Centre and Locality: The Political Structures of Castile, 1275-1325

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For my parents

Short Abstract

This thesis examines the structures of politics in Castile in the fraught period between 1275 and 1325. Whereas these decades have frequently been viewed as the product of an inevitable confrontation between crown and nobility or as a chaotic caesura in Castile's march towards statehood, this thesis argues that the interpretive keys to the period lie in the evolving relationships between central and local structures, which explain how diverse elements of society were drawn into new patterns of dialogue, cooperation and conflict. Through a combination of documentary, normative and narrative sources, the first part traces the interlocking development of noble (Chapter 1), urban (Chapter 2) and royal (Chapter 3) power in three separate zones: the northern regions of Burgos and Valladolid, the medial areas of Ávila and Cuenca, and the southern kingdom of Murcia. It argues that the different conditions in each of these zones produced different configurations of power which affected patterns of interaction with the centre. The second part turns to the royal centre, showing how legal and judicial changes (Chapter 4), strategies of office-holding and grant-making (Chapter 5) and the ideology of the royal service (Chapter 6) drew political society into a structure that was highly dependent on convincing and undivided leadership at the centre. The final part applies these structural insights to a discussion of the events of 1275-1325, arguing that the dynamics of the reigns of Alfonso X and Sancho IV (Chapter 7) and Fernando IV and Alfonso XI (Chapter 8) can only be understood if we give due appreciation to the weight that the centre had acquired over the preceding century and the strategies that various agents actually pursued when faced with structural crisis. In place of a narrative of chaos and disaggregation, therefore, this thesis posits one of integration and reciprocal development.

Long Abstract

This thesis examines the structures of power in Castile in the fraught period of its history between 1275 and 1325. It argues that the interpretive keys to the period lie in the evolving relationships between central and local structures, which explain how diverse elements of society were drawn into new patterns of dialogue, cooperation and conflict. The thesis uses a series of case studies to construct a sustained comparative analysis of local conditions and their connection to the centre. It asks how conditions in the locality affected strategies at court, how decisions at the centre were enforced in the locality, and how differing interest groups navigated the crises that emerged between 1275 and 1325.

The fifty years in question form a neglected, but vital, period in the development of the Castilian polity. These were the years when a suite of changes in local dynamics and central government were tested for the first time since the massive expansions of the kingdom under Fernando III by dynastic strife, rebellion and royal minority. The period begins with the last decade of Alfonso X's life (r. 1252-1284), often seen as the moment when the Wise King's ambitious projects failed. He fruitlessly travelled to pursue the Imperial throne at Beaucaire in 1275 and saw the death of his heir and regent, Fernando, in the same year. This ignited a contentious succession dispute, in which his eldest surviving son, Sancho, adopted *de facto* control of the royal government. The forces his later rebellion unleashed, most notably the associations of towns and prelates (called *hermandades*), continued to exert their influence even after Sancho IV (r. 1284-1295) took the throne. When Sancho died in 1295, his son Fernando IV (r. 1295-1312) was only nine years old, sparking a crisis which saw the renewed mobilisation of *hermandades* as well as nobles and royal uncles in an effort to address the vacuum at the centre of the system. A semblance of order was restored after 1301, but this came to a sudden end when the king died in 1312. His death sparked new

conflicts during the minority of Alfonso XI (r. 1312-1350), when once again different royal relatives claimed the regency before the king came of age in 1325. Though triggered by short-term contingencies, these crises also came at a crucial juncture in the reorganisation of landed power in Castile and a time of adjustment in the character of royal authority. Major changes to landholding over the thirteenth century, arising from the incorporation into the kingdom of large areas to the south, along with changes in attitudes to jurisdiction, inheritance customs and territoriality, disrupted established patterns of political behaviour. Meanwhile, it was still unclear how the Alfonso X's legal reforms would function in practice, and whether the monarchy could realise its claim to supreme jurisdiction based on Roman law.

Despite these critical structural adjustments, this period has typically been understood as a clash between an increasingly assertive monarchy and a nobility that rejected its centralising approach, with the aristocracy gaining the upper hand until the adult Alfonso XI's successful kingship tipped the balance back in favour of the crown. A more recent strand of the historiography has stressed the growth of royal power across the middle ages and that royal and noble agency developed in dialogue, as well as conflict, with each other. Meanwhile, local historiography has greatly deepened our understanding of the ways in which noble and urban power developed in certain regions, according to local conditions such as the timing of their incorporation to Castile, their socio-economic make-up and the presence or absence of major urban structures. However, interpretations of the period remain over-simplistic about the attitudes of the nobility and other political units to authority, their relationships with one another and their strategies, and they do not tie those aspects to interests at a local level. Conversely, advances in understanding of local structures are not used to make sense of the vicissitudes of 1275-1325.

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first, entitled ‘Localities’, uses a combination of published and unpublished documentary sources to investigate the major dynamics of local politics. It uses a threefold case-study approach to investigate the themes of noble power in the locality, municipal lordship and royal agency on the ground. It compares the northern regions around Burgos and Valladolid, situated in the old heartlands of Castile, with the more recently integrated cities of Ávila and Cuenca and with a still fresher conquest to the south-east, the region of Murcia. In each case, evidence is assessed from the municipal and ecclesiastical archives, both printed and unpublished, in combination with other resources specific to certain regions, such as the large documentary collections pertaining to magnate activities in Murcia. The focus in these chapters is on the pressures that emerged from the locality, both in terms of the changing modes of competition and interaction for local players, and in terms of the networks, material power and priorities they would bring with them when they engaged with the centre.

Chapter 1 analyses noble power, arguing that, during the thirteenth century, the nobility intensified their control over their lordships and constructed settled networks within territorial spheres of influence. This occurred unevenly across the kingdom: some regions saw the emergence of power bases that were strongly linked to other agents like cities or the crown; others were more fragmented and competitive between many noble lineages; and others still favoured aggregation into few hands in the transition from conquest to settled rule. Chapter 2 accounts for the parallel development of the municipalities. It shows how towns and cities also deepened their exploitation of landed resources, especially where they managed to appropriate pockets of royal rights and territories. It discusses how the increasing formalisation of town councils and their ability to group into brotherhoods or

hermandades made them a major force in Castilian politics which would profoundly influence political calculations. Chapter 3 examines the operation of royal power in a local context, demonstrating that the dramatic expansion of the network of royal officials, the fiscal system and modes of dialogue with political society forced agents of all kinds to engage with a new set of structures that brought both challenges and opportunities. Together, the three chapters of the first part demonstrate that the Castilian locality saw both significant regional variation and increasing structural integration to the centre. Local priorities propelled noble and municipal agents to the royal court for confirmation, arbitration, security or the changing benefits of royal office and grace.

The second part turns to the centre of the Castilian political system: the king and his court. It combines insights from the local case studies with analysis of surviving documents from the royal chancery, normative sources like Mirrors for Princes, legal texts and narrative accounts. Its approach is based on a conviction that, while some narrative accounts require the utmost caution given their production for a specific purpose, namely legitimating Alfonso XI, they contain insights about the expectations and assumptions of certain elements of political society. These can be contrasted with the picture presented by other texts produced under royal patronage, including legislation and Mirrors for Princes, and those from outside the direct ambit of the king, such as the political writings of Juan Manuel. By placing these sources in dialogue, these chapters ask: what kinds of claim emanated from the court, and how effectively could these be enforced? What were the institutional means of advancing these claims, how did they change, and what strategies did they invite for players at different levels?

Chapter 4 discusses royal legislation and justice, arguing that Alfonso X's famous legal projects firmly asserted the principle of royal supremacy in interpreting the law, even if they failed to bring all his dominions under one royal code. Contrary to the view that political society roundly rejected Alfonso's legislative innovations until their restoration under Alfonso XI, this chapter argues that a more assertive royal jurisdiction continued to grow under his successors, prompted both by the increasing self-confidence of judicial officers and the demands of a polity that was more thoroughly orientated towards central adjudication. Chapter 5 analyses the politics of office-holding and the functioning and implications of the king's grace. It argues that the conflict-driven interpretation of the relationship between king and subject cannot account for the evolving strategies of appointment to office or grant-making. The centripetal forces of Castilian politics drew noblemen more insistently into curial and territorial offices, though the changing modes of politics led them to hold them for much shorter periods. In response, kings and noblemen developed strategies to adjust to the changed stakes at the centre and in the locality. Just as kings tried to achieve particular effects through their officers, the same applies to their grant-making. Far from being mere rewards for good deeds or a sign of weak kings purchasing loyalty, grants established (or re-established) forward-looking relationships of service, according to a widely held set of expectations.

Chapter 6 argues for the significance of the discourse of royal service in the operation of Castilian politics. It examines how the ethic of service underpinned the workings of the political system so strongly that it became a political structure in its own right. Across royal documents, narrative accounts, private correspondence and literary texts, service was a ubiquitous and flexible concept, applicable to the habitual behaviour of servants, the justification for handsome rewards, military service, paying tax or any kind of unspecified

action that the king judged to support his interests. This generality, combined with the rhetorical habits of monarchs, established the royal service as something to be considered almost indistinguishable from the common good. The gravitational forces discussed in the first five chapters thus had a firm ideological backing. Moreover, it is highly significant that this language was more exclusive to the king than in comparable discursive systems like that of thirteenth-century England, since the ideological foundations of so many political relationships relied on a convincing leader to define and organise his service.

With these two thematic sections having identified pressures and dynamics in the interaction of central and local forces, the third part turns to the period's events. The aim is not to rehearse a full narrative, but rather to identify how the structural features of Castile played out in certain critical moments between 1275 and 1325. Chapter 7 argues that Alfonso X and Sancho IV articulated a mode of rule based on royal justice and strategic use of grants and offices, though their decisions often caused tension owing to levels of taxation, pressure on local jurisdictions or interpersonal feud. The dynamics of their reigns cannot be understood without an appreciation of the ways in which grievances were channelled from the locality to the centre or how central power was contested on the ground, or if we do not appreciate the difficulties that emerged when political circumstances disrupted the operation of a predictable centre. Chapter 8 observes the effects of even greater disruption to the centre, most of all when the king was a child, as was the case for 19 years between 1295 and 1325. The politics of minority, and the difficulties experienced by Fernando IV in establishing his adult rule, are explained in terms of the structural integration of the kingdom. The weight that the centre had acquired caused a serious breakdown of order and spawned various challenges, but, by contrast with previous minorities in Castilian history,

political society tried to find formal mechanisms to replicate the effective royal will upon which politics now relied.

Through its structural analysis and case-study approach, this thesis argues that the changes and variations of the locality profoundly affected estimations made at the centre, and likewise the altered stakes of politics drew regional power ever more insistently towards central arbitration. In place of a narrative of chaos and disaggregation, therefore, this thesis posits one of integration and reciprocal development. The structural evolution of the system produced strong gravitational forces that incentivised participation in the royal centre, at the very moment when that centre was destabilised. The ensuing crises, both in their causes and their responses, created a political repertoire that was to dominate Castilian political life for decades to come. As a result, the subsequent recovery of Alfonso XI's authority comes to look less like a triumph of a forceful character than a harnessing of structural features that had crystallised across the period 1275-1325.

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Finally, I am truly grateful to my Mum and Dad, who supported and encouraged me in more ways than I could count. With immense love and admiration, this thesis is dedicated to them.

Abbreviations

ACB	Archivo de la Catedral de Burgos
ACC	Archivo de la Catedral de Cuenca
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional
AMB	Archivo Municipal de Burgos
AMV	Archivo Municipal de Valladolid
APR	Archivo General del Palacio Real
Benavides	A. Benavides, *Memorias de D. Fernando IV de Castilla* (Madrid, 1860)
CAX	C. Rosell (ed.), 'Crónica del Rey Don Alfonso Decimo', in *Crónicas de las reyes de Castilla, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, 66 (Madrid, 1875), 1-66
CAXI	C. Rosell (ed.), 'Crónica del Rey Don Alfonso el Oceno', in *Crónicas de las reyes de Castilla, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, 66 (Madrid, 1875), 171-400
CFIV	C. Rosell (ed.), 'Crónica del Rey Don Fernando Cuarto', in *Crónicas de las reyes de Castilla, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, 66 (Madrid, 1875), 91-170
CODOM I	J. Torres Fontes (ed.), *Documentos de Alfonso X el Sabio*, *Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia*, I (Murcia, 1963)
CODOM II	J. Torres Fontes (ed.), *Documentos del siglo XIII*, *Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia*, II (Murcia, 1969)
CODOM III	J. Torres Fontes (ed.), *Fueros y privilegios de Alfonso X el Sabio al reino de Murcia*, *Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia*, III (Murcia, 1973)
CODOM IV	J. Torres Fontes (ed.), *Documentos de Sancho IV*, *Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia*, IV (Murcia, 1977)
CODOM V	J. Torres Fontes (ed.), *Documentos de Fernando IV*, *Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia*, V (Murcia, 1980)

CODOM VI	F. de Asís Veas Arteseros (ed.), *Documentos de Alfonso XI*, Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia, VI (Murcia, 1997)
CODOM XIII	F. de Asís Veas Arteseros and I. García Díaz (eds.), *Documentos del siglo XIV*, Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia, XIII (Murcia, 1985)
Cortes	*Cortes de los antiguos reinos de Leon y de Castilla, publicadas por la real academia de la Historia*, vol. I (1863)
CSIV	C. Rosell (ed.), 'Crónica del Rey Don Sancho Cuarto', in *Crónicas de las reyes de Castilla, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, 66 (Madrid, 1875), 67-90
Gaibrois	M. Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Sancho IV de Castilla.* 3 vols. (Madrid, 1928)
GCAXI	D. Catalán (ed.), *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI.* 2 vols. (Madrid, 1977)
Juan Manuel	A. Giménez Soler (ed.), *Don Juan Manuel. Biografía y estudio crítico* (Zaragoza, 1932)
Las Huelgas	J. M. Lizoian Garrido, *Documentación del Monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos* (Burgos, 1985)
LBB	G. Martínez Díez (ed.), *Libro becerro de las behetrías* (León, 1981)
Mañueco	M. Mañueco Villalobos and J. Zurita Nieto, *Documentos de la Iglesia Colegial de Santa María la Mayor (Hoy Metropolitana) de Valladolid* (Valladolid, 1917)
MHE	*Memorial histórico Español: Colección de documentos, opúsculos y antigüedades que publica la Real Academia de la Historia*, II (Madrid, 1851)
Partidas	*Las siete partidas del rey don Alfonso el Sabio, cotejadas con varios codices antiguos por la Real Academia de la Historia*, II (Madrid, 1972)
Pereda	F. J. Pereda Llarena, *Documentación de la Catedral de Burgos*, 2 vols. (Burgos, 1984)
Salazar	Madrid, Real Academía de la Historia, *Colección Salazar y Castro*, 1,498 vols.

