depiction of Julian as a kind of *valido*, or court favorite. Julian is the power without the crown, a perfect

complement to the king, implicit in the making of his very kingship. Although intended to inform the ensuing invective against Julian by the chronicler Eleastras, Rodrigo's lack of distance from his vassal seems as problematic as his betrayal of him; the lack of clear boundaries between them a complicating factor in their relationship, and one which seems to explain, at least in part, Julian's emotive and audacious response. In other words, the king's power may have been too accessible and that in itself as much a contributory factor in his downfall as his *hubris* and covetousness. This is proven when Julian's advice to Rodrigo to disarm his kingdom proves to be the first step in his betrayal. The narrator explains how treachery always begins under the pretext of benefit to the betrayed, to allay suspicions, "todos los que traiciones quieren fazer buscan que los comienços dellos vengan so causa de provecho por que luego no sean entendidos, e so aqueste color puedan levar adelante su maldad" (I, 464). Julian then flatters the king, telling him he is the powerful man in the world, with all the Arabs under his control, but that he is lacking in riches, "tesoro" (I, 464). The suggestion that Rodrigo's power is not matched by his material worth appeals to a side of the king we have seen abundantly demonstrated, his covetousness. However, he also appears to be strangely beholden to his vassal, valuing his advice above all else, "que le preciava más su consejo que no de todo el reino" (I, 465) and, more worryingly, is unable to tell him no, "todo lo quel Conde esa ora le demandava que le no dixera de 'no' por le contentar" (I, 467). The advice of Julian is that the king disband the court, send his men back to their lands to work the soil, not pay for the upkeep of fortresses, and require all his vassals to disarm. Within one month not a single weapon remains in Spain. The great irony is that this edict is issued, again with Julian's advice, under the threat of anyone who disobeys it being accountable for treason, "so pena de traición" (I, 465), a threat that is repeated three times in this chapter to reinforce Julian's audacious double-dealing, and to show how a darker atmosphere of betrayal descends on the kingdom. The collective mood quickly changes; the knights are unsettled and disagree with the edict, while investigators, "pesquisidores" (I, 466), agents of a generalized climate of distrust and blame, are sent to convict those concealing weapons.

The chronicler Eleastras appears to struggle to make sense of both Rodrigo's naivety and Julian's deeds, launching a series of questions at each of them in direct address. His rhetorical interrogation of Rodrigo concentrates on his absent "seso" (wisdom) and "saber" (knowledge) (I, 467) and on the king's disregard for the value and opinion of the collective, in favor of the advice of just one man, "¿cómo tu discreción consiente averte por mejor aconsejado de uno solo que de quantos a

tu mandamiento avías?” (I, 468). He also questions how Julian could destroy a man who has given him so much, and honored him so highly. The chronicler blames Julian for placing too much faith in the word of a woman and suggests many reasons why La Cava is at fault; why did she not inform her father when Rodrigo first spoke offensive words to her; why did she enter the king’s chamber alone; why did she not mention anything to the queen? (I, 463). He even suggests that the incident gave La Cava “plazer” (I, 462). For believing his daughter, Julian’s wisdom comes under attack in a decidedly petulant fashion, “los que te conocían te loavan por el ombre de mejor seso e más leal que en este tiempo fuese mas esto no lo fallo yo así” (I, 462). The language of betrayal starts to become evident, as Eleastras condemns Julian for the unilateral damage he causes among his own kith and kin “el que fizo el mal lo deviera pagar, e no los tus naturales, parientes, e amigos, e la tierra donde fuese criado” (I, 463). He even suggests that if he wanted revenge, he should have enlisted the help of other Christian friends, rather than the Islamic “enemigos de Dios, e de la su fe” (I, 463). The intransigent, deeply partisan tone of the chronicler does little to nuance the situation, but rather casts it in broad brushstrokes. It is here that the conquerors are referred to as stinking dogs, “los canes pudientes” (I, 464). The closing statement on Julian is similarly uncomplimentary, to the effect that he is the most evil and treacherous man ever to exist, “E todos te deven dar por el más traidor e malo que nunca hombre fue” (I, 464). The strident outburst of Eleastras seems determined to shape events into a set of extreme contrasts but the matter of betrayal and the Islamic conquest is a far more fluid and fluent one, always connected with the atmosphere of division that threatens the Christian polity.

It is Julian’s relationship with Musa which constitutes the most impressive example of betrayal as a form of crossing-over, both literal and conceptual, and highlights the fluid relationships between Christians and Muslims. His high esteem of Musa as a warrior, and of the Muslim troops more generally, prompts him to write to Musa inviting him to gain entry into Spain, with the approval of the Almohad Caliph Miramamolín.¹³ Julian is not hesitant at all about his role in enabling this, “le daré la entrada de España, e que le ayudará con todo mi poder, e vosotros así mesmo, porque a España puedan cobrar” (I, 477). Musa’s reaction to the letter is predictably one of great joy, but Miramamolín is more sceptical, asking for proof that Julian is not duping them. Julian’s second letter is reported mostly *verbatim*, allowing us access to the communicative strategies with which he builds a relationship of trust with the Muslims. Musa is addressed as “Honrado y esforçado cavallero leal, Muça el Guerrero” (I, 478), the epithet “el Guerrero” giving him an almost epic status, while

Julian's own position is cast as a needy one, in passive terms. The harm done to him by Rodrigo is emphasized in his self-styled title of "enemigo del Rey don Rodrigo por el mal e deshonra que me fizo" and the passive mood continues in his allusion to Musa as "aquel de quien entiendo ser ayudado e socorrido" (I, 478). The term *cobrar* (to recover or recuperate) is then employed in connection with the scenario offered to the Muslims, suggestive of material opportunity and appealing to their ambition, "por esta razón no se dexa de cobrar tanta buena tierra si coraçón ovieres como cobrarás" (I, 478). Julian proceeds to connect this to the part providence plays in the opportunity before them "que seas cierto que Dios vos ha otorgado todo el señorío de España en esta manera" (I, 478). To back this up, Julian recounts Rodrigo's *hubris* at the House of Hercules and his gullibility in disarming his kingdom, affirming that there isn't even a pocketknife in the kingdom with which Rodrigo's men can defend themselves (I, 479). That an element of *ventura* is controlling events seems evident in the matter of the forbidden house, which appears to lend confidence to the Muslims above all else, "E todos ovieron mayor esfuerço de començar esta guerra la ora que supieron el hecho que Hércoles heziera, e lo que había de venir en tiempo del Rey don Rodrigo" (I, 479). This implicit awe and respect for the foundation myth, and the power of prophecy it enshrines, contrasts starkly with the earlier flippancy of Rodrigo. The Muslims stake their entire armies mostly on this knowledge, rather than an inherent trust of Julian, leaving a lingering impression that they are not entirely undeserving of this opportunity, according to the design of providence.

The correspondence between Julian and Musa allows the literal crossing of the Strait, and the founding of an Islamic presence in Spain, to take place. The use of toponyms confirms the impression of Julian's role as enabler of a foundational enterprise, such as the renaming of Algeciras to "Tárfifa" (I, 480) or the population of a deserted town outside Toledo named "Tárfif Mesa" (II, 77), both after Tarif ibn Mulluq. The relationship between the two men survives the crossing; Musa hastily considers how to keep the momentum of the attack going, but is happy to take the advice of Julian and to wait to see what Rodrigo and his men are doing first. In ardent, and slightly obsequious, manner Julian stresses his desire for Rodrigo to be beheaded and the Moors to be masters of all Spain: "Amigo Muça, yo vos juro en mi ley que yo querria ser desheredado de quantos bienes yo he por tal quel Rey don Rodrigo toviere cortada la cabeça, e que vosotros fuédeses señores de toda España" (I, 481). It is notable that Julian's desire for revenge and for Muslim rule are one and the same thing, an absolute confluence of interests pitted against the Visigothic king. This is confirmed when the Infante Sancho is killed and

Julian is immediately joyful, “E la ora quel Conde don Julián lo sopo fizo muchas alegrías, e dio gracias a Dios de cómo veía comienço de vengar su corazón” (I, 516). More convincingly still, when Rodrigo’s cape is brought by an eagle to the Moors and falls to Musa, Julian’s reaction to this symbol of a change of dominion is one of personal delight: “no he por qué tomar pesar ni tristura sino mucha alegría, e consolar mi corazón como aquel que nunca su igual ovo en las venganças de los que mal quiso” (I, 618).

Nevertheless, Julian’s position starts to change in the second part of the chronicle, during an ominous preamble in which we discover the first cracks in the relationship between Julian and Musa. Musa overhears Julian’s wife consoling La Cava about the downfall of King Rodrigo with the fact that great honor has been bestowed on them as a result of Julian’s newfound position, “de aquí adelante vuestro padre será señor de toda España, e la avrá para si; ca no siento quien gela defienda.” (II, 13). On hearing this boast, Musa starts to realize that his own status is compromised by Julian’s success, and that it is time Julian experienced a taste of his own medicine: “E aquí se començó de hordenar la razón del exemplo que dizen: ‘Qual fizieres, tal avrás’. E el Conde don Julián a mala verdat destruyó el mejor rey del mundo; no es sin razón que él sea destruido por tal manera” (II, 13). While Musa starts secretly to plot against Julian’s power, the latter takes Tárfid aside to reach an agreement with the Moors, telling him that he wishes Tárfid to be the leader of all the troops in Spain, while Julian and his relatives and friends remain free to enjoy their properties, material goods, and honor, and are exempt from any impositions or attacks from the Moors (II, 14). The manner in which this exchange takes place highlights the overweening power and vanity of Julian and harks back to the sinful pride of Rodrigo. Julian alludes to the fame he has achieved among Christians for his deeds, “en quanto el mundo durare me avrán por enemigo capital, así al cuerpo como al alma” (II, 14) and, moreover, is happy that this is the case, “me plaze porque es venido, ca he dado folgança a mí” (II, 14). The vanity that now seems to be a trademark of Christian rulers is confirmed when Tárfid plays up to Julian’s comments, telling him that no man would now dare to refuse him anything: “tanta es vuestra merced e bondat que no es ombre del mundo que de ‘no’ vos quisiese dezir a todo lo que vós quisiésedes” (II, 16). All the while, in a vein of dramatic irony that is characteristic of Corral, Musa is conspiring to bring Julian down.