A Note on the Coinage

The *maravedí* was both a gold coinage and the primary money of account. One *maravedí* was worth 90 *dineros alfonsís*, issued by Alfonso X in 1264-1268 and known as the *moneda de la guerra* or *blancas*. In 1269, he issued the *dineros prietos*, six times more valuable than the *moneda de la guerra*. Subsequently, in 1272, Alfonso issued a new gold *maravedí*, setting its worth at ten *maravedís de la moneda de la guerra*, though this achieved limited circulation.[1]

Alfonso X responded to mounting complaint about the *dineros prietos*, which were scarce owing to silver shortages, by minting a new coinage from a silver and copper alloy. Emerging in 1277, this *moneda nueva* had a legal value equivalent to the *prieto* but was heavily debased, reducing its value by up to a half.[2]

By the early reign of Sancho IV, the *moneda de la guerra* had largely left circulation. In 1286, Sancho minted the *coronado*, a nine *dinero* piece, which he overvalued, leading to further weakening of the precious metal supply on the peninsula. The coinage was further debased during the minority of Fernando IV, with a new *coronado* made in 1297 that theoretically was equal to Sancho's piece. However, in 1303 Fernando IV accepted a revaluation, declaring that ten of his coins equalled six of his father's. Alfonso XI did not issue a new coinage until 1332, well into his adult reign. [3]

[1] J. F. O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X, the Justinian of his Age: Law and Justice in Thirteenth-Century Castile* (Ithaca, 2019), 204-5.
[2] J. Todesca, 'The Monetary History of Castile-León (ca. 1100-1300) in Light of the Bourgey Hoard', *Museum notes,* 33 (1988), 175.
[3] ibid., 188-9.

Owing to the debasement of the coinage and other causes of inflation such as increased production costs, between 1255 and 1306 the value of the *maravedí* decreased precipitously.[4] One *maravedí* from before 1264 was equivalent to six at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[5] The weakening of Castile's coinage continued at pace over the next 50 years: one Florentine *florin* in 1291 bought 5 *maravedís* and 8 *dineros*; by 1358 it was worth 25 *maravedís*.[6]

All sums are cited at their nominal value at the time.

[4] See G. Castán Lanaspa, *Política económica y poder político. Moneda y fisco en el reinado de Alfonso X el Sabio* (Valladolid, 2000), 26; M. C. Carle, 'El precio de la vida en Castilla del rey Sabio al Emplazado', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, XV (1951), 132-56, rather overstates the case.
[5] Todesca, 'Monetary History of Castile-León', 188.
[6] P. Spufford, *Money and its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1988), 29.

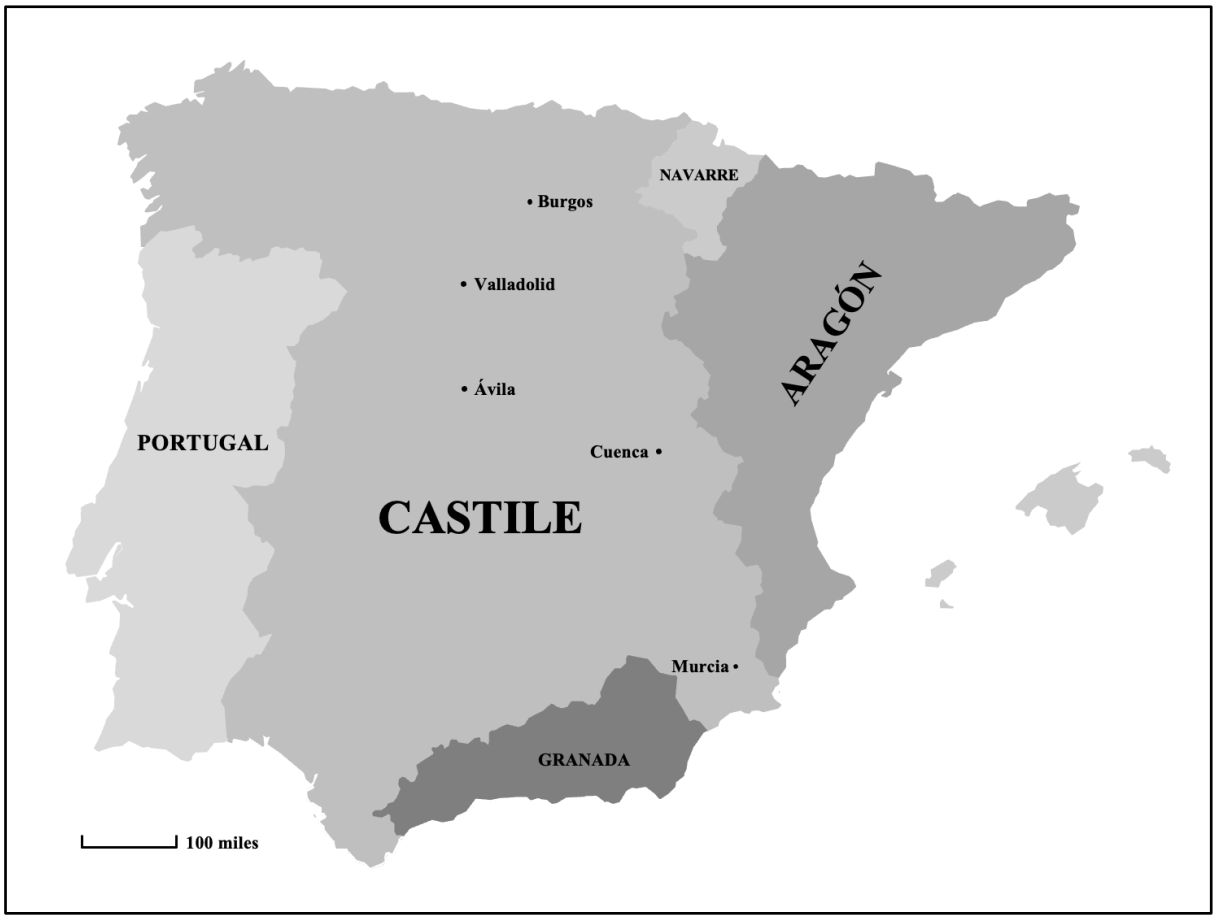
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Map 1: The Iberian Peninsula in 1325

Introduction

This thesis is about gravity. It is about the forces that pull and push, the pressures that bend and break, the masses that converge and collide. The forces I examine, of course, are political ones rather than physical; the pressures, socio-economic and cultural; the masses, kings and towns and noble families. Medieval Castile was a galaxy of swirling interest groups, never static, drawing smaller players into their orbit, buffeting each other with the weight of their competing claims and occasionally combusting into violent clashes. At every level, politics was conditioned by centrifugal and centripetal forces: a large city could bend the fabric of political space-time, drawing in wealth and prestige; a nobleman, likewise, sought to gather a constellation of lordships and servants to his side while demolishing those of his rivals. Castile's diverse geography and layered history produced a variegated nebula, with differing rhythms of politics discernible in different regions according to patterns of lordship and landholding, the density of competing interests and the impact of the distant and recent past. At the symbolic centre of this galaxy, yet itself revolving through Spain's landscape, was the brightest of the celestial bodies, the king's court. Whether it shone with virtue or appeared a black hole from which not even light could escape, the king's court drew in litigants, officers and attendants with powerful effect. Energy radiated from this core across the kingdom, whether in waves of jurisdictional or fiscal claims or through its charged particles, the officers who exercised the king's rights in the locality. When this centre was suddenly destabilised or even decomposed into a vacuum, Castile partly fragmented into its local units, but the centripetal pressures of the locality also forced people headlong into the heart of the crisis. The relative position of Castile's galaxy of political players and the forces

drawing them together or pushing them apart was thus fundamental to the practice of politics. Not for nothing was Alfonso X so fascinated by astrology.[1]

Understanding the structural features that shaped Castilian politics, and in particular how local pressures affected central dynamics and vice versa, is a particularly important window into the period 1275-1325. This is a neglected, but vital, period in the development of the Castilian polity. It was the moment when a suite of changes in local dynamics and central government were tested for the first time since the massive expansions of the kingdom under Fernando III by dynastic strife, rebellion and royal minority. It begins with the last decade of Alfonso X's life (r. 1252-1284), often interpreted as the moment when the Wise King's ambitious projects failed. He fruitlessly travelled to pursue the Imperial throne at Beaucaire in 1275 and saw the death of his heir and regent in the same year. This ignited a contentious succession dispute, in which his eldest surviving son, Sancho, adopted *de facto* control of the royal government.[2] The forces his rebellion unleashed, most notably the associations of towns and prelates (called *hermandades*), continued to exert their influence even after Sancho IV (r. 1284-1295) took the throne. When Sancho died in 1295, his son Fernando IV (r. 1295-1312) was only nine years old, sparking a crisis which saw the renewed mobilisation of *hermandades* as well as nobles and royal uncles in an effort to address the vacuum at the centre of the system. A semblance of order was restored after 1301, but this came to a sudden end when the king died in 1312. His death sparked new conflicts during the minority of Alfonso XI (r. 1312-1350), when once again different royal relatives claimed the regency before the king came of age in 1325. Though triggered by short-term contingencies, these crises also came at a crucial juncture in the reorganisation of landed

[1] L. A. Kasten and L. B. Kiddle (eds.), *Libro de las cruzes* (Madrid, 1961).
[2] See figure 1.

power in Castile and a time of adjustment in the character of royal authority. Major changes to landholding over the thirteenth century, arising from the incorporation of large areas to the south, along with changes in attitudes to jurisdiction, inheritance customs and territoriality, disrupted established patterns of political behaviour. Meanwhile, it was still unclear how Alfonso X's legal reforms would function in practice, and whether the monarchy could realise its claim to supreme jurisdiction based on Roman law.