The theme of power and presumption is voiced explicitly some chapters later by La Cava in a letter to her father Julian in which she asks him to quell his rage and become a defender of the broken country for the sake of the people, and of his reputation. She poses an apposite question—how

can you be confident that your great power will last? “E padre y señor mío, e ¿cómo puedes confiar en el grand poderío que ora tienes?”—illustrating how rooted the theme of evanescence of worldly success is in the second part of the chronicle, and how Rodrigo is already an *exemplum* of the reversal of circumstance: “E contempla en el grand estado del Rey don Rodrigo cómo a una hora sola cayó por el suelo de lo poco a lo mucho” (II, 54). Julian’s fame is also challenged later by King Pelistas, as he laments the complete reversal in his character “¡O cavallero perdidoso de la grande e buena fama que tenías mayor que onbre que rey no fuese en christianos no avía!” (II, 192). Pelistas simply refuses to believe that Spain can be so ruined while Count Julian is alive, and attributes this to the fact that he has become a Moor:

Por cierto falsías has dicho que tú seas el Conde, quel Conde don Julián fiel christiano era, e tú moro me paresces; y el Conde don Julián leal e verdadero era, e tú me paresces un gran traidor; y el Conde don Julián fe avía, e tú no la has, ca denegaste el verdadero Dios que todas las cosas fizo; y el Conde don Julián muerto es, que si él bivo fuese la su lealtad non sufriría que España fuese destruida e aterrada, y el su Rey con la su gran cavallería muerto y destruido. (II, 194)

The motif of conversion to Islam, which also appears in the case of Magued (II, 191), Enrique (I, 486), Tenderus (I, 510), the Christians who fight for Musa (II, 274), Afruendus (II, 280), and the diabolical Bishop Orpas (II, 355) is further illustration of the fluid relationships between Christians and Moors in the text, but is actually a very misleading and simplistic reading of the situation by Pelistas, one confined to a character within the text, rather than asserting any global point on the part of Corral. The broader point that Corral is trying to make does not pitch Christian and Moorish characteristics, chiefly loyalty versus disloyalty, against one another in quite the same way as this. Instead it confuses and conflates the two to the extent that the proximity between Christian and Moorish characters in an atmosphere of broken and reconstituted loyalties is the very substance of the text. Betrayal is not so much the dividing line between two contrasting polities but the bridge between them. It is over and across the bridge that power moves, not just in the case of Rodrigo’s destruction at the hands of Julian, but in the case of Julian’s downfall at the instigation of King Alahor (II, 347–48). Islamic figures may be the instruments of Christian destruction but it is clear from Corral’s sensitive treatment of borderlines and boundaries that the process is more like one of self-destruction on the part of the Christians, always instigated by a blind and unstoppable belief in an earthly dominion without limits.

“Cavallería,” the Court, and Christian Identity

Running throughout the *Crónica sarracina*, and for many critics a defining feature of its genre, is a narrative of *caballería*, one concerned with the exploits of the warrior, and imbued with aristocratic overtones so that it reflects the world of chivalry. The setting of the late medieval court is presented to us in all its color and drama, and values of courage, loyalty, nobility, and fidelity emerge as keystones of the chivalric ideal, consistent with the qualities typically associated with chivalry in medieval romance, “*prouesse, loyauté, largesse* (generosity), *courtoisie*, and *franchise* (the free and frank bearing this is visible testimony to the combination of good birth with virtue)” (Keen 1984, 2). The work is a curious transportation of the late seventh-century and early eighth-century Visigothic kingdom to the setting of the fifteenth century, where the traditional attributes of the Gothic people—namely loyalty and martial prowess—are reconfigured in the context of the later historical setting in which Corral was writing. The presence of chivalry, although often associated with surpassing the limitations of real life in its literary manifestations (Keen 1983, 3), is given a more cautious treatment by Corral, connected to the evolving identity of the Christian polity. Furthermore, Corral’s representation of chivalry strikes comparisons with, and depends upon, the warrior-like qualities of the Islamic figures, providing another means by which Islamic characters are central to the formation of Christian identities and illustrating that, ultimately, the work’s message and meaning cannot be appreciated without them.

Traditional definitions of chivalry often carry ethical or religious overtones, and *caballería* is frequently synonymous with the image of the crusading knight.¹⁴ The attention to Islamic figures by Corral alters and nuances his entire presentation of the chivalric ideal, highlighting the difference between its ceremonial, superficial aspects and its social significance. While there is copious illustration of feats of arms and acts of courage in the work’s many battle scenes, the waning military and moral position of the Christians, and the predominant motif of strife, mean that chivalry is often exposed to be an ideal rather than a reality, a fiction revealing itself as such, as it was apt to do in medieval historical writing:

The illusion of society based on chivalry curiously clashed with the reality of things. The chroniclers themselves, in describing history of their time, tell us far more of covetousness, of cruelty, of cool calculation, of well-understood self-interests, and of diplomatic subtlety, than of chivalry. (Huizinga 1955, 67)¹⁵

The presence of Islamic figures is important in the deconstruction of this ideal. Christian collaboration with Islamic figures through treacherous

liaisons as described above removes the very heart of chivalric values, altruism, and replaces it with self-interest, vanity, and pride. As Huizinga puts it, at the bottom of the chivalrous ideal lies "man, in the excitement of danger, stepping out of his narrow egotism, the ineffable feeling caused by a comrade's bravery, the rapture of fidelity and of sacrifice" (1955, 76). More importantly, however, the Islamic figures share the same knightly framework as that of the Christians, in both its positive and negative aspects, suggesting that *caballería* is not an exclusive theme, but a shared means of building, and demolishing, group identities.

From the outset of the chronicle, the narrative of chivalry associated with the Christian figures is interwoven with a narrative thread concerning the Moors. In Part One, for example, the knightly prowess of Sacarus, cousin of the sons of Acosta, Sancho, and Elier, runs together with the story of Julian's battles against the Moors so that peninsular and extra-peninsular affairs progress in tandem. What initially appear to be two mutually reinforcing tales of Christian bravery will proceed in different directions as Julian's loyalties switch. Sometimes the movement between narratives is signalled in obvious fashion by Eleastras who adopts the historiographical technique of shifting from one narrative thread to another, "Ora dexemos de fablar desto, e tornemos a contar lo que Muça fizo" (I, 382). The two narratives may alternate one chapter at a time, such as between Chapters 122 and 124, or a greater distance may elapse between them, but the effect remains the same, one of a fluid oscillation between Christian and Moorish affairs which keeps both in mind, akin to the effect of interlace described by Eugène Vinaver, "since it is always possible, and often even necessary, for several themes to be pursued simultaneously, they have to alternate like threads in a woven fabric, one theme interrupting another and again another, and yet all remaining constantly present in the author's and the reader's mind" (1971, 76). The narratives converge where there are physical clashes between the two groups, literal versions of this coming-together, but this structure is also useful in highlighting connections and comparisons between them at a more suggestive level. In other words, conflict is also a coming-together.

The Christian court is represented ostensibly at its apex in the first part of the work, a site of the "flor de la cavallería" (I, 219), young maidens to be married, jousts, tournaments, and *fiestas*. However, it quickly becomes apparent that this is a veneer intended to create an atmosphere of merriment and well-being while anxieties and misgivings about civil unrest, the threat from the Moors, and the attrition of good men, plague the king and his courtiers. In one particularly striking scene after his indiscretion at the House of Hercules Rodrigo muses about the loss of

men he has incurred since taking the throne, which he estimates at over 40,000 knights and over 150, 000 footsoldiers, and how this signals the end of the Visigoths:

E el Rey se entró en sus palacios, e metióse en su cámara, e començó de pensar mucho en estos cavalleros, e de cómo se perdía la flor de la cavallería después quél avía tomado el regimiento del Reino; que eran ya muertos más de quarenta mil cavalleros, e ombres de pie más de ciento e cinquenta mil, e que estos fechos no eran sino destrucción de España, de los godos para siempre. (I, 236–37)

Even before Rodrigo ravishes Julian's daughter, the repercussions of the Herculean prophecy have had a marked effect on court spirit. In Chapter 125, we find Rodrigo once again in his chamber reflecting on the loss of knights in battle; in the two years of his kingship over 50,000 of his finest men have been lost (I, 386). In an attempt to reinvigorate his forces he asks for a written record of the sons of these knights; the figures that come back are worse than his first estimate: over 56,466 knights are missing, as well as a countless number of footsoldiers, but only 6,000 sons above the age of 15 exist, confirming his earlier concerns about the broader downfall of the Visigothic line. The focus on genealogy only serves to highlight how the only cycle of renewal and regeneration is a perennial return of woes. This much is confirmed by the chronicler's mournful reference to the periodic renewal of misery, "nunca fue año que en España no oviese duelos e tristezas" (I, 387). Moreover, sorrow progresses from an annual occurrence to a permanent fixture, changing behaviors and customs in the longer term: "Ca tanto les duró los perdimientos de las gentes que les quedó por costumbre los cantares penosos. E aun creo que para sienpre lo usarán" (I, 387).

The contagious atmosphere of sorrow and attrition reaches new heights after the fierce battle between Sacarus and his men and Arcanus, cousin of Lembrot, and the count of La Marca. This clash creates a significant Christian death toll, including Sacarus, Melcar, Almeric, and Agreses, and reinforces how civil strife represents the root cause of the Gothic predicament. Berlin's view supports this, "the jousts and battles—characterized structurally, again, by repetition, symmetry, and chaining together—reveal the fundamental narcissism behind the text's supposed intercultural conflict" (2009, 121). Beliarte, brother of the king of France, comes to Spain and observes the aftermath of this clash. His position as an outside observer is useful, since he quickly succumbs to the sorrow these losses generate, underlining its pervasive effect and its internal

cause. His outsider status also creates the opportunity for the grieving women to explain to him the burial customs of the Goths. As we see them give their explanation of internal practice to a stranger, attention is focused intensely inward, to the self-made combination of success and disaster that defines the Gothic people. The women explain how the victors are dressed in colorful ceremonial garb, and the losers in black, the former reflecting an honorable death in colors befitting a wedding, and the latter's sombre clothing reflecting an everlasting death, without a legacy of fame (I, 441–44). Clothing is an important marker of mood, and reveals how the substantial, the live bodies of fine knights, is continually replaced in the text by the symbolic and the vestigial, to the extent that the narrator suggests that all men, but particularly the Spanish, should dress in poor clothes one day each week to mark the loss of such greatness, “E todas las gentes se devrían vestir un día en la semana de vestiduras viles por perderse la flor del mundo; e mucho más lo devían hazer los de España” (I, 262). This invites broader consideration of the demise of chivalry, a point which Brownlee connects with the historical context of the work:

In the fifteenth century, the much-commented social and moral crisis of the country revolved precisely around the tenuous position of noble pedigree in a bourgeois society, and the equation of money with honor. The climate of civil war and the usurpation of funds for personal pleasure and power exhibited by Rodrigo mirror the waste and impoverishment of fifteenth-century Spain. (2006, 125)

The mood and detail of the exchange between Beliarde and the women provides one of the most attenuated reflections on loss in the entire work and once again builds up to a generalized reflection on the depletion of Spain's knightly stock:

No es cosa al mundo que contarvos podiese el dolor e la tristura que estos cavalleros e dueñas pusieron en todos los coraçones de las gentes de España; e no hazían sinrazón en les pesar por sus muertes, ca gran mengua harán, ca ellos eran muy ricos e de grandes linajes de los godos, e los mejores cavalleros que a esa sazón se hallavan, e tan bien queridos de todos como nunca cavalleros lo fueron de gentes. (I, 446)

All this of course serves as preparation for the ultimate illustration of chivalric erosion in the work, the disappearance of King Rodrigo from the battlefield. In a self-imposed exile that feels consistent with the king's dominant individual will throughout the chronicle, and is clearly presented as an alternative action to staying with his men, he

continues to represent the tension between the self and the group: "E el Rey que esto vio, solo e sin hombre del mundo se va de la batalla, e no tiró por aquella parte que los suyos se fueron, que antes se fue al real de los moros que nunca pudo honbre saber esa hora qué se fizo dél" (I, 634).

While the diminution of Christian chivalric values occurs through individual *hubris*, civil strife, and treacherous liaisons with the Moors, it remains to consider the light in which the Islamic warriors are cast by Corral, and how this affects our reading of the work. Inés de la Flor Cramer has discussed Corral's praise of Moorish deeds on the battlefield, connecting this with the tendency of frontier ballads of the fifteenth century to adopt the enemy's perspective of combat, and with trends in early chronicles to exalt the feats of the enemy to enhance the image of Christian success (2005, 141). However, she proposes that because the Moors are not represented with much humanity, not judged by the same criteria as the Christians, this is evidence of their otherness or "otredad" (2005, 147). This term is both reductive and unhelpful, forcing a binary relationship which obscures the role played by Islamic figures in defining the Christian self amidst a climate of strife and betrayal. It is also untrue that the Moors are judged by different criteria, since one of the dominant motifs used to evaluate their chivalric credentials is the model of *fortitudo et sapientia* (bravery and wisdom), a common means of expressing the exemplarity of the Christian hero in epic poetry, as in the *Poema de Mio Cid*.¹⁶ Ernst Curtius (1990, 172–79) has traced the development of this ideal from Greco-Latin Christian tradition, including its use in the Old Testament.¹⁷ They are also associated with many of the same knightly shortcomings as the Christian characters, chiefly the divisive tendency toward *soberbia* and self-interest.

The great Musa, who is first referred to in the chronicle with the epithet "el Guerrero" (the Warrior) (I, 235) is the Islamic front line, stationed in Tangiers, and the best of the Moorish soldiers, "onbre guerrero e de grand coraçón, e tal que entre los moros no se fallava otro tal cavallero" (I, 330). Although he is the figurehead of Moorish might, the narrator has no qualms about indicating his worth as a warrior: "E Muça como era buen cavallero e vía que los suyos desmayavan metíase do eran las mayores priesas, e fazía muchas buenas cavallerías" (I, 271). Musa's character evokes the model of the epic hero; he possesses both wisdom and bravery, *fortitudo et sapientia* to greater or lesser degrees, as he is involved both in strategy, such as judging the numbers of men required and the timing and organization of the initial attacks against Julian and his men, and in the endeavors of the battlefield. Moreover, he is a voice of encouragement and even threats when the Moors look like suffering defeat, raging across

the battlefield like an angry bear to compensate for their inadequacies (I, 324), and asking what has become of their courage:

¡O bárbaros e alarabes!, ¿dó es vuestro esfuerzo?, que bien sabedes que nuestro profeta Mahomad dixo por su boca que las dos partes del esfuerço era en vosotros, e la una era repartida por todo el mundo. E vedes cómo los tenedes muertos, e no los podedes fazer quitar de allí. E yo lo juro por mi ley quel que yo viere que no faze como deve que yo lo mate, e no me escapa. (I, 332)

This combination of knightly *fortitudo et sapientia* is later recognized by Recindus when he tries to strike up a truce with the Moors, alluding to Musa and Abderamén as “los mejores cavalleros del mundo, ca no fallan vuestros iguales en ardimiento ni en seso” (I, 337). What is more, Musa is described as a dedicated guardian of his people, “que no avía tal cavallero al mundo que tan bien quería guardar los pequeños como los grandes, e de todos avía cuidado” (I, 345).

Musa's epic status is affirmed in his dedication to honor, and to settling disputes on the battlefield. When Recindus proposes a truce he is outraged and lambasts the Christians for trying to talk threateningly to him instead of settling matters through combat, “No habledes más deste fecho que paz ni tregua aquí no podedes aver agora ni nunca, antes todos los que aquí son quieren batalla” (I, 340). His straight-talking manner and clear-sighted ambitions to fight and win contrast in this context with the more intellectualized approach of the Christians, who try to win a truce by insisting, in more rhetorical fashion, that war is a domain of uncertainty:

Parad ojo cuántos bienes nacen de la paz, e cuántos males vienen por la guerra. E como onbre no es sabidor de las cosas por venir, deve tomar todavía lo cierto, e dexar lo dudoso, ca ninguno de quantos aquí estades no sodes seguros si seredes muertos mañana si la batalla fazedes, o si seredes vencidos o vencedores. (I, 337)

This develops into a rhetoric of reversal, once again stressing the point that in the context of war, man's fate is not in his own hands, “Ca tú sabes bien que por el mundo contesce los pocos vencer a los muchos, e los vencidos tornar a ser vencedores” (I, 339). Although ordinarily sensible, in this context these words provide a contrast between thought and action; that we are intended to regard them in a negative light is suggested by their ironic value when we consider that at the broader level of the narrative the Islamic figures are already part of the reversal in Christian fortune that is taking place in the wake of Rodrigo's intrusion into the House of Hercules.

When man-to-man battle emerges as the only option, Recindus proposes that Musa fight Branearde but he refuses to do so on the basis that the Christian is not a worthy enough opponent from whose defeat he could gain honor (I, 342). In the organization of these duels, and the raising of their stakes by Musa, it becomes apparent that the Moors do also suffer from a certain amount of pride, which links them with the Christians at this early stage “e los moros con sobervia del gran poderío que tenían començaron esta guerra” (I, 345). It is here that the reversal motif curiously reappears, “Mas Dios en quien son todos los poderes faze quandoquier de los tristes alegres, e de los alegres tristes, e no ha verguença ni miedo de dar el derecho a quien es” (I, 345). The persistence of this keynote of reversal in these early clashes between the two groups provides another version of the structural technique of interlace and prompts us to think of the two groups as bound by a fateful symmetry, strangely indivisible, like two sides of a coin. While the interpersonal duels create the mental image of two knights charging at one another, the reversal motifs that accompany the narrative at this point help us to see the two groups not as entirely separate entities, or as self and “other,” but as designed from the same fabric, clashing but locked together.¹⁸ The best proof of this comes in the vivid description of Musa fronting up to Julian, “E como Muça vio quel Conde venía saliolo a recibir, e como fueron cerca uno de otro cada uno estovo quedo en su lugar, e no fablavan, e mirávanse uno a otro así como aquellos que nunca se avían visto” (I, 346). The description of the two men standing silently before one another, and looking directly at each other creates a powerful visual image in which difference and similarity are condensed. More striking still is the way their manner of speaking to one another is exactly replicated through the repetitive, symmetrical, demonstrative structure “Éste es aquel que...” (This is he who...) so that they are like the mirror image of one another, reading in one another characteristics by which they define themselves:

Éste es aquel que mantiene la guerra desta parte de la mar contra todo el poder de los moros; e éste es aquel que ya tres vezes me ha vencido en campo, e me ha muerto tantas gentes que yo no les podría dar cuenta; e éste es aquel que me ha tomado por fuerça toda la tierra que yo avía ganado de los christianos, e a mi pesar la tiene; e éste es aquel que me ha quitado toda mi onra quanta yo por el mundo avía ganado de los christianos...

E el Conde que lo mirava de como lo veía delante sí dezía:

Éste es aquel que todavía mantovo la guerra comigo, e con los godos, e nunca cansó ni le amenguó el coraçón por mal que le viniese; y éste es

aquel que yo muchas vezes vi venir a destruir mi tierra, e matar mis parientes e amigos; y éste es aquel que nunca cansó días ni noches por ganar la onra de todo el mundo; y éste es aquel que me roba mis tierras, e me tiene así estrecho que ya no me puedo rebolver a una parte nin a otra. (I, 346–47)

Their mutual respect is reinforced by the narrative style, which creates a striking image of two warriors cast from the same mould. Linked by attenuated gaze, symmetrical speech, mutual respect, and similar goals, they eventually come together in an embrace, “Así estavan amos a dos fablando entre sí mesmos, e como un rato se estovieron mirando fuése uno contra otro, e abraçáronse, e feziéronse mucha honra” (I, 347). This dramatic chapter is the epitome of Corral’s unique vision of the indivisibility of Christian and Islam in the unsettled world he presents.

The second part of the chronicle sees Musa become ever more concerned with power, fame, and material wealth, a trajectory not dissimilar to that of King Rodrigo. While the Gothic king’s covetousness is the substance of Part One, Musa carries this theme from the very outset of Part Two, providing a connection between the two men and illustrating that the chivalric ideal is in both cases ruined by self-seeking motives that run counter to the well-being of the group. The prologue describes how Musa goes to see Miramamolín, taking his extraordinary riches with him, to retain his position as “mayoral,” or leader (II, 10), setting the tone for the rest of the second part. It is here in Ceuta that Musa becomes jealous of Julian’s prospects of becoming ruler of Spain, and envy spoils this partnership. Thereafter, in the second part, Musa is depicted as viewing each new opportunity for conquest as a means of personal aggrandisement and fame. The depiction of him looking in wonder at the Christian stronghold of Mérida is of particular interest, being strangely reminiscent of Rodrigo’s contemplation of the House of Hercules through Musa’s attitude toward the city, a mixture of fear and awe, and to what the city itself represents, another emblem of the decline of greatness and the fall of fame. On seeing Mérida, Musa is struck by its size and height, and how possessing it could make him the most fortunate man in the world (II, 270). Musa quickly identifies a “pedrera” or stone quarry from which he and his men may hide to await an opportunity to breach the city, echoing Rodrigo’s earlier association with breaching the apertures of the Herculean structure. Musa’s attitude to the city is, unexpectedly, one of fear, a detail the narrator repeats, and in the explanation of why this is the case the chronicle invests the city with an atmosphere of inaccessibility and wonder that has parallels with the House of Hercules. Musa’s apprehension of “la grandeza de la cibdad e de los fundamentos della”

(II, 271) introduces a digression on the prehistory of the city that reads like a foundational narrative, with Herculean reminiscences. The era of Mérida's greatest prosperity is set out in detail and the description of the city invested with unrealistic proportions: five citadels, each with 20 tall towers; 3,700 towers on the city wall; church towers so tall that on top of each is a working windmill; underground streams running water from every house (II, 271–72). The description is tinged with the fantastic and as Musa remains awestruck outside of the city the parallels with Rodrigo's contemplation of another extraordinary edifice are clear. Moreover, both the representation of the House of Hercules and the image of bygone Mérida are invested with providential overtones, whisperings from wise men about associations with fallen greatness (II, 273); like the House of Hercules, Mérida is a synecdoche of Spain itself:

ca la su planeta e la de España iguales son me parece, e que han seydo, según lo pasado e lo que agora es, porque digo que nunca ninguno se deve tener por aquel que las gentes le dan la fama hasta que vea su fin si está en igual de su comienço, e aun ay deve poner duda, ca todas las cosas han de aver fin si no es celestial, empero duran más unas que otras. (II, 273)

Mérida serves a similar purpose to the House of Hercules in providing a symbolic, and mnemonic, locus of reflection about the evanescence of worldly greatness and might.