The workings of Castilian politics have received much attention in recent decades, transforming our understanding of a host of topics. Traditionally, the over-arching interpretation viewed politics as an inevitable clash between monarchy and nobility. The 1970s work of Luis Suárez Fernández is in some sense the foundation for the conceptual framework that dominates political history in the fourteenth century. While his thesis, positing an overwhelming process of aristocratization, is primarily focused on a later period (1369-1450), his reading of Castilian politics as a dialectical conflict and especially his identification of a contest in the central government finds echoes in recent historiography.[3] We see its influence in Simon Barton's work, for example, when he endorsed K. F. Werner's view, expressed with regard to Carolingian politics, that the nobility 'was at once the main enemy and the only ally of the central government'.[4] Barton's interpretation was that there had been an equilibrium in the first half of the thirteenth century, formed through the cooperation of the monarch and the aristocracy in the *Reconquista*, which was disrupted by Alfonso X.[5] Several accounts of Alfonso X's reign concur, suggesting that in response to the threat of an over-mighty nobility, *el Sabio* attempted to introduce a new and unfamiliar conception of kingship, which was in turn rejected by the most 'conservative' elements of

[3] L. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía: puntos de vista sobre la historia castellana del siglo XV* (Valladolid, 1975).
[4] S. Barton, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile* (Cambridge, 1997), 105.
[5] ibid., 224.

political society.[6] Indeed, there are historians who argue that the course of the middle ages saw this confrontation grow in its severity.[7] In his work on the Lara family, Simon Doubleday traces a 'deterioration in relations between crown and nobility', which was 'a reaction to the expansive assertion of royal lordship in an age of acute economic dislocation'.[8] Ghislain Baury's study of the Haro family similarly traces a shift from royal service to pressurising the monarchy.[9]

Predictably, a period of crisis such as that of 1275-1325 encourages the conflict-driven narrative. The vicissitudes of the kingdom are interpreted as messy, anarchic and driven by the 'formidable challenge' posed by the nobility.[10] José Manuel Nieto Soria's discussion of Sancho IV's reign refers to a 'continual contradiction' between the aspirations of the monarchy and the nobility.[11] César González Mínguez applies this framework to the reign of Fernando IV, and his work is still cited as the standard account. His thesis posits a complete 'triumph of the nobility', who endlessly followed their own interests. This was ushered in by minority and sustained by the weak character shown by Fernando IV as he grew up.[12] Peter Linehan offers a similar assessment: Fernando was merely a 'conduit of public opinion' and 'the creature of the territorial nobility'.[13] The period does have its heroes, with María de Molina, Sancho IV's wife, who acted as regent for her son and

[6] J. F. O'Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile* (Philadelphia, 1993), 214; M. González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio, 1252-1284* (Palencia, 1993), 228.
[7] A. Sánchez de Mora, *Los Lara: Un linaje castellano de la plena Edad Media* (Burgos, 2007), 231.
[8] S. R. Doubleday, *The Lara Family: Crown and Nobility in Medieval Spain* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 62.
[9] G. Baury, 'Los ricoshombres y el rey en Castilla: el linaje Haro (1076-1322)', *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder. Revista de Estudios Medievales*, 6 (2011), 53-72.
[10] J. F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, 1975), 358, 401; D. Torres Sanz, 'Teoría y práctica de la acción de gobierno en el mundo medieval castellano leonés', *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos*, 12 (1985), 9-87.
[11] 'continua contradicción'. J. M. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV, 1284-1295* (Palencia, 1994), 12.
[12] C. González Mínguez, *Fernando IV de Castilla (1295-1312). La guerra civil y el predominio de la nobleza* (Valladolid, 1976); idem, *Fernando IV (1295-1312)* (Palencia, 1995), 9; idem, *Poder real y poder nobiliar en la Corona de Castilla (1252-1369)* (Bilbao, 2012).
[13] P. Linehan, 'Castile, Navarre and Portugal', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History VI*, ed. Michael Jones (Cambridge, 2000), 626.

grandson, standing out as a defender of the crown; but her triumphs are seen as a valiant struggle against a nobility with 'an insatiable desire for power and wealth at the expense of the monarchy'.[14] The traditional view of Alfonso XI's minority also stresses the inevitability of conflict invited by a nobility 'disposed to improve their privileged situation at the expense of a weakened royal power'.[15]

However, the paradigm of conflict has been destabilised in recent decades. José María Monsalvo Antón's recent account is an excellent example of the current trend. He is deeply sceptical of analyses built solely on royal-noble conflict, and instead analyses the changing structures of royal power across the middle ages.[16] In this he is joined by other scholars trying to understand kingship on a more sophisticated footing: Fernando Arias Guillén, for example, has studied the workings of such themes as royal itinerancy and the construction of royal memory, while Jaime Salazar y Acha's work on the structure of the royal household unpacks the workings of office-holding and interaction at the court. He traces a process of 'honourisation' with the great posts being held by the high nobility, who in turn delegated their tasks of rent collection.[17] Francisco Hernández's recent *magnum opus* zooms in on the transition from Alfonso X to Sancho IV as a revolutionary period of tension between the nobility and the crown, driven in part by the collection of these incomes, which elevated the importance of new bureaucratic officials in the king's court.[18] This combines with work that

[14] P. L. Pepin, *María de Molina, Queen and Regent. Life and Rule in Castile-León 1259-1321* (Lanham, 2016), 81; see also M. Gaibrois y Riaño de Ballesteros, *María de Molina* (Madrid, 1936).
[15] J. Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal, *Alfonso XI, 1312-1350* (Palencia, 1995), 12.
[16] J. M. Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real en la monarquía castellana (siglos XI-XV)* (Madrid, 2019), 156-7.
[17] F. Arias Guillén, 'A Kingdom Without a Capital? Itineration and Spaces of Royal Power in Castile (*c*. 1252-1350)', *Journal of Medieval History*, 39 (2013), 456-76; idem, '"Deus vult". El apoyo económico, espiritual y militar del clero castellano a las campañas militares de Alfonso XI (1312-1350)', *Signum: Revista da ABREM,* 11 (2010), 130-47; J. Salazar y Acha, 'La evolución de la Casa del Rey en el siglo XIII', in A. Gambra Gutiérrez and F. Labrador Arroyo (eds.), *Evolución y estructura de la Casa Real de Castilla* (Madrid, 2010), 80.
[18] F. J. Hernández, *Los hombres del rey y la transición de Alfonso X el Sabio a Sancho IV (1276-1286)* (Salamanca, 2021), 735-8.

looks more closely at the dynamics of kings' interaction with the nobility: François Foronda, for example, has analysed the emergence of a system of favourites (*privanza*), while Marcelo Paulo Correa has argued that office-holding patterns show old lineages being represented and old enemies re-integrated under Fernando IV.[19]

When it comes to the localities, historians now draw on a rich and specialised literature. This can be grouped into two loose categories: the study of lordship and analysis of political relationships. First, the seminal work of Carlos Estepa Díez has transformed our understanding of landed lordship. Almost any topic, from the systems of noble tenancy to the lordship of the town councils or the administration of the royal estates, has been touched by his insights.[20] With a particular emphasis on the eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries, Estepa's studies, including a work published posthumously in 2021, root power in the geography of Castile's landscape, identifying the precise claims and influence that lords and kings could exercise over certain territories, and how these changed to become more fully jurisdictional and dependent on the king's superior lordship.[21] Estepa's extensive analysis of the extant royal documentation is afforced by the accumulation of local and regional studies, with many cities and bishoprics finding their historian.[22] The force of Estepa's

[19] F. Foronda, 'La privanza, entre monarquía y nobleza' in *La monarquía como conflicto en la Corona castellano-leonesa (c. 1230-1504)*, ed. J. M. Nieto Soria (Madrid, 2006), 73-132; M. Paulo Correa, 'La integración de la nobleza en los oficios de la Corte de Fernando IV de Castilla (1295-1312)', *Revista Chilena de Estudios Medievales*, 9 (2016), 63-77.
[20] C. Estepa Díez, 'Formación y consolidación del feudalismo en Castilla y León', in *En torno al feudalismo hispánico: I Congreso de Estudios Medievales* (Ávila, 1989); idem, 'Las tenencias en Castilla y León en los siglos XI al XIII', in *Los espacios del rey. Poder y territorio en las monarquías hispánicas (siglos XII-XIV)*, ed. F. Arias Guillén and P. Martínez Sopena (Bilbao, 2018); idem, 'El alfoz y las relaciones campo-ciudad en Castilla y León durante los siglos XII-XIII', *Studia Historica, Historia Medieval,* II (1984); idem, 'El realengo y el señorío jurisdiccional en Castilla y León (siglos XII-XV)' in *Concejos y ciudades en la Edad Media hispánica: II Congreso de Estudios Medievales* (Ávila, 1990).
[21] C. Estepa Díez, *Los territorios del rey. Castilla, siglos XII-XIII* (Madrid, 2021).
[22] E.g. A. Rucquoi, *Valladolid en la Edad Media* (Valladolid, 1987); J. I. Moreno Núñez, *Ávila y su tierra en la Baja Edad Media (siglos XIII-XV)* (Ávila, 1992); J. Torres Fontes, 'El concejo de Murcia en la Edad Media', in *Concejos y ciudades en la Edad Media Hispánica* (Ávila, 1990).

paradigms for interpreting lordship have aligned subsequent analyses to an extent, allowing for more direct comparison of local conditions.

Other historians have adopted a more socio-economic approach to explain the same transformations. Teófilo Ruiz considered the impact of the stalling of new conquests after Murcia's incorporation, suggesting that the nobility became harder to control both because they had been enriched with substantial landholdings and because the king no longer had a steady stream of new lands to hand out, while at the same time patrician groups were favoured in Castilian cities. [23] Ignacio Álvarez Borge, an important writer on noble landed power, takes this argument further. He suggests, as Doubleday concurs, that the nobility entered a period of crisis towards the end of the reign of Alfonso X, as their usual methods of landed expansion had dried up. In this context, occupying high office acquired particular importance.[24] Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada has contested the idea that the closing of the Castilian frontier produced internal struggles, arguing that expansion did not cause problems in its own right and that confrontations like the noble revolt of 1272 sought modification of judicial arrangements in the older parts of the kingdom.[25] However, it remains an important insight that a combination of shifting power balances and reorganisations in the modes of landed power could have a profound impact on the modes of confrontation and conflict between kings and noblemen.

[23] T. F. Ruiz, 'Expansion et changement: la conquête de Séville et la société castillane (1248-1350)', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales,* 34 (1979), 548-65; idem, *Crisis and Continuity: Land and Town in Late Medieval Castile* (Philadelphia, 1994), 298-9.
[24] I. Álvarez Borge, *Poder y relaciones sociales en Castilla en la Edad Media: los territorios entre el Arlanzón y el Duero en los siglos X al XIV* (Valladolid, 1996), 150.
[25] M. Á. Ladero Quesada, 'La corona de Castilla: transformaciones y crisis políticas. 1250-1350', *XXI Semana de Estudios Medievales, Europa en los umbrales de la crisis (1250-1350)* (Pamplona, 1995), 275-322.

Finally, several studies analyse political relationships as they adjusted to these economic and seigneurial conditions. Through prosopographical reconstruction of noble groups, historians have considered the bonds between and within extended families and studied the informal mechanisms of power that determined these relationships.[26] Álvarez Borge, for example, has masterfully navigated the documentary landscape to produce studies of certain families, most notably the Rojas lineage, and Richard Kinkade has produced a rich biography of Alfonso X's brother, *infante* Manuel.[27] Related to this work on lineages, Isabel Beceiro Pita and Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave show a gradual transition towards valuing primogeniture, while there was also a crystallising second tier of this nobility of the blood. These *hidalgos* are seen emerging through vassal relationships with great nobles (*ricos hombres*), and some rose to prominence in this way.[28] This provides an important corrective to the traditional interpretation formulated by Salvador de Moxó, which depicted the upper and lower nobilities as clearly distinct and closed to one another. [29] The authors argue that there existed client networks even before the documentary evidence allows us to see them in detail, and that this *parentesco* must have been a factor in the incorporation of new rebel nobles into coalitions against Alfonso X.[30] In other cases, local examples are examined in

[26] I. García Izquierdo, 'El linaje de Aza. Origen, evolución e impacto de una familia aristocrática en la Castilla suroriental', *Studia Historica*, 35 (2017), 129-55; S. de Moxó, 'Los Albornoz. La elevación de un linaje y su expansión dominical en el siglo XIV', in *El Cardenal Albornoz y el Colegio de España* (Zaragoza, 1972), 157-72; J. I. Moreno Núñez, 'Los Dávila, linaje de caballeros abulenses. Contribución al estudio de la nobleza castellana en la baja Edad Media,' in *En la España medieval, III. Estudios en memoria del profesor don Salvador de Moxó* (Madrid, 1982), 17-80; J. Torres Fontes, 'Linaje y poder en el reino de Murcia, siglos XIII-XV', in *La Península Ibérica en la Era de los Descubrimentos (1391-1492)*, ed. M. González Jiménez (Sevilla, 1997), 901-28; M. A. Carmona Ruiz, 'En torno al origen de los señoríos del reino de Jaén. La génesis del linaje de los Quesada, señores de Garcíez y Santo Tomé (Jaén). Siglos XIII-XIV', *Medievalismo*, 27 (2017), 97-131.

[27] I. Álvarez Borge, 'La nobleza castellana en la Edad Media: familia, patrimonio y poder', in *La familia en la Edad Media,* ed. J. I. de la Iglesia Duarte (2001), 221-51 ; idem, *Ascenso social y crisis política en Castilla c. 1300. En torno a Juan Rodríguez de Rojas y su grupo familiar* (Salamanca, 2019); R. Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty: The Life and Times of Infante Manuel of Castile* (Toronto, 2019).

[28] I. Beceiro Pita and R. Córdoba de la Llave, *Parentesco, poder y mentalidad: la nobleza castellana, siglos XII-XV* (Madrid, 1990).

[29] S. de Moxó, 'De la nobleza vieja a la nobleza nueva, la transformación nobilaria castellana en la baja Edad Media', *Cuadernos de Historia*, 3 (1969), 33-81.

[30] Beceiro Pita and Córdoba de la Llave, *Parentesco, poder y mentalidad,* 309.

order to understand the interaction of aristocratic power with other agents like the church or municipalities. A useful example of this is the work of María Quintanilla Raso on Cuenca, which shows that the city, like others, saw the growth of urban noble lineages.[31] That said, since the focus is on the family units and their power bases, these phenomena have not always been connected to political pressures at the highest level.

As a result of the richness of historiographical development in Castilian politics, we now have a much better understanding of local dynamics in cities and surrounding regions; of the workings of noble power and how it could be transmitted through the generations; and a fuller picture of the development of royal power. A problem, however, arises from the way in which insights from these studies have been integrated into overall appraisal of the Castilian political system. There are two aspects to this: connection and framing. First, there is often a lack of explicit analysis of connection between local or central dynamics and their implications elsewhere. This is by no means universal, and there are many studies that think carefully about the interplay of central and local forces – Estepa's being the most prominent example, even if he did not develop his insights into an overall interpretation of kingship or high politics. Nevertheless, a sustained and explicit attempt to bring the 'local' and 'central' sources together could still prove fruitful, to observe how the pressures of politics at different levels could influence each other. It is still unclear exactly how conditions in the locality affected strategy at court, how evenly decisions at the centre were enforced in the locality, how differing interest groups found ways to negotiate their priorities from positions of relative strength and weakness, and how to fit each of these strands of analysis into an explanatory model that does not reduce politics to clashes of ideology or self-interest.