Musa and the Moors are successful in taking Mérida and the capture is compared to a death sentence upon the sinful Christian people (II, 280–81). It is in this context that a hermit appears to Musa and attempts to quell his pride by telling him that his victories ultimately come from God, “Muça, no te argulles ca las buenasventuras que en España as avido contra el noble linaje de los godos, que fue la cima de la mejor cavallería del mundo . . . el mi señor Jesu Christo, Dios verdadero en que yo creo, las consiente e da lugar que pasen” (II, 281–82). Just as the Moors are punishing Christian pride, their own susceptibility to *soberbia* comes to the fore (II, 282). It is shortly after this that people remark on how Musa is starting to look old, his hair and beard white, as if he too were showing the first signs of decline. However, his hair changes color again to fair, then to pitch black, causing the Christians to remark on his diabolical ability to be both old and young: “Este es el diablo que quando quiere es viejo, e quando le plaze es mancebo, e agora se ha tornado moço” (II, 286). This flexible identity is the baffling last straw for the Christians, who capitulate and enter a tribute relationship with Musa. This is a disastrous misreading on their part, for this fluid identity and apparent immunity to the ravages of time and fortune, is but an illusion. Musa is already being

challenged by his politically ambitious son, Abalagis, and his own death is shortly to follow. Indeed, Musa's self-seeking campaign for fame and riches comes to a head when Miramamolín forces him to repay Tárif the riches he has earned at his expense, humbling him in the process: "dixole que él lo abaxaría por aquella manera que él quería abaxar a los que bien e lealmente le avían servido" (II, 337). As with Rodrigo, and with Julian, it is pride that ultimately brings Musa down, "Vuestra sobervia vos fará venir a menos; e quiero que me pagueades todo lo que de España llevastes" (II, 338), as the weight of the repayment and the ignominy involved are so great that he dies from sorrow.

The military career of Musa's son, Abalagis, provides further evidence that although the Moors are cast as agents of destruction unleashed by Christian sin, they too suffer from the precariousness and instability of a deficient chivalric mode. Musa gives his son the opportunity to gain honor through military prowess, and he quickly rises to become ruler of Mula, Lorca, and Seville. Gaining confidence in his son's abilities, Musa leaves him as "señor e rey de toda España" while he returns to see Miramamolín (II, 330). It becomes apparent, however, that Musa has misgivings about a threat to his son's position and writes him a letter advising him to guard against betrayal, "aunque sea tu hermano si traición faze no te debes fiar en él" (II, 332). Ironically, it is Julian whom Musa asks to look in on his son and advise him in his youth and inexperience, a choice that proves his point perfectly about not trusting even the closest brother and underlines the pervasiveness of betrayal. Abalagis's *privado*, Habibi, confirms this much in telling him not to trust Count Julian nor any of his kin (II, 333). With ambition, and now requisite caution, Abalagis soon sets to work populating Spain with Moors and in the process gains a leader's reputation, "cobra Abalagís tal fama como nunca rey cobró" (II, 334). In becoming a king, Abalagis falls prey to the now familiar shortcoming of pride in a salutary tale wherein he takes Eliata, wife of Rodrigo, captive as his wife, presenting himself as a replacement king, "si rey perdistes, rey cobraredes" (II, 341). Eliata urges him to wear a crown to prove his kingship, telling him that this is the only correct thing for a true king to do (II, 341). Once a lavish golden crown is placed on his head he is pleased with what he sees, quickly converted to the idea through his vanity. It is this very deed, however, that leads to Abalagis's death as it is thought to identify him as a Christian and leads his courtiers to kill him (II, 347). In the pride and materialism symbolised by the crown Abalagis meets his downfall.

The other key figure in the Islamic invasion of Spain is Muçáf Tárif; he corresponds to the historical figure Tarif ibn Mulluq, who first landed on the Spanish coast at Tarifa, although there does appear to be some conflation in terms of his role with the Berber Tariq ibn Ziyad, later appointed

by Musa to carry out a more extensive investigation of conditions in the Peninsula (O' Callaghan 1975, 52), and more prominent in the subsequent battles. Like Musa and Abalagis, Tárif influences the definition of chivalry in the work, affecting the martial context in which the Christians are viewed, and he is most explicitly shaped according to the model of *fortitudo et sapientia*, and singled out for his great wisdom, as "sabio" (II, 80, 203). At the outset of the second part, Julian invites Tárif to step into the space left by the decimation of the Christian cavalry, describing how he is "solo e desierto de todo el bien que Dios me avía dado, el qual era ser señor de mucha buena cavallería" before proposing that Tárif become "el mayoral de todas estas gentes e quedades para conquistar a España" (II, 14) Tárif's position at the forefront of a new form of *caballería* bridging Christian and Islamic identities could not be clearer. This is developed later in Part Two when the narrator describes how Tárif starts to acknowledge his superior military position, and to consider how strong his claim to power is, given the hundreds of men who have died in the conquest:

vio que en su poder era puesta e dexada la conquista de España por quanto Muça pasara la mar después de la batalla dolorosa vencida, e pensó en sí como Dios le avía fecho la mayor merced que a ombre de ese tiempo, ca él avía estado en todas las batallas que los godos e el Rey don Rodrigo con el Conde don Julián hoviera. (II, 80)

Tárif also rivals Musa's power, a fact that connects him with the single-minded ambitions, and tendency toward pride, of all the other Christian and Islamic political figures:

enpero mayor triunfo otorgara Dios a él que a Muça, en caso que Muça era el mayor cavallero e a él solo era dado el poder de la conquista, la qual él fazía mucho a su voluntad e como se vido en tan grande honra como es traer a servidumbre a sus enemigos, e que la gente que tenía era poca según la grandeza de la tierra, penso de fazer la conquista a su salvo lo más que pudiese. (II, 80–81)

The competition between Tárif and Musa enriches the theme of civil strife that runs right through the work; Musa responds to Tárif's growing ego by writing to him in the manner of a disgraced vassal rather than a friend, so that he will show him greater honor and not try to be on equal terms with him, "por que supiese el poder qué tenía del Miramamolín del señorío de España" (II, 203).

That Tárif has strategic sense becomes evident in his plan not to kill all the Christians but to keep some men to work the land. The fact that he decides earlier not to set fire to a church in Toledo to kill the Christians

inside, based on that fact that they can't escape and "esto era una terrible cosa" (II, 76), makes it tempting to think that a degree of clemency surfaces here. However, the chronicle takes care to state that this is not the case, that he is always planning ahead:

las cosas que Tárif fazía a los poco entendientes parecía que era hombre de verdad e de piedad; e no era así, ca todo lo quél fazía era crueza e falsedad, e que después que la tierra fuese poblada e en su poder y le fuesen venidas tantas gentes como menester les eran que ay tenía tiempo para los matar e destruir, e de fazerlos tornar a su secta... E por esta guisa se levantó el enxemplo del que dixo: "Quien adelante non cata, atrás cae." (II, 81)

His wisdom therefore emerges as a combination of ruthless ambition and tactical awareness. Musa's peremptory letter, putting Tárif in his place, prompts a digression from the narrator about the relevance of *seso* and *esfuerço* in political rule, showing just how closely this framework defines both Christian and Islamic figures:

Ciertamente Tárif era ombre muy sabio e de bien. E havia con el seso compañía el esfuerço que cae en pocos onbres seso e esfuerço todo junto, maguer que todo ombre déstos dos cosas deve ser hallado, quanto más de los que han de mantener estado; ca el que ha seso e no esfuerço aunque todo el mundo lo juzgue tal por de seso no es así, ca no deven tener las gentes por cumplido al que es menguado. (II, 203–04)

The narrator postulates at great length on how lacking bravery means that men can never be deemed truly wise, but instead ought to be considered fortunate, "venturoso" (II, 204). The ardent tone of this chapter, and insistent repetition of the key point that wisdom without bravery is not true wisdom lift this passage from the immediate narrative context. Indeed, Corral seems to be making a broader statement about a chivalric ideal found wanting. This is confirmed when the digression builds to the point that a lack of both knightly qualities of *seso* and *esfuerço* together, and the inability of people to perceive this deficiency, is indicative of the wider mutability of the world: "ca este mundo movable que traemos en caso que dure algund tiempo esta bien aventurança de loar de bienes al que en sí no los ha, no puede estar firme en un tenor como sea cosa no estable" (II, 204). The rather unsteady replacement for this knightly pairing, *ventura*, is presented as the deceptive equivalent, the smoke and mirrors of true power and success:

Algunos dirán: ¿qué cosa es ventura? Yo les digo: hablar sin verdad, loança sin mereçimiento, comienço de poderío; ca nunca en este mundo

llaman bienaventurado al ombre pobre aunque sea amigo de Dios, sino aquel que con mala verdad e con engaño prevalesce en este mundo. (II, 204–05)

It seems initially logical to consider this an attack on the Islamic rulers for arriving at a power they do not deserve by fortune rather than entitlement, but actually this is not the case; immediately afterward, Tárif is described as possessing wisdom and courage in abundance. It is more the case that Corral is using the exemplarity of Tárif to make a much broader point about an institutional decoupling of the two central knightly values and, more seriously, the lack of insight into this breakdown that means people are fooled into thinking that fortune and success, *ventura*, are the same as complete and intrinsic worth. A discourse of *engaño* thus runs through the heart of the image of knighthood, urging caution in distinguishing a veneer of success and virtue from the true to life qualities that underpin it. A cleavage in the image and reality of chivalry is clearly identified, courtesy of the Islamic narrative.