[31] M. C. Quintanilla Raso, 'La implantación de la nobleza y relaciones de poder en la tierra de Cuenca en la baja Edad Media', in J. S. García Marchante and A. L. López Villaverde (eds.), *Relaciones de poder en Castilla: El ejemplo de Cuenca* (Cuenca, 1997), 103-6.

Second, even where the most care has been taken to incorporate all these different perspectives, the overall framing of the period 1275-1325 as a period of messy and largely meaningless politics remains hard to shift. This is even true where historians go out of their way to challenge the paradigm of royal weakness, since their solution is invariably to focus on the innovations of Alfonso X and his great-grandson Alfonso XI, leaving our period as an uncomfortable hiatus of paralysis and conflict. Arias Guillén's recent title, *The Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, encapsulates this sense of recovery by Alfonso XI from a dark age of strife.[32] The uncomfortable character of the period for narratives of state growth and royal power perpetuates explanations based on conflict between powers: Foronda, for example, reads *privanza* under Fernando IV as the struggle by royal favourites to control the apparatus of power, while *concejos* sought to use royal minorities to resist the onslaught of the nobility.[33] Ladero Quesada's sophisticated analysis ends in a similar place, emphasising that conflict was driven by a desire to control the government amid structural crises.[34] There is a conviction among historians that the basics of the period's trajectory are settled, as is apparent in Monsalvo Antón's 2019 book: 'from the confluence of all these factors derives a historical sequence which, in essence, is not difficult to establish'.[35] The transition they describe, from royal assertion to stagnation and back again, is, however, inadequately explained in structural terms because they ignore the underlying dynamics between the crisis-ridden centre and the developments of the locality.

[32] F. Arias Guillén, *The Triumph of an Accursed Lineage: Kingship in Castile from Alfonso X to Alfonso XI (1252-1350)* (London, 2021).
[33] Foronda, 'La Privanza', 82-3.
[34] Ladero Quesada, 'La corona de Castilla', 275-322.
[35] Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real,* 156.

The state of the sources available makes it difficult to tackle these twin problems of connection and framing. The precise order of events, their meaning to contemporaries, and the role of different participants are continually obscure. The first and most notorious problem for political historians is that the registers of the royal chancery have not survived, leaving us reliant on the survival of documents in other archives.[36] The majority of the most high-profile surviving documents are helpfully collected in editions published for particular reigns, though unpublished material continues to emerge, not least thanks to Francisco Hernández.[37] Not even the records of the Cortes, the kingdom's representative assembly, are complete, and these, like all documents issuing from the royal chancery, must be treated with due caution. They attempted to give authoritative shape to messy realities in a manner that suited the king, and hence they can mislead both by implying consensus where it was lacking or by omitting contradictory details.[38] Meanwhile, whatever documentary collections were amassed by noble lineages are largely lost. This leads to numerous distortions, chiefly that the bulk of our documentation comes from those institutions best placed to preserve their privileges: monasteries, cathedrals, town councils, military orders and so on. This skews our perception of the tenor of royal business towards over-emphasising these political entities and highlights the role of patronage over other forms of management. That the record is not representative is evident in the fortunate survival of a great deal of documentary output by one nobleman, Juan Manuel, pertaining to *c.* 1296-1348. This material derives from the fact that Juan Manuel had extensive contact with kings of Aragón, whose chancery was much more successful at preserving royal documents.

[36] J. L. Rodríguez de Diego, 'El archivo real de la corona de Castilla (ss. XIII-XV)', in *Monarquía, crónicas, archivos y cancillerías en los reinos hispano-cristianos. Siglos XIII-XV*, ed. E. Sarasa Sánchez (Zaragoza, 2014), 277-308.
[37] A. Ballesteros Beretta and M. Rodríguez Llopis, *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Barcelona, 1984); M. Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Sancho IV de Castilla* (Madrid, 1928); C. González Mínguez, *Itinerario y regesta de Fernando IV de Castilla (1295-1312)* (Bilbao, 2015); M. García Fernández, 'Regesto documental andaluz de Alfonso XI (1312–1350)', *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos*, 15 (1988); A. Recuero Lista, *El reinado de Alfonso XI de Castilla (1312-1350)* (Madrid, 2016); Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, vol. II.
[38] P. Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford, 1993), 527.

Published long ago by Andrés Giménez Soler, it reveals an active culture of letter-writing and petitioning.[39] It is an indispensable resource and requires serious thought as to how far its picture of Castilian politics relates to the whole.

As for narrative sources, for our period we are extremely reliant on two main accounts. The first is Jofré de Loaysa's Latin continuation of the *De rebus Hispaniae*, covering Fernando III (1230-1252), Alfonso X, Sancho IV and Fernando IV. Loaysa (d. 1308) was archdeacon of Toledo, but came from a family rooted in noble politics: his father owned land in Murcia and was closely involved in royal service, delivering the news of Fernando III's death to Jaime I of Aragón and educating Alfonso X's eldest son, while his elder brother, García Jofré, was a major office-holder for Alfonso X and Sancho IV.[40] The chronicle is therefore interesting in sitting across two perspectives and ought to caution us not to draw distinctions too sharply between 'noble' or 'clerical' views of politics. In addition to Loaysa's text, we also rely heavily on a series of vernacular chronicles written under royal patronage in the mid-fourteenth century (before 1344). There is doubt as to the authorship: a possible candidate is Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, a royal servant who would serve as chancellor of the secret seal to Alfonso XI, but the text lacks unity and may in fact be the work of multiple hands.[41] What is certain is that the author(s) operated firmly within the king's circle, had privileged access to documents from the king's chancery, and showed a sound grasp of legal process.[42] The work also drew on a number of earlier textual variants.[43] The narrative's

[39] A. Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel: biografía y estudio crítico* (Zaragoza, 1932).
[40] A. García Martínez (ed.), *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla: Fernando III, Alfonso X, Sancho IV y Fernando IV (1248-1305)* (Murcia, 1982), 29-30.
[41] C. Benítez Guerrero, *Crónica de Fernando IV: estudio y edición de un texto postalfonsí* (Sevilla, 2017), xxxiv-v.
[42] ibid., xxxiii; M. González Jiménez and M. A. Carmona Ruiz, *Crónica de Alfonso X: segun el Ms. II/2777 de la Biblioteca del Palacio Real (Madrid)* (Murcia, 1998), xiv.
[43] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey,* 732. For ease of reference, I cite Rosell's edition, cross-referencing other editions when necessary.

provenance leads to a number of critical distortions, in addition to its factual errors.[44] First, it consistently depicts events from the king's point of view and is particularly hostile towards noble motivations, driven in part by clashes under Alfonso XI. However, the agenda of justifying Alfonso XI's rule often necessitated greater subtlety: for example, the chronicler was at pains both to attack those who criticised Alfonso X unduly, but also to demonstrate that monarch's shortcomings in order to justify Sancho IV's claims in the succession dispute, since it was from Sancho's line that Alfonso XI descended.[45] As historians have long recognised, then, we must always consider these vernacular chronicles as a dynastic interpretation designed to serve the interests of Alfonso XI.[46]

While acknowledging these issues, modern accounts often remain constricted by the interpretative framework generated in the chronicles' inception. The chronicler was writing teleologically from the perspective of Alfonso XI's assertive kingship which, by the 1340s, was founded on a secure basis politically and underpinned by a self-confident intellectual tradition.[47] This relentlessly projected a *nobleza versus monarquía* mentality underpinning a narrative that Alfonso XI brought order from chaos. As we have seen, modern historians have sometimes absorbed this tradition and treated it as a correct interpretation. The challenge for the student of Castile at the end of the thirteenth century is therefore the same as that met by Paul Strohm for England at the beginning of the fifteenth: understanding 'the relations between textuality and political process'.[48] Just as Lancastrian texts adopted programmes of official forgetfulness and deliberately misunderstood motives in the wake of

[44] González and Carmona Ruiz, *Crónica*, xx-xxxi.
[45] J. Escalona Monge, 'Los nobles contra su rey. Argumentos y motivaciones de la insubordinación nobiliaria de 1272-1273', *Cahiers de Linguistique et de Civilisation Hispaniques Médiévales*, 25 (2002), 131-62.
[46] Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 423.
[47] S. de Moxó, 'La promoción política y social de los letrados en la corte de Alfonso XI' *Hispania. Revista Española de Historia,* 35 (1975), 5-30.
[48] P. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne. Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (Notre Dame, 2006), xvii.

Richard II's deposition, Castilian chroniclers were committed to vindication of Alfonso XI's rule and the vilification of his enemies. Our aim must therefore be to challenge the narrative we inherit from the mid-fourteenth century about the inherent hostility of royal opposition and the weakness of monarchs less exalted by favourable historiographical texts than Alfonso XI. Nevertheless, the same contexts that imbued the vernacular chronicles with their outlook also provide opportunities for historical analysis of what Gabrielle Spiegel termed 'the social logic of the text'. Following Dominick LaCapra, she argues that 'texts represent situated uses of language', and hence can be analysed in the context of social relations and power networks in particular places.[49] Since texts 'both mirror and generate social realities', we can examine not only the chronicles, but also other literary sources like Juan Manuel's writings or the various Mirrors for Princes, to understand how politics was perceived and discussed; how the situation of texts in local networks can account for their semantic inflections; and how discursive contests 'on the ground' relate to rhetoric emanating from the centre.

In order to reassess the period 1275-1325, this thesis concentrates on the evolving structural features of the Castilian polity. In doing so, it considers both 'the centre' and 'localities', and the connections between them. The term 'locality' is helpful for its rooting of processes to specific geographical contexts. It is preferred over alternatives such as 'periphery' because the critical point is not marginality or distance from the 'core' but rather the operation of power in place. Power in the locality conditioned access to local resources and determined the influence enjoyed by people in a given space. The concept of 'the centre' requires careful nuance. First, because, to an extent, the definition of 'central' is relative

[49] G. M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 77; see also eadem, *Romancing the Past. The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1995).

depending on the lens we adopt. A village might be the focal point for an agrarian community; a town or city was a commercial and political centre for a cluster of villages; a cathedral or castle a centre of spiritual, ceremonial or defensive activities, and so on. Moreover, the king also moved endlessly around the kingdom, through areas which in turn amassed prestige and 'central' characteristics owing to their history of regular royal occasions.[50] On the largest scale, the 'centre' (or 'head') of the kingdom was the king and his court, as the medieval understanding of the body politic made clear, and this thesis refers to 'the centre' with that meaning.[51] Moreover, the period 1275-1325 saw numerous occasions when different powers challenged the centre and even took over some of its powers, and hence we have to consider how tolerant Castilian structures were of polycentric politics. 'The centre' could become a contested and potentially multiple concept, as well as being a moving apparatus of government. The analytical framework of 'centre' and 'locality' helps us appreciate the similarities and distinctiveness of Castile compared with elsewhere in Europe. The greater centralisation of England, for example, made Westminster a more stable focal point for English political aspirations.[52] Meanwhile, in Germany, the constant mobility of the rulers was similar to the Castilian example in its creation of multiple places with proud royal traditions, but the imperial model did not permit such extensive royal control: 'in an age of conquest kingdoms, Germany remained substantially unconquered by its monarchs'.[53] Understanding Castile's own combination of regional variation and powerful centripetal forces is the topic of this thesis.

[50] F. Arias Guillén, 'El Estado sobre ruedas. El poder regio y el valor de la itinerancia en Castilla durante la Baja Edad Media', in *Los espacios del rey*, 185-206.
[51] For the organic metaphor, see *Partidas*, II.ix.1,6. For further discussion of this version of the centre, see P. S. Lewis, 'The Centre, the Periphery and the Problem of Power Distribution in Later Medieval France', in *The Crown and Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. J. R. L. Highfield and R. Jeffs (Gloucester, 1981), 34-6.
[52] C. Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity. Service, Politics, and Finance in England, 1360-1413* (New Haven, 1986), 1; C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (1992).
[53] L. Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity. Authority and Crisis, 1245-1414* (Cambridge, 2012), 72.