This is not the only occasion where the characterization of Tárif opens up deeper questions about truth and deception, *engaño*, in connection with the chivalric world. The episode of Solomon's table which follows and connects with the discussion of knowledge also draws a line between image and reality, truth and falsehood. The table, one of the spoils of the conquest, is the finest and most desirable object imaginable and is constructed through Solomon's great wisdom, as a mirror of knowledge "espejo de todos los saberes" (II, 206). Its qualities are explained as follows:

Ca por tan grand saber fue fecha que no se fazía cosa de grand conquista ni fecho de armas que en ella no fuese visto doquier que la conquista se fiziese. E por allí venían quáles devían ser loados o quáles no. Empero de tanto sed ciertos, que si la conquista se fiziese por causa de engaño o de traición, que en ella no veríades cosa sino las cavallerías de aquellos que de la traición no fuese sabidores. (II, 206–07)

The table's ability to distinguish treachery from virtue makes it a fitting symbol of the problem of reality and appearance associated with the knightly world. Its movement into the possession of the Islamic figures creates a kind of formalized movement, *translatio*, which shows how important the Islamic conquest is to raising and developing this theme of truth and reality in connection with the chivalric setting and its centrality to Christian identity formation. Moreover, the table is not just a mirror of the truth, but is also explicitly connected with an episode of trickery wherein Tárif steals a leg from the table before giving it to Musa.

This highlights Musa's inability to spot the trick, "no sabía la verdad de la mesa para ver si Tárif andava con engaño o no" (II, 208), reinforcing at the level of the narrative the competition between these two men, and the fact that one is emblematic of the complete package of chivalric qualities, the other deficient and aligned with insubstantial *ventura*. In a final confirmation of this fact, when challenged by Miramamolín about the fourth leg on the table not matching, both Musa and Tárif claim to have the missing original piece. Only Tárif's statement is revealed as true, and he defends his action as the act of a brave and deserving soldier, and as defence against the grasping nature of Musa, "entendió que Tárif dezía verdat, e que Muça fiziera contra él lo que fizo por lo amenguar e cobrir los bienes que avía fechos" (II, 337). Wisdom, and bravery, coupled with Tárif's sheer audacity in converting a deceitful act of theft into the vehicle of truth, win through, forcing further meditation on the location of truth and virtue, and the deceptive veneer of knightly success, and in the process showing how the Islamic figures are deep at the heart of Corral's literary challenge of the meaning of *caballería*.

The *Crónica sarracina* is a brooding and troubled text; the civil strife created by the death of King Acosta provides the setting for a series of fractured interpersonal relationships, devastated by covetousness and pride: Sancho and Elier, Rodrigo and Julian, Rodrigo and La Cava, Julian and Musa, Musa and Tárif. Despite the predominance of sin in Corral's depiction of the waning Visigothic court, it is not the case that the Arabs are presented simply as the instruments of divine castigation, dehumanized entities to be dreaded and despised, as they are in the earlier historiographical tradition. It becomes increasingly apparent that on one level the Islamic figures share the same problems of rivalry, ambition, and distrust as their Christian counterparts, as well, in fact, as the same positive attributes of courage and wisdom. On another level, moreover, the fluid and changing relationships between Islamic and Christian characters seems to be intended to foreground the fragility and subjectivity of loyalty in the political context, and hence the complications of the process by which group identities are forged. It is never simply a question of self versus other, us against them, in Corral's text; rather, the self is always in a position of some uncertainty relative to anyone, be they Christian or Islamic. It is from this backdrop that the crisis of *caballería* emerges, one that speaks of an internalized, egotistical world, stripped of altruism. In this context, the greatest contribution of the Islamic figures to Corral's literary vision is to open up the theme of truth and reality, a theme replicated in the chronicle's own elusive format, straddling history and fiction, a theme which prompts the reader to look for the certitude and the soul of the text in a cohesive social vision but to find only a reflecting mirror

turning everything back into a question of the self. The Islamic figures are, therefore, central to the process of textual interpretation, providing that anchoring quality of *seso*, wisdom, that comes from an attentiveness to the flexibility and relativity of truth, and which prevents us being led too far into the deceptive realm of a fictional chivalric setting that is exhausted by its own self-generated and self-destructive *esfuerzo*.

CONCLUSION

THE MEANING OF CONQUEST

The idea of conquest and reconquest that encodes and abbreviates the historical trajectory of medieval Spain has been shown in this study to encapsulate a number of different perspectives that challenge the application of this historical diptych to the literary context of medieval Castile without a large degree of caution. It is a lesson in separating theory from practice, and avoiding the temptation to look for uniformity, that is well exemplified in Peter Linehan's description of the situation at the Islamic frontier more broadly: "In *theory*, the very idea of frontier *convivencia* is inconceivable. Crusade and co-existence comprise a confessional oxymoron if ever there was one. But in *fact*, people aren't like that" (2003, 53). Here he follows Norman Housley's scepticism about historians' approaches to the medieval frontier: "Perhaps, seeing the high premium which was placed on uniformity in the Middle Ages, they have assumed that it corresponded to reality. But in practice the inconsistencies of human behaviour and belief were probably as deep as in any age" (1996, 115).

The thirteenth-century chronicles, the *Estoria de España* and the *Crónica de veinte reyes*, are profoundly interested in the history of the Islamic peoples and polities that inhabit the Iberian Peninsula after the conquest and represent this as a complex sequence of human events with much didactic value and common interest for a Christian audience. The *Estoria* upholds and structurally embeds the idea of an Islamic *señorío* in its narrative, investing it with meaningful associations for a Christian audience within a broader context in which the matter of Spain, *el fecho dEspanna*, is a history of waves of occupation and annihilation. Although a work from the "centre" insofar as it was written by a king and would-be Holy Roman Emperor, the work illustrates that the dynamics of center and periphery, inside and outside, are porous, and that "defining inside/outside divisions in social activity may be of less significance than recognizing different

scales and hierarchies of relations operating at different levels of geopolitical resolution" (Rowlands 2009, 4). The *Crónica*, with its narrower focus on Castile yet more expansive narrative style, represents the conquest within a historiographical framework where epic legends, written accounts, and eye-witness encounters are all grist to the mill. In this setting, where the "truth" of history is not necessarily an empirical one, the Islamic conquest is not accounted for as the uniform or "factual" course of events but as a means of provoking the imagination into seeing history as saying more than the sum of its words, of possessing of a secondary, foundational meaning that is "not so much 'constructed' as 'found' in the universal human experience of a 'recollection' that promises a future because it finds a 'sense' in every relationship between a past and a present" (White 1997, 53). The *Crónica sarracina*, although not strictly historiography, connects with the earlier chronicles in its questioning of truth in the context of historical narrative. Its later, self-consciously fictive, stance makes it even harder to interpret the conquest as historical "fact" or "event"; instead, we are encouraged to regard it as the setting for a world turned inward on itself, where there is no stable position from which to distinguish the self from the other but rather a contingent, relational, introverted set of circumstances where even *caballería* is in crisis. The poems of the *mester de clerecía*, meanwhile, although produced during the so-called Great Reconquest of Fernando III, and in monasteries, draw attention to the elusive and at times contradictory notion of the frontier in a way that confines any ostensibly triumphalist content to the realm of mere rhetoric. In these poems, conquest is synonymous with crossing, mediation, and intercession between open and closed spaces, inviting us to consider that there are two basic functions of space: space as a limit, which exerts pressure on forms within it, and space as an environment, as a receptive realm into which form can expand (Grinnell 1946, 147). The presence of both of these forms of space in the poems suggests that their conception of reconquest is not so much uninhibited outward movement into space, but a pattern of expansion and contraction, advancing and retreating into onself, which is symptomatic of their overriding concern with *olvido* and the borderline between memory and oblivion.

The set of events that constitutes the Islamic conquest is distinctively plotted and analyzed in each text but there is an order of meaning to be taken from them when viewed collectively. All of the narratives encourage us to move away from the historical particularities of the Islamic invasion and toward the idea that the conquest, in its barest essence, is a lesson in how all things are subject to change. In this sense, they are more about life than history. Thus, *señoríos* are innately time bound, cities change hands, frontiers blur, power is precarious, bonds are broken,

people age, ail, and die. Envisaged like this, the literary content of all of these historically engaged accounts has a meaning quite different from that which might be gleaned from looking at their literal level, and/or adhering too closely to the historical contexts in which they were written. As Hayden White states, "one cannot represent the meaning of historical events without symbolizing them, because historicity itself is both a reality and a mystery... What can be explained about historical events is precisely what constitutes their non- or ahistorical aspect" (1997, 53). From this altogether fluctuating vision of the Islamic conquest one may, therefore, deduce that it is better not to ask what the meaning of conquest is in these texts, but to regard them as compelling evidence for the way in which literature conquers the apparent uniformity of history.

NOTES

Introduction Conquest and Defeat: Legacy and Literature

1. On the myth and legend surrounding the invasion, particularly the development of this narrative, see Drayson 2007 and Grieve 2009. Grieve also provides a clear summary of the different versions of the conquest in early chronicle accounts (38–45). Lewis notes that in the case of La Cava, historical sources are “problematic” but for Count Julian there is a “high probability that he was a real person” (2008, 120).
2. Collins describes the nature of the conquest in the following terms: “The initial conquest was territorially comprehensive, though depending on a patchwork mixture of garrisons and local treaties. The imperative for further gain led to the extension of conquest across the Pyrenees and on into Provence and Aquitaine. This was halted and then reversed thanks to a mixture of increasingly resilient opposition and the revolt of the Berbers in Ifrīqiya and then in al-Andalus itself” (2014, 23).
3. On these conquests, see Ladero Quesada 2006, 17 and O’Callaghan 1975, 100.
4. Lomax describes it as “an ideal invented by Spanish Christians soon after 711,” preserved as a historiographical tradition, which has also become “an object of nostalgia and a rhetorical cliché of traditionalist and communist publicists” (1978, 1–2). For Burns, “the very term Reconquest... has probably outlived its usefulness, except as the medieval canonists’ synonym and justification for crusade against Islam in the East as in the West” (1979, 242). O’Callaghan refers to it as “not a static concept brought to perfection in the ninth century, but rather one that evolved and was shaped by the influences of successive generations” (2003, 3–4). For Ladero Quesada “la idea de reconquista no se puede aceptar hoy de manera tan simple y escueta” (2006, 13).
5. The term “literature of conquest” is usually reserved for those works which describe conquest from the perspective of the victors / conquerors whereas in the case of medieval Spain I use it to designate literary texts dealing with the Islamic invasion of 711. I do not use this term therefore as a generic category, but as an indicative description of thematic content, alongside the notion of “literature of reconquest.” The term “literature of defeat” is

used as a generic category by Moorman to describe literature which “has its origins in the refusal of a defeated people to submit in its heart to reconstruction, to approve the new mores, to find common cause with its conqueror, in the terms of recent history, to collaborate” (1990, 31). Quint’s study of *Epic and Empire* (1993) is an extremely useful means of considering literature of conquest and defeat as separate categories; he discusses epic literature in terms of the poems and perspectives of the winners and losers and so forms a contrast between two political traditions: the Virgilian epics of conquest and empire and the epic of the defeated and of republican liberty, epitomized by Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, Ercilla’s *Araucana*, and d’Aubigné’s *Les tragiques*. In the former, historical narrative is linear and teleological and, in the latter, it is open-ended and identified with romance. The term “conquest narratives” is often applied in the context of Spanish literature to the chronicles of the Spanish conquerors of the New World; for the use of such a term see, for example, Sears 1998.

6. I choose not to include the *Romancero viejo* in this study, obvious a source as it is for relationships between Christians and Moors and representations of conquest, owing to the vast amount of scholarship, much of it excellent, that already exists on the topic. See, for example, the classic article by Angus MacKay, “The Ballad and the Frontier in Late Medieval Spain” (1976) and the recent book by Yiacoup, *Frontier Memory: Cultural Conflict and Exchange in the ‘Romancero fronterizo’* (2013).
7. The *Libro de buen amor* refers in its Prologue to the “çela de la memoria” (line 22; Gybbon-Monypenny 1988, 106).
8. Recent scholarship draws attention to the poem’s hybrid generic status; see, for example, Bailey 1993 and West 1983.
9. As Barkai notes, in the context of medieval Spanish historiography, “a veces se hallan expresiones de la mentalidad popular también en las fuentes de los ilustrados, ya sea aparezcan como de paso o que fueron transmitidas explícitamente como símbolo de una expresión popular” (2007, 15).
10. See also Ruiz’s earlier article “Fronteras: de la comunidad a la nación en la Castilla bajomedieval” in which he argues that the development of ideas of sovereignty, national frontiers and a national space in late medieval and early modern Castile was linked to the emergence of territorial boundaries and the ordering of physical space at a more local level in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (1997).
11. For an excellent summary of scholarship on the Granadan frontier, see Rodríguez Molina 2007, 9–11.
12. Pick notes, for example, that “There are problems with this multiplication of meanings for the word ‘frontier’... By defining a frontier variously as ‘a line, a moving zone, a static region, a kind of society, a process of character formation, an abundance of land’, and so forth, the concept of a frontier becomes less useful as a way of understanding difference—if difference is everywhere, it is, in a sense, nowhere” (2004, 24). Huizinga (1955) serves as an ever-useful reminder of the capacity of the medieval imagination.

13. Daniel ardently argued that Western attitudes toward Islam in the modern era were formed in the Middle Ages (1958), a posture he continued in later work (1975, 2). More recently, Akbari (2009) relates premodern ideas of the Orient with Orientalist types still common in present-day depictions of Muslims. Flesler (2008) argues that contemporary Moroccan immigration to Spain is connected with the fact that the Moroccans are characterized as Moors and, as such, identified with the Arab and Berber Muslims who colonized Iberia in 711, awakening “historical ghosts related to their invading and threatening character” (3). For a historical overview of Western attitudes toward Islam, see the classic studies by Daniel 1958 and Southern 1962.
14. For a discussion of the origins of the term *convivencia* in Menéndez Pidal and Américo Castro, see Glick 1992, 1–2.
15. For an overview of scholarship on Islam and the Arabs in Spain from the sixteenth century onward, see Monroe 1970. A more recent assessment of scholarship on Western views of Islam, including those from Spain, since the 1960s can be found in Blanks and Frassetto 1999, 37–38.
16. Earlier literary accounts are dismissed as “de gran parquedad” (21).
17. Carrasco Urgoiti’s choice of texts for the fifteenth century covers the *Romancero fronterizo*, Juan de Mena’s *Laberinto de Fortuna* (briefly), the *seranillas*, and the work of Juan de la Encina. María Rosa Lida de Malkiel’s review article notes that Don Juan Manuel is a glaring omission, given that he “pertenece al ‘clima’ de frontera . . . porque en sus tiempos merma considerablemente el ímpetu de la Reconquista, en parte por la turbulencia de magnates que, como él mismo, anduvieron en tratos más cordiales con el rey de Granada que con el de Castilla” (1960, 355).
18. This work is a recopilation of articles covering the representation of the Moor in a range of mainly Golden Age literary contexts, including Cervantes and the *Comedia*, with some reference also to the Romantic period and beyond.
19. While not directly relevant to this study, Albert Mas’s early and wide-ranging study of the Turk in Spanish literature of the Golden Age (1967) deserves acknowledgment.

1 Dominion and Dynasty in the *Estoria de España*

1. The earliest accounts include the *Crónica mozárabe de 754* (López Pereira 1980); *History of the Conquest of Spain* by the Egyptian Ibn Abd-el-Hakem (c. 870); and *Cronica del moro Rasis* (Catalán and de Andrés 1974), an anonymous Spanish version of a lost Arabic text, *Ajbar Muluk al-Andalus*, written by the Andalusian historian al-Razi in the mid-tenth century.
2. *Chronicon mundi* is a world chronicle in the tradition of Isidore of Seville which employed a variety of Latin histories, and popular epic legends, to describe the time of the Muslim invasion of 711 to the recapture of Córdoba in 1236. See edition by Falque Rey 2003. Jiménez de Rada’s *De*

rebus Hispaniae borrowed heavily from Lucas's work and traced Spanish history from Genesis down to the conquest of Córdoba. His *Historia Arabum* covers the Muslim conquest of Iberia through to the arrival of the North African Almoravids in terms that show acquaintance with Arabic language, history, and culture.

3. The edition of the *Estoria* used here is the *Primera crónica general* by Menéndez Pidal (see Alfonso el Sabio 1955); page numbers will henceforth be provided.
4. Alfonso's sources for the episode are primarily *De rebus Hispanie* (1243), *Chronicon mundi* (1236), and *Chronicon sive Chronographia* by Sigebert of Gembloux (1111). The story was also diffused in the *Crónica mozárabe de 754; History of the Conquest of Spain* by Abd-el-Hakem (c. 870), and *Cronica del moro Rasis*.
5. Jiménez de Rada, in *De rebus*, mentions the possible marriage to the king that never comes about, "Qua legatione pendente rex Rodericus filiam eius, de qua diximus, uiolenter opresit. Hec erat regi promissa, sponsaliter non traducta" (1987, 100). Lucas de Tuy does not refer to the rape but describes Julian's daughter as being taken for a concubine not a wife, "Ad hoc facinus peragendum incitabat Iulianum, quod Rodericus rex filiam ipsius non pro uxore, sed eo quod sibi pulcra uidebatur, utebatur pro concubina, quam pro uxore a patre acceperat" (2003, 220).
6. Ballads such as "Los vientos eran contrarios" and "Las huestes de don Rodrigo"; see Smith (1964, 54–59).
7. See, for example, Flesler 2008, 72.
8. Richard notes that the portrayal of Muslims in Castilian chronicles depicts disloyalty and an "esprit de discorde" (1971, 120–21) but does so more in the manner of overview than detailed analysis of these factors in each of the chronicles concerned, including the *Estoria de España*.
9. On the Alfonsine workshop, see the classic studies by Solalinde 1915 and G. Menéndez Pidal 1951, as well as the summaries by Menéndez Pidal (see Alfonso el sabio 1955, xv–xvii) and, more recently, Fernández-Ordóñez 2000b.
10. Biblioteca del Escorial, ms. Y-i-2
11. Biblioteca del Escorial, ms. X-i-4.
12. "en este segundo caso la frontera estructural que denuncian ciertas repeticiones y un sistema cronológico dispar se manifiesta además en la reorganización del stemma de la tradición manuscrita y en el fin de un conjunto de manuscritos que desconocen la sección posterior" (Catalán 1997, 462).
13. See also Martin 1992, 335.
14. Fernández-Ordóñez identifies two forms of history writing in the *Estoria*: the rejection of any deviation from the narrative objectives of the work, and the desire for exhaustivity, "el relato *complido* de cada *fecho*" (1992, 52).
15. Chapters 495–97 and 499–501 contain very scant information while the more detailed chapters come later in the sequence, for example 502, 504, 510; 537–39, 551.

16. Throughout the chronicle, the latter part often contracts to just reference to the years of the Arabs: “e el de Abdelmelic rey de los moros en tres, e de los alaraues en setaenta et quatro” (302).
17. Also, “E en ell vii murio el papa Beneyto . . . Esse anno murio Izid rey de los alaraues e regno empos el su fijo Maula seys meses” (299); “Esse anno murio el papa Costantin . . . E en ese anno murio otrossi Abdelmelic rey de los alaraues, e regno empos ell Ulid onze annos” (305).
18. In *Form and Meaning in Fiction*, Friedman writes: “Theme is one of those crucial but shifting terms in contemporary criticism which for the old-fashioned critic means message or moral, while for the New Critic it means total meaning or form. It can also refer variously to the basic problem, issue, or question embodied in the work . . . any recurrence in the work, as in motif or leitmotif . . . any pervasive element or factor . . . any dominant subject matter or character type . . . any aspect of the content; or, as in Northrop Frye, the ‘meaning,’ ‘conceptual content,’ ‘idea’ or ‘point’ of the work” (1975, 56).
19. “la ‘estoria’ acoge una suma de ‘exemplos,’ de ‘fechos,’ de los que se desprenden unas pautas de comportamiento que justifican esa nueva ideología que se está intentando construir, ese pensamiento regalista” (Gómez-Redondo 2000, 135).
20. However, the technique is not exclusive to the Moors but used to add details about other political histories, such as the French.
21. Meserve observes that the twelfth-century French authors Guibert of Nogent, Hugh of Fleury, and Sigebert of Gembloux established a polemical biography of the Prophet, in the context of the infidel occupation of Jerusalem: “Their accounts, cobbled together from half-true details from the life of the Prophet and some outright fabrication, aimed not only to explain the historical origins of Islam but also to show that it was an erroneous, even ridiculous superstition” (2008, 158). Daniel discusses the intense interest in revelations to Mohammed among Christian writers claiming that “There was an intense interest in his revelations, a sense that they were crucial to the controversy between the two religions” (1958, 32).
22. One cannot rule out the possibility that the heavy heart is a metaphor for the duty and responsibility Mohammad will develop, given the chronicle’s generally, and perhaps surprisingly, positive emphasis upon his capacity for *esfuerzo*.
23. See, for example, “ut iugo seruitutis abiecto iam aperte inciperent rebel-lare” (1999, 91).
24. Lucas de Tuy’s wording is as follows: “Machometus autem inter cetera nefanda qui docuit, sectam Nicholay aduene Antiocheni, qui unus de septem Apostolorum diaconis fuerat, iam per Apostolos emortuum suscitauit, quam Dominus in Apocalipsi angelo Ephesi ecclesie scribit se odire dicens: ‘Odisti facta Nicholaytarum, que et ego odi’” (2003, 168–69).
25. See, for example, Gabriel’s revelations to Daniel (Daniel 8.15–26) in the Old Testament, and his appearance in the New Testament to