What follows is divided into three parts. The first focuses on the major dynamics of local politics. It uses a threefold case-study approach to investigate the themes of noble power, municipal lordship and royal agency on the ground. It compares the northern regions around Burgos and Valladolid, situated in the old heartlands of Castile, with the more recently integrated cities of Ávila and Cuenca and with a still fresher conquest to the south-east, the region of Murcia. This comparative framework inevitably excludes many important nuances by leaving out other critical areas, such as the large cities of Andalucía or the region of Galicia with its distinctive patchwork of noble and ecclesiastical lordships.[54] Nonetheless, the case studies are instructive in that they provide windows onto the rhythms of local politics. As we shall see, there were markedly different conditions for lordship and political influence, while interaction with the centre was determined by a fluid set of factors including the types of networks constructed in those localities and the relative proximity of other players such as the Crown of Aragón. Selecting a narrow cross-section for comparison allows us to look in detail at the major players in these regions, their interactions and the influence they wielded at various levels. In each case, evidence is assessed from the municipal and ecclesiastical archives, both printed and unpublished, in combination with other resources specific to certain regions, for example the *Libro becerro de las behetrías*, a mid-fourteenth-century survey of landholding in the northern kingdoms, or the large documentary collections of Juan Manuel pertaining to his activities in Murcia. The focus in these chapters is on the pressures that emerged from the locality, both in terms of the changing modes of competition and interaction for local players, and in terms of the

[54] See M. Á. Ladero Quesada, 'Los señores de Andalucía. Investigaciones sobre nobles y señoríos en los siglos XIII a XV', (Cádiz, 1998); M. González Jímenez, 'La caballería popular en Andalucía (siglos XIII al XV)', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 15 (1985); J. García Oro, *Galicia en la baja Edad Media. Iglesia, señorio y nobleza* (Santiago de Compostela, 1977).

networks, material power and priorities they would bring with them when they engaged with the centre.

The second section turns to the centre, both in terms of the king's court and the more metaphysical understanding of the lynchpin or 'head' of the political system. It discusses the operation of the king's legislation and justice; the politics of office-holding; the functioning and implications of the king's grace; and the discourse of the royal service which underpinned the workings of this system. It is worth noting that military service and the salaries paid in return are largely omitted because they have received far more attention in the historiography, whereas the implications of office and grant-making are not fully appreciated.[55] Moreover, the role of royal women is not discussed at length, since a rich bibliography already exists on this topic and because this thesis asks a different set of questions about the operation of the centre as a whole.[56] The agenda pursued in the second part requires a somewhat different combination of sources from the first, though the documentary evidence from our local case studies is often adduced to observe these political structures operating in practice. Much of our understanding of the centre comes from the chronicles, as well as documents produced at the royal chancery. In addition, the Cortes ordinances are an imperfect but indispensable record of some of the most important interactions between centre and locality. Related to the Cortes records, but still separate, are the various legislative codes that were drawn up at the court, especially during the long reign of Alfonso X. These are at once a rhetorical tool for kings and a key source for political thinking on critical issues. They can be contrasted with the picture presented by the

[55] See e.g. H. Grassotti, *Las instituciones feudo-vasalláticas en Castilla y León* (Spoleto, 1969), 788-844; Hernández, *Las rentas del rey*; I. Álvarez Borge, 'Sobre nobleza, rentas regias y señoríos en Castilla la Vieja, c. 1290-c. 1350', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales,* 50 (2020), 31-59.
[56] See e.g. L. K. Pick, *Her Father's Daughter: Gender, Power and Religion in the Early Spanish Kingdoms* (Cornell, 2017); M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, 1988); A. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997).

vernacular Mirrors for Princes which were so fashionable in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, both those produced under royal patronage and those from outside the direct ambit of the king, such as the political writings of Juan Manuel. When it comes to the centre, we must ask: what kinds of claim emanated from the court, and how effectively could these be enforced? What were the institutional means of advancing these claims, how did they change, and what strategies did they invite for players at different levels?

With these two thematic sections having identified pressures and dynamics in the interaction of central and local forces, the third section turns to the period's events. The aim is not to rehearse a full narrative, but rather to identify how the structural features of Castile played out in certain critical moments between 1275 and 1325, including periods of royal absence, dynastic challenge, the impact of minority and the politics of regency. The section applies the insights of the first two sections to understand how centralising and fragmentary forces shaped the trajectories of noble families, courtiers, royal authority and the polity as a whole.

The threefold division inevitably makes heavy-handed distinctions that do injustice to the inter-connectedness of political realities. For example, kings and, by extension, royal officers exercised a kind of 'central' authority, but they always did so in one geographical context or another; noble power, likewise, could be held in specific regions but also depended on personal relationships at the court. Similarly, the 'events' discussed in the final section were partly the product of the structures identified in the thematic chapters, but they also influenced the course of the period and had the potential to disrupt profoundly the usual patterns of dialogue between centre and localities. It has therefore been necessary to refer backwards and forwards at various moments. A separate distortion comes owing to limitations of space, which has prevented full analysis of ecclesiastical structures on their

own terms. While monasteries, cathedral chapters and military orders are frequently to be found throughout these chapters as participants in the dynamics analysed, it has not been possible to consider them separately and hence the resulting picture of politics skews unnaturally towards secular society. There is also more in-depth study of the higher nobility and justice, and rather less on urban society and taxation, each of which have been comprehensively examined in the past.[57] Finally, the reader will find an additional conflation within these pages, namely between 'structure' and culture. This thesis is inspired to a large extent by historians of political structures in fifteenth-century England, above all Christine Carpenter and John Watts, whose work integrates both the 'underlying ideas' of politics and institutional frameworks.[58] Rather than follow historians influenced by cultural anthropology to view all historical acts as texts or 'historically contingent discursive formations',[59] this thesis assumes that any attempt to analyse the frameworks that channel political interactions requires engagement with both institutional realities and the world of ideas, signs and languages.[60] 'Structures' are therefore any phenomenon (institutional, ideological or discursive) which shape political behaviour into the form it ultimately takes. The terms and institutional frameworks in which politics was carried out and imagined had important consequences for the kinds of possible action and the expected outcomes: for

[57] M. Á. Ladero Quesada, 'Las transformaciones de la fiscalidad regia castellano-leonesa en la segunda mitad del siglo XIII (1252-1312)', in *Historia de la Hacienda Española (épocas Antigua y Medieval)* (Madrid, 1982); idem, *Fiscalidad y poder real en Castilla (1252-1369)* (Madrid, 2011); C. Estepa Díez, 'La construcción de la fiscalidad real', in *Poder real y sociedad: Estudios sobre el reinado de Alfonso VIII (1158-1214)*, ed. idem, I. Álvarez Borge, and J. M. Santamarta Luengos (León, 2011); F. J. Hernández, *Las rentas del rey: Sociedad y fisco en el reino castellano del siglo XIII* (Madrid, 1993); M. Asenjo González, 'Fiscalidad regia y sociedad en los concejos de la Extremadura castellano-oriental durante el reinado de Alfonso X', in *Homenaje al professor Juan Torres Fontes* (Murcia, 1987); M. González Jiménez, 'Ciudades y concejos andaluces en la Edad Media: gobierno urbano', in *Concejos y ciudades en la Edad Media Hispánica* (Ávila, 1990); J. Díaz Ibáñez, 'Iglesia, nobleza y oligarquías urbanas', in *La monarquía como conflicto,* ed. Nieto Soria, 197-252.

[58] J. L. Watts, 'Conclusion', in idem, C. Fletcher and J.-P. Genet (eds.), *Government and Political Life in England and France,* c. *1300-1500* (Cambridge, 2015), 353-4; C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses. Politics and the Constitution in England,* c. *1437-1509* (Cambridge, 1997); J. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996).

[59] L. Hunt and Aletta Biersack, *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989), 10.

[60] See C. Carpenter, 'Introduction' in *Fifteenth Century IV. Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. eadem and L. Clark (Woodbridge, 2004), 1.

example, Grassotti has shown how royal anger was at once a rhetorical device, a legal structure and a pattern for interaction between kings and noblemen.[61] With their various methodologies and limitations, the three sections of the thesis work to answer the same fundamental questions: how did politics work in medieval Castile? How could a position of strength in a locality be used to assert influence in the centre, and vice versa? What factors changed the relationships between centres of power and their roots in the locality? In what terms were these dynamics discussed and understood? What place should 1275-1325 have in our understanding of Castilian history?

[61] H. Grassotti, 'La ira regia en León y Castilla', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, XLI-XLII (1965), 5-135.

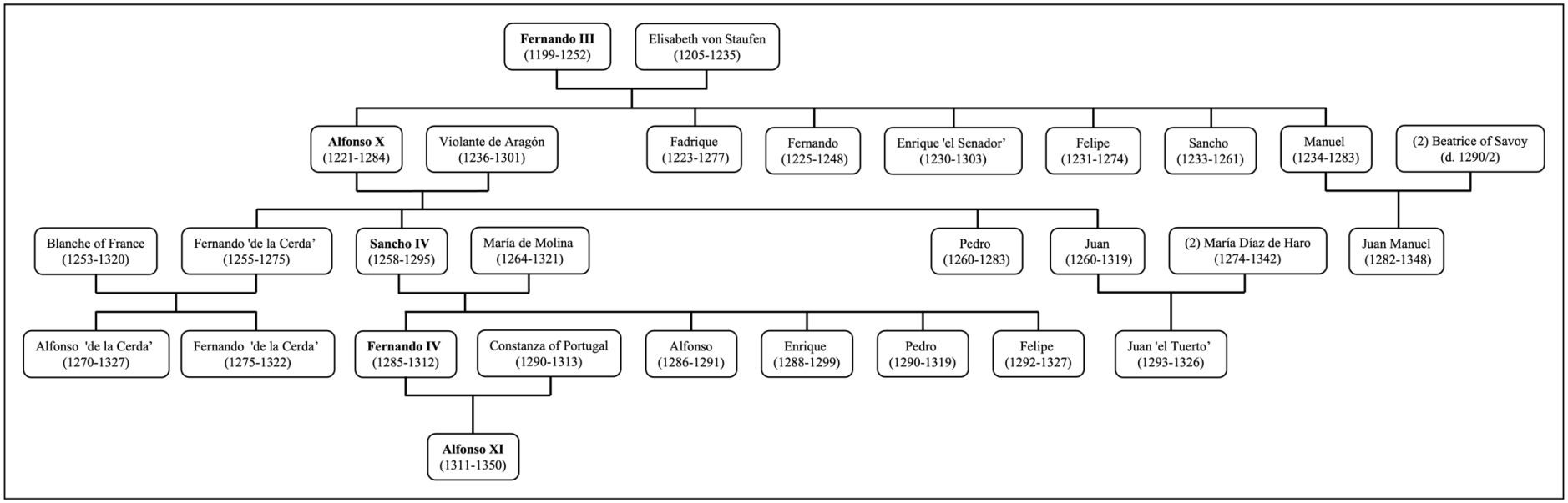


Figure 1: Descendants of Fernando III.

Part One: Localities

1. Noble Power in the Locality

> 'And each one of these has the power in his land to do justice in all those matters over which they have jurisdiction, as dictated by the privileges which they have from emperors and kings who gave them the lordship of the land in the first instance, or according to ancient custom which they used for a long time; except that they cannot legalise anything or make law or new custom without the consent of the people'.[1]

With these lines, the authors of the *Siete partidas* described the 'honourable men' with whom kings surround themselves.[2] In doing so, they attempted to rationalise a messy reality, in which multiple interests held jurisdiction rights, some of them so lasting that they almost stretched beyond memory. But, at the same time, the authors also tried to change that reality, asserting a narrative that the king's grants of privilege lay behind the rights of private lords. This move reflected attempts in other kingdoms to redefine the terms of landholding in the king's favour,[3] most famously the *Quo warranto* proceedings of Edward I from 1278, which exploited both Romano-canonical innovation and the development of the English common law.[4] The interest in redefining the relationship between royal authority and local landholding requires careful consideration in any attempt to understand the connections between land, local power and central authority in Castile at the end of the thirteenth century. We must ask ourselves, were Alfonso X's jurists justified in implying that landed rights were held primarily from the king? Who were the major players in the locality, and what was the relationship between the lordship they exercised and their modes of political interaction? What kind of implications did these power bases and networks have for power at various levels of society?

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[1] 'et ha poderio cada uno dellos en su tierra de facer justicia en todas las cosas que han ramo de señorio, segunt dicen los previllejos que ellos han de los emperadores et de los reyes que les dieron primeramente el señorio de la tierra, ó segunt la antigua costumbre que usaron de luengo tiempo, fueras ende que non pueden legitimar, nin facer ley nin fuero nuevo sin otorgamiento del pueblo'. *Partidas*, II.1.xii.
[2] See below, 146-7.
[3] J. Watts, *The Making of Polities* (Cambridge, 2009), 74-5.
[4] See D. W. Sutherland, *Quo Warranto Proceedings in the Reign of Edward I, 1278-1294* (Oxford, 1963).

Answering these questions requires a long view of lordship in the Iberian Peninsula. Indeed, this is especially important because of the uneven incorporation of vast swathes of new lands to the south, first with the fall of Toledo in 1085 and later with the dramatic advances under Fernando III in the 1230s and 1240s. This defining aspect of Castilian history means that the answer to the above questions might not be the same for every region: the politics that emerged from administering newly-conquered territories would not necessarily resemble northern regions where old families had been competing for generations. Sensitivity to these variations is not new in the historiography: there is a long tradition of local study, producing frameworks designed to chart the distinctiveness of Andalucía, for example.[5] Meanwhile, Estepa, Álverez Borge and Cristina Jular Pérez-Alfaro have led a transformation in our understanding of the conditions north of the Duero.[6] The next step is to analyse the implications of regional variation for the trajectories of Castilian politics as a whole. A return to the documentation on a regionally comparative basis is required to understand what went on beyond the king's comfortable haunts, and to ask whether primary importance of the messy process known as the *Reconquista* was really its provision of booty for a restless nobility, as Ruiz argued.[7]

In this chapter, five case studies are used to analyse the relationship between local power and the kinds of material possession that underpinned it. These cases are taken in three groups: the northern regions of Burgos and Valladolid are compared with the central territories of Ávila and Cuenca, and with the recently integrated southern kingdom of

[5] R. Sánchez Saus, 'Aristocracia y frontera en la Andalucía medieval', in *III Jornadas Hispano-Portuguesas de Historia Medieval. La Peninsula Iberica en la Era de los Descubrimientos (1391 –1492)* (Seville, 1991); M. Nieto Cumplido, *Origenes del regionalismo andaluz (1235–1325)* (Cordoba, 1978).
[6] See esp. Estepa, 'Formación y consolidación'; Álvarez, *Poder y relaciones sociales*; Jular and Estepa, *Land, power, and society.*
[7] Ruiz, 'Expansion et changement', 548-9.