- announce the respective births of John the Baptist and Jesus (Luke 1.11–38).
26. *aluoroşar*, “hacer levantamiento, alborozar” (Alonso 1986)
 27. The break corresponds to Chapter 565.
 28. The relationship between the *Versión crítica* and Alfonso’s reworkings of the *Estoria de España* are explored in a later chapter concerning the *Crónica de veinte reyes*.
 29. Alfonso X had to content with the uprising of the Mudéjars in 1264 and the rebellion of the nobles, who objected to Alfonso’s centralized legislation, imposition of taxes, and the diminution of their rights and resources. What is more, the king was betrayed by his own son, Sancho IV culminating in the deprival in 1282 of Alfonso’s powers of government.
 30. A more politicized version of this idea is provided when Mohammed corrects a knight’s reluctance to die in stating that death is what made his rule possible (377).
 31. *regañar*, “Formar el perro cierto sonido en demostración de saña, sin ladrar y mostrando los dientes” (Alonso 1986).
 32. That pride is a diabolical offence is confirmed some chapters later when a moor from Merida named Mahomad tries to betray King Alfonso II, “tomol ell diablo al coraçon el alçose con soberuia” (358).
 33. It ought to be noted that the *Versión crítica* reorders events from history of the caliphate of Córdoba and states that Abd al-Rahmān reigned just 33 years; the two versions also differ on the length of al-Hakam’s reign, 20 years in the *VP* and 26 in the *VC* (De la Campa 2000, 91–92).
 34. This latter title indicated overall command of the exclusive political community of Muslims (Al-Azmeh 1997, 76).
 35. “quia sicut supercilium defensio est siue umbraculum oculorum, sic et ipse dicebatur defensio populorum” (1987, 162).
 36. The portrait of this king is notably sympathetic, as Louis Chalon has pointed out (1973, 175). We may also observe that he is credited with a good relationship with both Christians and Moors (445).
 37. See the *Historia Arabum*, “et imposuerunt ei nomen Almuztacarville, quod interpretatur deffendens se cum deo,” “nunc autem dictus fuit alhagib, quod interpretatur uicerex” (Jiménez de Rada 1999, 128).
 38. “trabajo, enfermedad, desgracia, y finalmente todo género de mal y quebranto. Ley 21, título 22, partida 1a. ‘Majamiento da Nuestro Señor Jesucristo’” (Cov).
 39. The concept of *fitna* is subject to various nuances but I use it here in the context of civil disturbances in the history of al-Andalus associated with a struggle for control of the caliphate. Scales comments on the use of it by eleventh-century Arab historians and biographers: “the word they all use to refer to these years of civil disturbance, *fitna*, is strong, especially owing to the Qur’ānic connotations. In the Qur’ān, a *fitna* is a test of trial, and is especially seen as a test of the faithful brought by God. At the same time it is a punishment, divine chastisement of the impious” (1992, 2).

- Hawting refers to *fitna* as “a period of crucial importance and . . . the end of something like a Golden Age in the history of Islam” (2000, 24).
40. *De rebus* describes him briefly thus, “Amiramomeninus, qui Haly proprio nomine dicebatur, uenit Uclesium obsidere” (Jiménez de Rada 1987, 216).
 41. Alfonso is emperor in the Spanish tradition; Chapter 968 describes how his self-styled title of “King of the Spains” derives from his continual and ardent warfaring against the Moors (650).
 42. On Alfonso X’s political idea of *naturalaleza*, see Martin 2008.
 43. This is also reported to be sung on the accession of Kings Enrique I (709) and Ferdinand III (714).
 44. Lucas de Tuy states “iuxta ciuitatem que uocatur Xarez, et comisso certamine fugati sunt Mauri multis milibus suorum prostratis et Christiani reuersi sunt in patriam cum multis opibus et gloria magna” (2003, 339).

2 Founding Fictions, Creating Castile: The *Crónica de veinte reyes*

1. This was the title given by Menéndez Pidal to the chronicle in 1896. Most codices refer to the work as *Crónica de once reyes* but Pidal’s title has been widely adopted by editors and critics and is used here.
2. I follow the transcription of ms. X-i-6 (Hernando Alonso et al. 1991) throughout and page numbers to this edition are provided.
3. The term “como a perdón” is noted by Alonso as “como a una cruzada, a una guerra santa” (1986).
4. The chronicles refer to the “Infantes de Salas” but Lara seems to have been used from the fourteenth century (see Pidal 1971, 179).
5. Menéndez Pidal pronounced it to be of historical basis (1971, 11). This has since been affirmed by Deyrmond (1987, 75–76) and, more recently, Ratcliffe (2011, 131). On the background to the legend, see Montgomery 1989.
6. The *tablado* was “A mock castile loosely built of boards, set up for knights to knock it down as if they had skill and strength enough with javelins” (Griswold Morley, cited in Burt 1982, 347).
7. The *Poema* refers to news arriving in Zaragoza of the Cid’s sacking of the surrounding region (ll. 905–06) and to his imposing tribute on Zaragoza (l. 914, 935). However this brief reference quickly move into the story of the Cid’s enmity with the Count of Barcelona and the end of the first Cantar (see Montaner 2007, 57–60).
8. In one of the opening lines of the *Poema*, the Cid refers to his exile as being caused by “enemigos malos” (l. 9) (evil enemies), and his wife Ximena later alludes to the machinations of “malos mestureros” (l. 267) (evil slanderers). There are further elliptical allusions to false accusations against the Cid for having retained some of the tributes he was sent to collect from Seville in Alfonso’s name (ll. 109–14) and to his longstanding enmity with Count

García Ordóñez including his having once plucked the Count's beard, a serious affront (ll. 3287–88).

9. See also the reference to the Battle of Cánthica as “muy nonbrada entre los aláraues” (136).
10. A similar example of concern shown by Islamic figures for Christian safety comes when Mahomad Almohadid wins Córdoba from Çulemán only to meet unrest among the Cordobans. When Almohadid hears from a Moor that the Christians, like the Berbers, are in danger from the Cordobans, the king sends Count Remont and the other Christians back to their lands, again rich and honored (137).
11. As clarified in the *Estoria de España*, *alhagib* means “a man who takes the place of the king.”
12. Marmon describes eunuchs as “nongendered individuals” (1995, vol. 7); Ayalon provides more detail about their sexual and romantic liaisons, and their resemblance to women (1999, 316–25).

3 The Cleric and the Frontier in the *mester de clerecía*

1. Some critics include works from both the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in their definition of the corpus, and some extend the definition to include clerical narratives in rhyming couplets (*pareados*) such as the *Vida de Santa María Egipcíaca* and *Elena y María*. For example, Salvador Miguel (1979) includes all of the poems of the thirteenth century written in monorhymed four-line stanzas, and also those of the fourteenth century written totally or partially in *cuaderna vía* (such as the *Libro de buen amor*). I adhere to Deyermond (1973, 109) and Uría Maqua (2000, 55–57) in only including thirteenth-century works in my definition. It is generally recognized that the *mester de clerecía* comprises the poems of Gonzalo de Berceo—of which nine are long poems and three liturgical *Himnos*—the anonymous *Libro de Alexandre* (mid C13), the *Libro de Apolonio* (c.1260), and the *Poema de Fernán González* (c.1250).
2. See O'Callaghan 1975, 245–49 on the decisive battle of Las Navas de Tolosa and its after-effects: “The equilibrium hitherto existing between Christians and Muslims was upset, and the balance of power was tipped decisively in favor of the Christians. The victory was the greatest ever achieved in the course of the reconquest, and it made possible the subjugation of the greater part of al-Andalus in the next forty years” (248–49).
3. Henceforth *Vida de San Millán*, *Vida de Santo Domingo*, and *Poema*.
4. See the introduction to Bayo and Michael's edition of the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (2006, 48–54), for a discussion of Berceo's use of language, and the growing influence upon the Riojan dialect of the variety of Castilian from the region of Burgos.
5. A tendency noted by Bayo and Michael, who refer to Berceo as “lejos de ser un ingenuo poeta de aldea” (2006, 39).
6. See, for example, Bailey 1995–96, Armistead 1961, Fernández Gallardo 2009 where he refers to “fuerte agresividad religiosa” (8).

7. I do not intend to give a single definition of the frontier in this chapter; selective scholarship of the vast amounts published on medieval frontiers in general, and on the Castilian–Granadan frontier more particularly, is identified and introduced where relevant into the textual discussion. That said, Abulafia's view of the frontier as "not simply a place but... a set of attitudes, conditions and relationships" (2002, 34), and Toubert's allusions to it as "une membrane vivante" and "organe social périphérique" (1992, 16–17) stand out for their ability to define its indefinability.
8. On hagiographic content in the *Poema*, see Johnson 2008. Avallé-Arce also notes that the *Poema* follows a well-known hagiographic scheme in which the infancy of a saint is in stark contrast to his later life (1972, 73).
9. Nepaulsingh has identified possible links between the *Poema* and the apocalyptic tradition, citing a likely reference to either Gog or Magog in stanza 15 (1986, 85), parallels with Ezekiel in stanzas 63, 80, 82, and 83, and an implied association between the kings of Spain and those of Israel (86–87). He argues too that the poet, knowing the apocalyptic *Libro de Alexandre*, sought to describe the deeds of "a Christian, Spanish, Alexander" (89).
10. The opening stanza of the earliest of these clerical poems, the *Libro de Alexandre*, initially led critics to assume a diametric split between a *mester de clerecía* and *mester de juglaría* (Milá y Fontanals 1874, 514, Menéndez Pelayo 1913). The stanza is as follows: "Mester traigo fermoso, non es de joglaría, / mester es sin pecado, ca es de clerezía" (st.2) ["The craft I bring is refined, it is no minstrel's work / a craft without fault, born of the clergy's learning" (Such and Rabone 2009, 85)]. This division has successfully been refuted in a vein of criticism since Alan Deyermond (1965, 112); see, for example, Francisco López Estrada (1978, 165), Nicasio Salvador Miguel (1979, 22–23), Ángel Gómez-Moreno (1984, 117), and Isabel Uría Maqua (1981, 180; 1990, 46; 2000, 162–71). On the particular combination of *clerecía* and *juglaría* in the *Poema*, see Avallé-Arce 1972.
11. The term "geopiety" originates from the typology of Jonathan Edwards, who referred to "emotional, or thoughtful, or thoughtfully emotional piety aroused by awareness of terrestrial diversity of the kind of which geography is also a form of awareness" (Wright 1966, 251). Wright invokes it as a means of expressing the way in which religion and geography influence, and borrow from, one another, a focus "on divinely ordained forces, processes, and events conceived as having produced (or as going to produce in the future) specific geographic effects" (1966, 277). Remensnyder's description of the monastic foundation model echoes this: "The sanctification of this community's origins translated into the characterization and definition of topography through a conjunction of divine intervention (miracles) and the action of various persons, larger than life, saintly and often heroic—the founders" (1995, 6).
12. See <http://www.vallenajerilla.com/notabene/notabene2.htm>
13. The will refers to "castros de fronteras de mauros qui sunt pro facere," on the appearance of the term in this context, see Buresi 2001, 54, Sénac 2001, and Pick 2004.