Murcia. This means both considering how Castile's long history led to different patterns of lordship in different regions and asking how these differences could change the kinds of relationships, networks and behaviours available to different lords in their spheres of influence. The chapter begins with an overview of the formation of the Castilian aristocracy and their landed power. The subsequent analysis of the case studies at the turn of the fourteenth century is divided into two parts. First, the predominant features of landholding by noblemen in each region is discussed. Land, and its associated fiscal resource, was of course only one ingredient for local and regnal influence: the other was the cultivation of a network of allies and dependents. This is the subject of the second section, especially where the differences in regional landholding left a trace on the strategies used to manage affinities.

Landholding and Lordship from the Tenth to the Fourteenth Centuries

Prior to the tenth century, there existed a style of lordship based on property ownership and a limited set of obligations derived from economic dependence, such as labour services, basic tributes for fortifications and regulations over forests. This kind of lordship, described by Estepa as *propiedad dominical*, was exercised by lay lords, ecclesiastical institutions and kings alike, while other village communities (*aldeas*) were essentially independent.[8] Gradually, the depth of the rights claimed by lords over territories under their control increased and evolved towards a more complete form of power (*dominio señorial*). In his work on southern Italy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Sandro Carocci develops an 'ideal type' to conceptualise the workings of local lordship. His four parameters are: the exercise by a lay or ecclesiastical lord of a 'decisive share' of military, fiscal and judicial

[8] Estepa, 'Formación y consolidación', 164.

powers; a social and political relationship between lords and client networks which marginalises other authority from the state, its officers, cities, princes or other supralocal powers; the exercise of patrimonial power; and the financing of military and political organisation through a local base rather than by public authority. Importantly, this does not necessarily require territorial coherence or coverage of all inhabitants within a given area.[9]

The transition in Castilian lordship towards Carocci's ideal type happened unevenly, but there are three parallel avenues that merit attention. First, concentration of properties or internal dissolution allowed a lord to predominate, asserting more jurisdictional elements over his sole property (*solariego*).[10] Second, a community might commend themselves to the protection of a lord. This process produced lordships that came to be known as *behetrías* (shared lordships). Commendation in fact had its earliest roots in the Visigothic period, but it developed much more fully from the eleventh century, picking up more complex rights of income collection like *yantar* (for victuals), *martiniega* (annually on the feast of St Martin), *conducho* and *infurción*.[11] Local nobles began to claim *divisas* or shares in the produce of lordships, which later became cash rent.[12] By the twelfth century, claims had multiplied over successive generations so that *behetrías* often became fragmented and mixed with other types of lordship.[13] Correspondingly, it became more difficult for peasants in *behetrías* to exercise the old right to choose their lord. Instead, the defining characteristic of the *behetría* was the residue of this system, which left a small degree of self-regulation (e.g. choosing between two members of the same family in a succession dispute) and, more importantly,

[9] S. Carocci, *Lordships of Southern Italy. Rural Societies, Aristocratic Powers and Monarchy in the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Rome, 2018), 22.
[10] Estepa, 'Formación y consolidación', 192-4.
[11] C. Sánchez-Albornoz, 'Las Behetrías' in *Viejos y nuevos estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas* (Madrid, 1976), 63-4, 141.
[12] Estepa, 'Formación y consolidación', 198; B. Clavero, 'Behetría, 1255-1356. Crisis de una institución de señorío y de la formación de un derecho regional en Castilla', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 44 (1974), 232.
[13] Estepa, 'Formación y consolidación', 234-5.

two layers of lordship.[14] This meant that the primary jurisdiction of the *behetría* pertained to one individual, who was responsible for representing the vassals before royal jurisdiction, while there existed a number of *diviseros* or *naturales* at the inferior or 'shared' level of lordship. The development of *behetrías* towards a settled system of revenues shared between lineages and multiple layers of authority was therefore one of the ways in which lordship ceased to rely on purely economic domination and took on more complex forms. The process emerged owing to the presence of many lords of roughly equivalent power, such that no one figure could fully dominate. This explains the concentration of *behetrías* in the north of the kingdom, where geographical factors and the early development of royal and noble authority in tandem meant that there was no automatic aggregation of land into a small number of hands.

Territory alienated by kings was the final means by which lords could add jurisdictional authority to private property. This could take multiple forms. Kings might give a *beneficium* in exchange for the *servitium* and *fidelitas* of a vassal, who would render counsel and aid. From the reign of Alfonso VI, these benefices were referred to as *prestimonios* or *honores*, and were generally temporary rights to collect income. However, the benefice was often given with hereditary rights, which allowed these rights to crystallise and lose their connection to the royal will.[15] Meanwhile, lords also accumulated *dominio señorial* through more permanent grants from monarchs. These had their roots in the alienations made by monarchs from the ninth century in various parts of Western Europe, and in Visigothic traditions of gifts from kings to *fideles*.[16] The form that eventually crystallised in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was giving land in *plena propiedad* (freehold). This was a particular

[14] Clavero, 'Behetría' 221; I. Álvarez Borge, *El feudalismo castellano y el Libro Becerro de las Behetrías: La merindad de Burgos* (León, 1987), 23.
[15] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 43-4.
[16] Grassotti, *Las instituciones*, 483-6.

product of the incorporation of new land during the Christian conquests, as the low levels of population led kings to grant lifelong rights of jurisdiction to lords to encourage fuller investment in the territory.[17] It is most notable, however, that throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries kings limited their donations in *plena propiedad*, preferring overwhelmingly to reward their followers with beneficiary concessions or the payment of salaries.[18]

Instead, a more significant feature of landholding in the earlier period was the involvement of the nobility in the protection of the royal domain.[19] From at least the tenth century, kings of León delegated territories to leading nobles to administer on their behalf. At first these were known as *commissos* or *mandationes*, with recipients responsible for public order, administering justice, collecting taxes and defence.[20] By the late twelfth century, the terminology had evolved into *honores* and *tenencias*. It has been debated whether this was a fundamental transformation, perhaps copying Navarrese structures or reflecting the more general spread of 'feudal law' in twelfth-century Europe,[21] but it seems most likely to have been a change in terminology rather than administrative realities.[22] Indeed, there was a marked flexibility in nomenclature, with recipients known variously as *tenente*, *senior*, *dominus terrae*, *mandante*, *dominante*, *consul*, or *villicus regis.*[23] The territorial entities (*alfoces*) allotted in *tenencia* varied enormously: they might comprise little more than a village, or consist of a castle and its district or even a town. For example, among the many

[17] ibid., 539-41.
[18] ibid., 540.
[19] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 44.
[20] ibid., 85.
[21] See S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (New York, 1994), 258-9.
[22] L. G. de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia de las instituciones españolas* (Madrid, 1968), 505-6; Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 86.
[23] J. M. Monsalvo Antón, 'De los alfoces regios al realengo concejil en el reino de León (1157-1230). La territorialidad de las ciudades y las villas reales entre la cordillera Cantábrica y el Duero' in *El Reino de León en la época de las cortes de* (2002), 39-40. See also J. Bianchini, 'The Distribution of Tenancies in León, C. 1200-1250: Charter Evidence for a History of Power', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 5 (2013), 33-46.

tenancies held by *conde* Manrique Pérez de Lara at various times in 1143-64 were Ávila, Baeza, Madrid, Segovia and Toledo.[24] Tenants were expected to render service or aid (*auxilium*) to the king, and they often appointed *alcaides* (derived from the Arabic *al-qa'id*, meaning 'leader') to supervise administration of the *alfoz*.[25] This system has been described by Monsalvo Antón as a kind of *realengo directo* (direct royal lordship), because there was no intermediary between the king's territorial power, exercised through the tenant, and the place's inhabitants.[26] Despite the overlap in terminology (*honores*), by contrast with outright property, tenancies were conditional. Some were extremely fluid: Salamanca, for example, saw a dozen different tenants during the reign of Fernando II (1157-1188).[27] This fluidity was underpinned by the fact that homage was rendered for these tenancies, which meant that they could be confiscated in the event of rebellion. At other times, however, close supervision by the monarch was impractical, and hence the tenants were the effective lords of the *alfoces* they held.

Solariego, *behetría* and *realengo* rights held by the nobility thus developed in parallel towards more complex rights of jurisdiction, though the balance of royal delegation was always in favour of temporary tenancy as opposed to hereditary benefices. However, a set of important changes was to transform landholding in all its forms. Whereas agnatic kinship (deriving family membership from the father's line) took hold in France between the ninth and twelfth centuries, in Castile there was still a significant degree of flexibility, with lords able to choose between sons and using cognatic practices to endow other family members. This derived from Visigothic tradition, which insisted on inheritance divided among all

[24] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 108.
[25] M. C. Quintanilla Raso, 'La tenencia de fortalezas en Castilla durante la Baja Edad Media' in *En la España medieval. Homenaje al profesor D. Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz* (Madrid, 1986), 868.
[26] Monsalvo, 'De los alfoces regios', 48.
[27] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 108.

heirs.[28] However, some *behetrías* and tenancies began to settle in the hands of single families, passing regularly from father to son. This was especially prevalent north of the Duero, where the crown contended with entrenched lordships of local families. For example, when *conde* Osorio Martínez became *tenente* of the city of León after 1138 he was the latest in a long line of his kin, while the lordship of Cifuentes de Rada was held by Froila Díaz and his descendants throughout the twelfth century and beyond.[29] Closely related to this was the cultivation of group solidarity organised around lineages. From the twelfth century, the custom of using a surname to designate lineage took off, and some families, like the Traba and Ponce, began to be buried with their immediate ancestors.[30] The changes here were mutually supportive: transfer of non-divisible rights like tenancies from generation to generation reinforced preference for the male line, while the crystallisation of lineages encouraged efforts to secure patrimonial goods that could be inherited. Indeed, Barton has even suggested that the reluctance of the monarchy to give hereditary benefices and the length of time that the greatest magnates spent at the royal court explains the unusually late development of inheritance customs in Castile.[31]

The consequences of these changes were highly significant. Lineages gaining dramatically in material and symbolic power led to a tendency for 'weaker' forms of lordship to be converted and patrimonialised. Tenancies accumulated in the hands of a shrinking number of powerful families who began to dominate distinct zones, while *behetrías* were concentrated into fewer hands. To take just one example: under Alfonso VIII the Haro lineage had constructed an extensive patrimony in La Rioja and Vizcaya, which came to rank alongside los Cameros and Molina as one of the most homogeneous territorial lordships

[28] Beceiro and Córdoba, *Parentesco, poder y mentalidad*, 42.
[29] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 86, 108.
[30] ibid., 58-61.
[31] ibid., 44.

of Castile. Tenancies were a key part of their consolidation: the family held Cameros, Rioja, Haro, Nájera, Bureba, Nava and Calahorra, as well as Baeza, which Fernando III gave them after the conquest of 1226.[32] Significantly, they managed to patrimonialise the northern tenancies of Haro, Nájera and Bureba. How they did so is not entirely clear, but it can most likely be explained by the fact that the tenancies were located adjacent their own possessions and were held continuously for several generations. In other cases, tenancies might have lost their royal status through sale, as happened in the case of Cartagena, near Murcia.[33] A final factor might perhaps be poor record-keeping practices, which allowed for lapses in memory across generations. Indeed, when tenants confirmed documents there was a subtle trend towards omitting words like *senior*, *dominus* or *tenente*, replaced simply with *de* or *en*, perhaps signalling an attitude towards these former tenancies as possessions that reinforced the general diffusion of jurisdictional responsibilities in this period.[34] Moreover, whereas tenancies in earlier periods were frequently recorded alongside names in witness lists, Fernando III's documents do not consider tenancies a significant marker of status. This indicates that many tenancies had become continuous and automatic.

As a result of the transformations in lordship, the nobility evolved as a force in Castilian politics with multiple discernible layers. The top-tier aristocracy, the *ricoshombres*, grew extremely wealthy owing to their domination of the tenancies and the intensification of their exploitation of *solariego* lordships.[35] In addition to their traditional role at the court, where they counselled the king and witnessed his charters, these magnates exercised a more settled, territorial form of power, with increasing continuity in their spheres of influence as opposed

[32] A. Rodríguez López, 'La consolidación territorial de la monarquía feudal castellana. Expansión y fronteras durante el reinado de Fernando III', (Madrid, 1994), 203-4.
[33] J. Torres Fontes, 'Don Juan Manuel, señor de Cartagena (1313-1347)', in *Estudios en Homenaje a Don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz en sus 90 años*, IV (1986), 45-6.
[34] Sánchez, *Los Lara*, 226.
[35] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 44.

to the collection of scattered rights they had previously held.[36] Beneath them lay the lesser nobles, known by the end of the twelfth century as *fijosdalgo* or *hidalgos*. These men were less influential across a wide area, would rarely witness charters and generally served as mounted knights to the king or a major nobleman.[37] We shall see in later chapters how the power of these two noble groups was shared with and conditioned by that of the growing urban knighthood. Finally, the picture of noble power in Castile is complicated by the *infantes*. The royal family had grown dramatically under Fernando III, meaning that by the beginning of our period Alfonso X had four living brothers, one half-brother and five living sons.[38] This meant that the top-tier aristocracy, with their crystallising local networks and appetite for hereditary royal grants, had to compete with royal relatives, all of whom demanded significant endowments to match their status.[39] These *infantes* and their sons, as we shall see, played a critical role in the politics of our period.

The transformation of noblemen from rich men holding scattered rights to the exercisers of regional power is therefore fundamental to our interpretation of the period. However, the transformations we have identified set in motion some important tensions that would have to be resolved over the coming century. The first was the tension between the king's ability on one hand to supervise landed rights, whether through the waning system of tenancy or his judicial and fiscal officers, and on the other the opportunities provided by royal power to noblemen to expand their territorial agency. Second, the conditions we have identified produced contradictory trends of diversity and homogeneity. Some of these evolutions tended towards regional diversification, with local conditions fundamentally affecting the type of authority exercised in each region. At the same time, there was also a homogenising

[36] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 6.
[37] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 33-4.
[38] See figure 1.
[39] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 102-8.

dynamic: partly as a result of royal policy, partly by aristocratic experience, lordship everywhere was more intense and referred more predictably to similar forms of administration, office-holding and confirmation by royal decree. This would have important consequences when it came to the possibility of integration of different power structures over the long term.

Case Studies: Land and Power

All of this suggests several avenues for further enquiry in the documentation of 1275-1325. We need to understand the implications of the increasingly territorial nature of nobility in the later thirteenth century: now that lordships were becoming settled and heritable and were more stable than the shifting tenancies, different zones of the kingdom fell under different spheres of influence. This begs the question of what implications territorial nobility might have for the ways in which noblemen pursued and defended their interests, gathered networks around them, and sought to exert influence at political centres of various kinds. These questions will be analysed with a threefold framework of case study comparison: the northern regions of Burgos and Valladolid will be set against Cuenca and Ávila in the central band of the kingdom, and against Murcia much further to the south.

The defining features of landed power around Burgos and Valladolid were fragmentation, competition and a combination of fluid alliances and enduring archaic structures. Situated on the northern edge of the central Spanish plain on the banks of the river Arlanzón, the city of Burgos became the functional centre of a wealthy *merindad* (administrative district) of

the same name, as well as being the seat of a bishopric. From its beginnings as a cluster of trading posts in the ninth century, in the eleventh century Burgos became a centre of recruitment for Christian armies and grew rich from its position on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela.[40] Alfonso VI declared Burgos head of all the dioceses of Castile, beneath only Rome, cementing Burgos' symbolic, political and administrative significance.[41] Commensurate with its rise in status, Burgos came to enjoy the royal presence more often, and was the site of numerous significant royal marriages, coronations and meetings of the Cortes.[42] Burgos also boasted a major Cistercian nunnery, known as Las Huelgas, founded in 1187 by Alfonso VIII. This house, along with the chapter of the cathedral, established a significant landholding base, receiving regular donations from monarchs and other individuals up to the middle of the thirteenth century.[43] The monastery and the cathedral chapter were also both heavily dependent on a raft of fiscal rights, such as incomes from salt mines and ports on the northern coast.[44] Their landholdings were surprisingly widespread: in 1323 the cathedral of Burgos acquired possessions in the Jewish quarter of Valencia in the will of *infante* Juan, while Las Huelgas owned interests in Valladolid, Cuenca, Seville and Jaén.[45] In general, though, the tendency was for the institutions of Burgos to sell off or farm out these possessions in the early fourteenth century, and to avoid investing significant resources in acquiring new ones outside of their own regions. It became increasingly important to have one's resources close at hand, where they could be more readily protected, especially in the competitive north.

[40] T. F. Ruiz, 'The Transformation of the Castilian Municipalities: The Case of Burgos 1248-1350', *Past & Present*, 77 (1977), 5.
[41] J. García Sainz de Baranda, *La ciudad de Burgos y su concejo en la Edad Media* (Burgos, 1967), 313-4.
[42] ibid., 318-20.
[43] J. M. Lizoain Garrido and J. J. García González, *El monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos. Historia de un señorío cisterciense burgalés (siglos XII y XIII)* (Burgos, 1988), 101.
[44] *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc. 91; 1307-1321, doc. 246.
[45] ACB V - 25, fol. 302; *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc. 130; *Las Huelgas*, 1307-24, docs. 204, 257; *Las Huelgas*, 1329-1348, doc. 60.

Valladolid had a more recent history than Burgos, and lacked the boost provided by pilgrims. The first mention of the city comes in a document of Alfonso VI in 1062, before which there are scattered references to fortresses along the major tributaries of the river Pisuerga in the area. The fortress on the Esgueva gradually became the epicentre of a growing city, especially after the conquest of Toledo in 1085, which positioned Valladolid midway between the Christian capital, León, and the old Visigothic capital.[46] Valladolid's fortress, and later the new thirteenth-century royal palace, quickly became a favoured residence for kings. Valladolid was also distinctive in that it was vital during multiple royal minorities, with Fernando III, Fernando IV, Alfonso XI and Juan II spending their childhoods and adolescences in the city.[47] Much like Burgos, the city also developed a wealthy and competitive structure of ecclesiastical institutions, headed by the Iglesia Colegial de Santa María.[48] Though the abbot could command significant jurisdiction, Valladolid differed from Burgos in that it was not the head of the bishopric, with the bishop of nearby Palencia having superiority. Valladolid's position was notable in that, from the mid-eleventh century, it was the head of an *infantazgo* (princely lordship), which the king occasionally entrusted to a tenant or, increasingly, the queen.[49]

In addition to the size and strength of the landholding of ecclesiastical institutions, the city councils of Burgos and Valladolid also amassed significant lordships (examined in greater detail in Chapter 2). There were nonetheless opportunities for the most important magnates in the kingdom to acquire land, collect incomes and cultivate networks in both regions.[50] The task of establishing the noble interests is made difficult by the source material. In

[46] Rucquoi, *Valladolid*, 61.
[47] ibid., 180-1.
[48] ibid., 147.
[49] Rucquoi, *Valladolid*, 74.
[50] M. I. Alfonso Antón, 'Resolución de disputas y prácticas judiciales en el Burgos medieval', in *Burgos en la Plena Edad Media*, (1994), 223.

particular, the disappearance of noble archives and the patchy survival of government records forces us to rely on moments of interaction with those institutions that had more stable record-keeping practices, and this is one reason for the fact that the evidence substantially richer in Burgos than Valladolid. However, there are historical, as well as evidential, factors to this disparity. The fragmentation of lordship around Burgos led to a substantially more contested landed situation than Valladolid, which sat in the middle of a coherent lordship in the hands of the queen and was consequently far less vulnerable. Álverez Borge's study of the *merindad* of Burgos confirms the fragmentation of lordship in the region. He sketches a division of influence: to the north the monastery of Escalada and the Villalobos lineage were predominant; the central zone was controlled by García Fernández Manrique and the monastery of Oña, and to the south closest to the city the monastery of Cardeña and the cathedral chapter were the most significant players.[51] Given the fragmentation of lordships around Burgos and Valladolid, congestion and competition were the inevitable result for the nobility. In the documentation of Burgos and Valladolid, four features of local politics in these regions stand out: a frantic land market, infiltration of the offices of the ecclesiastical institutions, accusations of extra-judicial seizure of territory and the clear strategic value of lay lordships where they could be underpinned by royal assent.

When it comes to the intense activity of the land market, we must be aware that our evidence is distorted towards conveyances in which the ecclesiastical institutions had some stake; there must have been many transactions which have not left a trace in our sources.[52] Even so, it is striking how many noble families of different means can be found buying and selling

[51] Álvarez, *El feudalismo castellano,* 185-6.
[52] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 71.

land in these regions: we have transactions involving the Rojas,[53] Velasco,[54] Sandoval,[55] Torquemada,[56] Carrillo,[57] and Saldaña lineages.[58] Some of these transactions by noblemen may not strike the observer as especially grand: the Rojas family, for example, purchased houses in Villageriego in 1271 from ten different villagers, before selling them to Las Huelgas for cash.[59] Others were more significant, such as the 21,000 *maravedís* paid by the monastery for property in Quintanaortuño from the executors of the will of Juan Fernández de Rojas.[60] It should also be noted that servants of the most significant noblemen left their mark on local politics. For example, *infante* Juan's cook made a number of purchases in Villalbilla in 1303-5, as did his scribe,[61] while his *despensero* made a much more significant purchase of lands in Villímar.[62] This trend continued with the *infante*'s son, whose own *despensero* leased a number of lands from the chapter of the cathedral of Burgos in 1323.[63] A list drawn up in 1346 of the properties rented out by the cathedral chapter states that Fernando Martín de Valpuesta, an *alcalde* of Juan Núñez III de Lara, was one of its tenants.[64] This was not inconsequential: as Rucquoi has shown, these servants had a significant impact on these cities' development, with new districts near the royal palace by the church of Santa Magdalena in Valladolid populated mostly by royal servants.[65] The active property market allowed lineages to concentrate their holdings, and perhaps also to buy out *behetrías* to turn them into areas of single lordship, though this process is difficult to observe in the documentation.

[53] *Las Huelgas*, 1263-1283, docs. 563, 564, 565.
[54] *Las Huelgas*, 1307-1321, doc. 281.
[55] ibid., doc. 326.
[56] *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc. 130.
[57] *Las Huelgas*, 1307-1321, doc. 327.
[58] APR, Pergamino 936 (previously Caja 3062, núm. 8).
[59] *Las Huelgas*, 1263-1283, docs. 563, 564, 565.
[60] *Pereda*, doc. 396.
[61] ibid., docs. 374, 382, 383, 386, 391
[62] ibid., doc. 480.
[63] ACB LIB - 14, fols. 13v-14.
[64] ACB RR - 14, fol. 350v-351.
[65] Rucquoi, *Valladolid,* 72.

In addition to seeking opportunities on the land market, nobles were also adept at using local influence to engage in the spiritual patronage of the regions.[66] For example, the clout afforded by their landholding around Burgos allowed a member of the Rojas lineage, María Rodríguez, to become abbess of Las Huelgas in the first half of the fourteenth century.[67] In 1298, two important noblemen, García Fernández Manrique and Lope Rodríguez de Villalobos, demonstrated the power they expected to exercise as a result of their spiritual patronage. The two patrons ordered the chapter of San Martín de Elines to elect an abbot without waiting for permission or confirmation from the bishop of Burgos: 'and we do not desire this matter to come into the hands of the bishop, but instead that you arrange it as your predecessors did in this place'.[68] The self-confidence of this intervention gives a tangible sense of the influence exercised by these lords on a local level. Indeed, the Villalobos lineage also used religious institutions to gain a foothold in Valladolid when Gil Gómez de Villalobos, became abbot of the collegiate church of Valladolid in 1276.[69] This was a rich and prestigious benefice, having previously been held by the son of Fernando III and *infante* Sancho, son of Jaime I of Aragon.[70] The tangible mark that the Villalobos lineage was able to stamp on the political life of Valladolid through this position is demonstrated by the fact that Gil Gómez used his family's seal, complete with its two wolves, for church business.[71] It is evident, then, that there can be no neat distinctions between noble and ecclesiastical power, and that the highly competitive nature of landed power in the regions

[66] For more on the involvement of the nobility in the late medieval clergy see J. Díaz Ibáñez, 'La incorporación de la nobleza al alto clero en el reino de Castilla durante la Baja Edad Media', *Anuario de estudios medievales,* 35 (2005), 557-603.
[67] ACB LIB - 43 fols 268-9
[68] 'Et non queremos nos que entre en mano de obispo, sinon que vsedes asi commo lo vsaron los que viuieron en este lugar'. *Pereda*, doc. 322.
[69] *Mañueco*, doc. 62.
[70] ibid., doc. 53.
[71] ibid., sellos, no. 30.

around Burgos and Valladolid made securing ecclesiastical posts an attractive option for members of powerful lineages.