14. For a survey of critical studies on the Castilian–Granadan frontier, see Bazzana et al. 1992, 35–38 and González Jiménez 2009.
15. Toubert writes that “La frontière linéaire, en tant qu’abstraction, appartient d’autre part à deux domaines complémentaires: celui du visible . . . et celui du symbolique” (1992, 12).
16. Mackay also states that “the late medieval frontier was an eschatological one” (1989, 241).
17. On this point, see also Truyol y Serra 1957.
18. A similar image of the frontier as a space of proximity / “neighbouring,” in essence a border that moves as people move, comes in the *Poema de Mio Cid*, where on setting up camp at Alcocer the Cid is too close for comfort for the Moors: “venido es a moros, exido es de cristianos; | en la su vezindad non se treven ganar tanto” (l.567, Montaner 2007: 38). Linehan describes the historical frontier as “probably permeable from the outset. It was certainly accustomed to two-way traffic forever after” (2003, 38).
19. Being watchful is a commonly cited Christian virtue in the Bible. See, for example, Mt 24.43; 2 Timothy 4.5.
20. “Herropeado” refers to one who has his feet shackled together in irons (Martín Alonso 1986, vol 2, 1231). Ruffinatto notes that captured Moors were at that time put to work restoring churches and monasteries, and that this might be connected with the fact that the capitals in the cloister at Silos bear traces of Arabic craftsmanship (Berceo 1992, 366).
21. See, for example, Mt 24.42: “Watch ye therefore, because you know not what hour your Lord will come.” See also, Luke 12: 35–40, Mark 13: 32–37, Ps. 130. 5–6.
22. Even the idiom the devil employs presents them as “neighbours”: “qe mal día l’amasco al qi ha mal vezino” (121d) (for it is a bad day that dawns for he who has a bad neighbor).
23. Ward’s view is also helpful, “miracles . . . are intimately associated with the society in which they take place” (1982, 215).
24. The term *desamparo* is the negation of the Latin *anteparare* (prevenir), from *parare* meaning “disponer, preparar”; from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries it had the meaning of “defender cubriendo” (Alonso 1986, vol. 1, 298).
25. It ought to be noted that Alfonso X (1221–84) was very interested in astrological material, his *scriptorium* translated numerous astrological and magic-related texts, such as *Lapidario*, *Picatríz*, *Liber Razielis*, *Libro de las formas*, and *Libro de astromagia*. Alfonso saw his work as contributing to the greater glory of God, in his *Libro de astromagia* he writes “por ende ha mester que quien este libro oyere y en él leyere . . . que se tenga bien con Dios y que le ruegue y le pida merced para que le guíe y le oriente en ello” (García Avilés 1999, 103). In his *Siete Partidas*, Alfonso distinguishes between “astronomy, which is one of the seven liberal arts; and this, according to the law, is not forbidden to be practised” and “that practiced by fortune-tellers, soothsayers, and magicians” (vol. 7.23, 1; in Alfonso vol. 10, 2001, 1431).

26. On the origins and use of this heroic formula, literary, and otherwise, see Curtius 1990, 178 and Hart 2006, 52.
27. On the cult of Saint James and its origins, see van Herwaarden 1980 and Fernández Gallardo 2005.
28. In the *Poema*, however, Fernán is criticized strongly by his men for withholding information from them, and he also disregards the advice of one of his principal vassals.
29. It is thought that Berceo knew and used a poetic version of the legend of Fernán González in his composition of the *Vida de San Millán*; on this point, see Avalle-Arce 1972, 61 and Dutton 1961, 197–205.
30. The poem has survived through a single manuscript written in the fifteenth century (Escorial b.IV.21), which is lacking an ending. Márquez-Sterling suggests that there were at least three other manuscript copies, now lost (1980, 114).
31. On the relationship between the *mester de clerecía* and arts of memory, see Hazbun 2013.
32. See, for example, Bailey 1995–96, where he usefully lists all the figurative language used to describe the Moors as enemies of the Christian faith, for example “gente descreyda” (60b), “gente maldicta” (395a), “pueblos paganos” (142a) (171).
33. Cordero Torres comments on the way national identity is tied to the conception of exterior frontiers and internal limits: “en conjunto, la Edad Media introduce en España una diferenciación entre *fronteras hispánicas exteriores y límites interiores*, fundamental para comprender la esencia de nuestra nacionalidad” (1960, 65).
34. On the Islamic frontier as an impermanent one, see González Jiménez 1992, 50.
35. See also 518d
36. On the role of natural limits such as valleys and mountains in the shaping of the frontier, see Cordero Torres 1960, 63, Bazzana et al. 1992, 44, and Ladero Quesada 2001, 6.
37. Almanzor is of course an anachronism; the historical Almanzor (Ibn Abi Amir, d.1002) was ruler of Andalusia in the second half of the tenth century (O’Callaghan 1975, 126–30).
38. The name “Vusarban” as found in the poem’s only manuscript is thought to originate from a corruption of Tarif abu Zara (Chalon 1974–70, 357).
39. Rodrigo’s order to disarm accordingly to Julian’s advice seems to originate in legend; historical sources have Witiza following Julian’s treacherous counsel instead (Chalon 1974–79, 357).
40. This appears to confirm Chalon’s view that the anachronistic reference to Almanzor is to render him a symbolic head of all Muslim armies in Spain (1974–79, 362).
41. Fernán is also depicted as a wise speaker at the Leonese court, “ca dio les el buen conde mucho de buen consejo” (574c)
42. A number of lines are missing from the manuscript at this point, adding to the sense of the brevity of Almanzor’s words.

43. The theme of the disappearance first appears in the Moorish chronicle of Rasis (d. 955) and that of Ibn al-Kutya (d. 977), see Chalon 1974–79, 360.
44. Alfonso el Casto provides another example of the association between governance and protection, he is described as a shepherd, “que sin pastor non podien bien vevir” (162c), protecting his people from “canes” (162d).
45. See also stanzas 157 and 173.
46. Sancha does redeem herself and is later associated with “mucho pesar a moros” (685).
47. See Burns 1992, 320.

4 Crossing and Double Crossing: Islamic Conquerors in the *Crónica sarracina*

1. The work’s generic complexity means that it is difficult to categorize, not least because the terms “crónica” and “historia” could be used for historiographical works and for fictional works without distinction (Fogelquist 1982, 9). I henceforth use the term “chronicle” in such a light. Critics regularly refer to the *Crónica* as a mixture of history, hagiography, epic, and chivalric fiction. Menéndez Pidal described the chivalric elements as foremost (1958, lxciii); more recently Alvarez-Hesse also considered it primarily a work of chivalric fiction (1989, 55). Drayson provides a balanced assessment of it as “a literary colossus, containing motifs, structures and techniques from three different genres, historiography, chivalresque literature and hagiography, in which the chronicle form is fundamental” (2005, 194). For Brownlee, the interaction of romance and history is central to the text’s identity as Corral “demythologizes both historical positivism and the impoverishing transparency of romance values as well” (2006, 129).
2. All quotations from the *Crónica sarracina* are from the 2001 edition by James Donald Fogelquist, 2 vols. (Madrid: Castalia).
3. I would therefore disagree with Grieve’s more optimistic reading of the structure of the work whereby “Corral clearly intended to make part I of his historical romance a trio of male successes: a magnificent, well-functioning kingdom is constructed by a trio of men who have bonded, trust each other implicitly, and work together constantly, each doing his part for the welfare of the state” (2009, 83).
4. See, for example, De la Flor Cramer 2005, 113–50, esp. p. 123.
5. See also La Cava’s comments in Part Two, that “yo só aquella porque los fijos e los padres e dueñas e donzellas andarán desterrados por las montañas entre las bestias fieras” (II, 53).
6. On techniques used to create a sense of historical veracity, see Cacho Blecua 1992, and Lauzardo 1995 for a briefer summary.
7. And also present in contemporary literary criticism; see, for example, Vargas Llosa, *La verdad de las mentiras* (1990).

8. On the seven deadly sins in medieval Spanish literature, Oyola 1979 is a basic introduction.
9. This character corresponds to the historical Musa ibn Nusayr.
10. On the characterization of La Cava and her role in different versions of the legend, see the excellent studies by Drayson 2007 and Grieve 2009.
11. For a full study of the presence of treachery in early literary texts, and its role in the creation of collective identities, see Coates 2009.
12. On the influence of Corral's work in the sixteenth century, see Grieve 2009, 122–24.
13. Miramamolín, or *amir al-muminin*, prince of believers, was the name given by Christian writers to Muhammad al-Nasir (1199–1213), caliph of the Almohad dynasty in Morocco (O'Callaghan 1975, 244).
14. See Keen 1984, 44–62.
15. Keen also points out that “chivalry really was no more than a polite veneer, a thing of forms and words and ceremonies which provided a means whereby the well-born could relieve the bloodiness of life by decking their activities with a tinsel gloss borrowed from romance” (1984, 3).
16. See, for example, the definition of epic poetry given by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae*: “*Heroicum enim carmen dictum, quod eo virorum fortium res et facta narrantur. Nam heroes appellantur viri quasi aerii et caelo digni propter sapientiam et fortitudinem*” (I.39.9) (“A heroic song is so called because in it the affairs and deeds of brave men are narrated. For heroes are so-called as if of the air and worthy of heaven on account of their wisdom and bravery”).
17. “*sapiens corde est et fortis robore quis restitit ei et pacem habuit*” (Job 9.4) (“He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath resisted him, and hath had peace?”); “*meum est consilium et aequitas mea prudentia mea est fortitudo*” (Proverbs 8.14) (“Counsel and equity is mine, prudence is mine, strength is mine”); “*et locutus ait sit nomen Domini benedictum a saeculo et usque in saeculum quia sapientia et fortitudo eius sunt*” (Daniel 2.20) (“And speaking, he said: ‘Blessed be the name of the Lord from eternity and for evermore: for wisdom and fortitude are his’”).
18. The image of “Interlace in the design of a single combat” from Chrétien de Troyes’ *Yvain*, Ms. 125 of the Garrett Collection in Princeton is an excellent visual example of this (reproduced in Vinaver 1971, 76).

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