So far, our analysis of noble activity has been drawn from judicial material and conveyances, and thus on actions within the repertoire of licit, procedural behaviour. Of course, this excludes less formal actions, which are only picked up in judicial material once there has been a subsequent complaint or condemnation. Indeed, some transactions may have been settlements after unknown illicit behaviour. The most important example of illicit action is the use of extra-judicial violence by the nobility to seize lands and rights. For example, reference to nobles seizing church goods by force is found in a series of sentences of excommunication passed by the cathedral chapter of Burgos in October 1270. They condemned those who 'through fear or desire undertook through their lay power to seize or invade or occupy, with or without arms, our goods and those of our church, whether commended to us or put beneath our protection, moveable or immoveable, sacred or non-sacred'.[72] In 1302, this *potentiam laycalem*, as they put it, was described more fully in a petition from the monastery of Las Huelgas: 'some noblemen and knights and other men buy and bought inheritances, houses and vineyards from the vassals of the said monastery and the said hospital... and from others who have them, and they had them because they married the daughters of their vassals and call themselves *fijosdalgo*'.[73] This description provides a more textured picture of the pressure of the nobility on ecclesiastical interests, in which normal behaviour like purchasing land from the monastery's vassals resulted in local landlords powerful enough to threaten the monastery's ability to control its estates. Of

[72] 'propria temeritate uel uoluntate bona nostra et ecclesie nostre, uel nobis comendata aut deffenssioni nostre supponita, mobilia aut inmobilia, sacra uel non sacra, rapere uel inuadere aut occupare cum armis uel sine armis presumpsserit per potenciam laycalem'. *Pereda*, doc. 99.
[73] 'algunos ricos ommes e caualleros e otros ommes que compran e compraron heredamientos e casas e vinnas de los vasallos del dicho monesterio e del dicho Ospital... e otros que los an e los ouieron porque casaron con las fiias de los sus vasallos e se llaman fiiosdalgo'. *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc. 146.

course, these passages are filled with the classic tropes of clerical oppression, and it can be difficult to assess how far the nuns exaggerated their grievances. What is clear, though, is that these complaints could lead to a concrete response. Alfonso X, for example, attempted to crack down on the knights and noblemen who seized houses from the bishop of Burgos, arguing that they were part of their *behetrías*.[74]

These complaints suggest two important features of local politics around Burgos. First, that there was considerable anxiety about the coercive force of the lay nobility. Second, that the arbitration of the monarch was an important factor mitigating this pressure. Both these factors are underlined when we examine the immense monetary and strategic value that lay lordships in the proximity of these cities could hold. When, in September 1305, Juana, widow of Rodrigo García de Villamayor and later of *infante* Luis, son of Fernando III, sold all that she possessed in Briviesca, about 23 miles from Burgos, to the abbess of Las Huelgas, its value was 170,000 *maravedís*.[75] The weight of possessions held near the city is also revealed in the case of the Lara family. The Lara collected a variety of incomes from the populations of various municipalities, including those which were relied upon by the major ecclesiastical institutions. The pressure this exerted on the privileges of these competing lordships is demonstrated by their appeals to the king, which resulted in interventions like that of Alfonso XI in 1342, ordering Juan Núñez III de Lara not to demand rents from the vassals of Las Huelgas in various locations in Bureba and Rioja.[76] Similarly, Juana de Lara's lordship of Villafranca Montes de Oca lies roughly 20 miles to the east of Burgos, and had previously belonged to the city council, but was transferred to her by Sancho IV after 1285.[77] The political consequence of Lara landholdings so close to Burgos

[74] *Pereda*, doc. 122.
[75] *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1308, doc. 188.
[76] *Las Huelgas*, 1329-1348, doc. 92.
[77] AMB HI - 93.

was made clear in 1298-9, during the open rebellion of Juan Núñez I de Lara. Seizing the initiative, the city council attacked: as Fernando's regents wrote, 'seeing that it [the Lara rebellion] was a great disservice to us and damaging to our land, they [the council] went to it [Villafranca] with our blessing... and surrounded, attacked and entered it with the force of men, ingenuity and arms'.[78] As a reward, the city of Burgos was granted the lordship in the Cortes of Valladolid.[79] However, in 1301, with the *infante* Enrique and Juan Núñez secure in the king's counsels, Fernando reversed his decision.

Two aspects of local politics thus rise to the surface in this episode, which encapsulate some of this chapter's main arguments about the landed politics of Burgos and Valladolid. One is the striking proximity of grand magnate landholding to the city, leaving it within range of their military power. The second is the contingency of even the greatest lords' landownership on the king's grace. In a region like Burgos, with a heavily fragmented lordship structure, contested claims and overlapping jurisdictions abounded. The ability to secure sanction for machinations to overcome this competition was vital for noble power. We can therefore see how an active land market, the penetration of the nobility in ecclesiastical positions and the licit or illicit gathering of lands into more concentrated blocks all shaped local politics around Burgos and Valladolid. The distinctive dynamics of competition and conflict left some lineages far better placed than others for intervention in some of the period's most significant events in or around these cities.

[78] 'veyendo que era muy grand nuestro desservicio e dano dela nuestra tierra fueron sobrella con nuestro plazer... e cercaron e conbatieronla e entraronla con fuerza de gente e de engenios e de armas'. AMB HI - 129.
[79] J. A. Bonachía Hernando, *El señorío de Burgos durante la baja Edad Media, 1255-1508* (Valladolid, 1988), 34.

The situation in the central regions of Ávila and Cuenca was rather different. The city of Ávila is situated at the heart of the zone that stretches between the Duero basin to the north and the Tajo to the south, and which is intersected by the sweeping *sistema central* mountain range. Formerly a Visigothic stronghold, the city's repopulation dates to the time of *conde* Raimundo (1093-1096).[80] In the following centuries the cathedral amassed substantial lordships through a series of royal and private donations, while the dominions of the *concejo* underwent a process of definition and redefinition.[81] To the southwest a new township was created in Plasencia in 1186, while in 1209 Alfonso VIII separated more land for the establishment of Béjar. To the east, the lands of Segovia shared a long border with those of Ávila.[82] As a result of these multiple long borders, the early history of the *concejo* of Ávila, now occupying a land mass of roughly 3,500 square miles, was dominated by jurisdictional disputes, often mediated by royal confirmations and redrawing of boundaries. These disputes could be extremely drawn-out: for example, Plasencia and Talavera formed an association to resist Ávila's claims as late as 1248.[83] An even greater challenge was posed by depopulation, driven by limited agricultural fertility, instability owing to the possibility of Muslim incursion, and rapid advances to the south which diverted attention and resources.[84]

Cuenca was captured just under a century after Ávila, surrendering to Alfonso VIII in September 1177. The king established his court there for a decade to consolidate his hold over the region, situated 140 miles to the southeast of Ávila.[85] The *concejo* of Cuenca was

[80] Moreno, *Ávila*, 10.
[81] A. Barrios García, *Estructuras agrarias y de poder en Castilla: el ejemplo de Ávila* (Salamanca, 1983), 277-8.
[82] Moreno, *Ávila*, 33.
[83] ibid., 35.
[84] ibid., 49.
[85] M. E. Espoille de Roiz, 'Repoblación de la Tierra de Cuenca, siglos XII a XVI', in *Cuenca y su territorio en la Edad Media* (Madrid, 1982), 205.

entrusted with a substantial landholding as a focal point for repopulation, while the nearby town of Huete was also retained in royal hands. We shall see in the following chapter how the relationship between the *realengo* and conciliar lordship developed towards a more assertive kind of control by the *concejo* over the territory and the king's fiscal rights. Meanwhile, other powers began to establish themselves in the region: the bishopric accumulated lands, as did the military Order of Santiago, with lordships like Moya. Both the Order and other noblemen also received houses in the city.[86] The eastern flank of the region was secured by Fernando III when he obtained Requena, some 65 miles away, from the Muslim ruler of Valencia in 1238-9.[87] Meanwhile, the border with Aragón remained less certain, with the substantial lordship of Molina to the north and lordships like Cañete vulnerable to Aragonese intervention.[88]

Having been conquered somewhat recently, the regions still bore some marks of the attempts to administer large blocks of suddenly acquired territories, most notably the large coterminous *alfoces*, bishoprics and lands of the military orders. The major implication of this was that opportunities for growth and expansion by local elites was limited, while external figures like the archbishop of Toledo in Ávila or the master of the Order of Santiago in Cuenca had significant influence. Cuenca was hemmed in to the south and west by the lands of the Order of Santiago and the possessions of Juan Manuel, more famous for his possessions in Murcia, who held a string of castles from Alcareña to La Mancha, and added Alarcón in 1305.[89] An additional factor in the region's development was depopulation, driven by a combination of the flight of previous Muslim inhabitants, sluggish growth in the

[86] J. M. Sánchez Benito, 'Concejo y sociedad en Cuenca (siglos XIII-XIV)', in García and López, *Relaciones de poder*, 83-102.
[87] T. M. Vann, 'The Matter of the Muslim Captives and the Town of Moya', *Mediterranean Studies*, 6 (1996), 46.
[88] R. I. Burns, *The Crusader Kingdom of Valencia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 4.
[89] de Moxó, 'Los Albornoz', 31.

overall Castilian population, geographical features which limited the fertility of the regions' agricultural land, and the draining effect of the rapid territorial advances to the south.[90] Depopulation certainly caused difficulties for lords in Ávila and Cuenca, but it also provided opportunities for expansion where they had not existed previously. Actions by various parties to counter depopulation resulted in a process of seigneurialisation. In Ávila, Alfonso X first tried to tackle the dwindling population using the most conventional tactic: granting privileges. He exempted towns like Oropesa from a string of royal taxes (except *moneda forera*) in 1274, but this failed to have the desired effect. He then took more drastic measures, giving Oropesa to the military Order of Santa María de España before 1281, and finally in 1286 his son gave it to *infante* Juan. Juan acknowledged the state of the town's population in 1303 when he gave them a privilege 'so that the place can be populated better and more for my service'.[91] The grant of Oropesa was part of a wider pattern of grants to the royal family in Ávila: *infante* Juan had been given Cebreros by Fernando IV in 1301; Violante, daughter of *infante* Manuel, received Madrigal; Alfonso de la Cerda was given Valdecorneja as part of the settlement of 1304; and María de Molina received Arévalo in 1307.[92]

It was not only the highest strata of the nobility who were used to address the issue of depopulation, however. The Dávila lineage rose from humble origins in the *concejo* of Ávila. In 1271, Alfonso X gave to Blasco Gómez, a scribe of his in the city of Ávila, a village near the city which he now called Velada.[93] Blasco was to take the lead in populating this settlement, and he issued its *fuero* and built a new castle.[94] When he died, for lack of

[90] Moreno, *Ávila*, 49.
[91] 'Por que el logar se pueble mejor e más a mis servicio'. ibid., 56.
[92] Barrios, *Estructuras agrarias*, 162.
[93] The relevant documents from Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Sección de Manuscritos, núm. 13.124 have been published in the documentary appendix to Moreno, *Los Dávila*, 169-72.
[94] Moreno, *Ávila*, 57-8.

heirs the village passed to his brother, Velasco Velázquez, in 1274. Velasco Velázquez was a royal judge, and as a result of this position he had also received grants from Alfonso X, including Guadamora in 1275 and six further villages in 1276, before Sancho IV continued this pattern with the grant of Salobroso in 1288.[95] On top of all this royal liberality, Velasco Velázquez extended his patrimony with a total of 52 purchases in 1284-1302, all concentrated in his lordships, at a cost of 12,471 *maravedís*.[96] Most of these took place after he had become the dean of the cathedral of Ávila in 1297.

A particularly unusual and interesting feature of the landed politics of Ávila, however, was the role of the town council itself in establishing local lordships for the purpose of repopulation. In November 1276, the *concejo* gave the villages of Navamorcuende and Cardiel to another member of the Dávila lineage, Blasco Jiménez. In the document conferring this benefit, they state that they did this because of the service he had done for them in Beaucaire. Hilda Grassotti has convincingly surmised that their gratitude stemmed from the fact that he had been sent on a mission to the Occitan city to bring the council's appeal against the cathedral chapter before Alfonso X.[97] Later, on 1 February 1283, the *concejo* took the initiative again, giving San Adrián to Velasco Velázquez. This time, they stated that they were doing so to thank Velasco for the goods they had received from him and *infante* Sancho, and because he had given them property in Ribera de Tormes. [98]

In Cuenca, meanwhile, local lineages benefited from the start provided by royal patronage. In 1298, Fernando IV's government allowed Alfonso Ruiz Carrillo, a royal vassal, to collect

[95] ibid., 59-60.
[96] Barrios, *Documentos de la catedral*, docs. 121-9; 132-5; 137; 140, 142, 144. See Moreno, 'Los Dávila', 164, n. 43.
[97] H. Grassotti, 'Un abulense en Beaucaire', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, XLIII (1967), 146-8.
[98] Moreno, *Los Dávila*, doc. 4. See also C. Sánchez-Albornoz, 'Señoríos y ciudades', *Anuario de historia del derecho español*, 6 (1929), 460-2.

a set of incomes in Priego de Escabas, 27 miles to the north of Cuenca.[99] In line with the pattern traced above, Carrillo managed to turn this time-limited grant into a heritable right for his son, Juan Alfonso Carrillo, as Fernando IV confirmed to Juan's uncle in 1302.[100] This formed a nucleus for Juan Alfonso Carrillo to carry out a significant expansion, gathering lands, properties and rights of jurisdiction which he put into *mayorazgo* (tail male) for his son, Juan Ruiz Carrillo, in July 1341.[101] Juan Ruiz also appears to have gathered some rights beyond La Mancha: in the mid-fourteenth century, his sons were recorded as sharing in the incomes of Ruy González de Castañeda's *behetría* of Vertavillo, near Palencia.[102] The Carrillo were not the only local lords to increase their landholding around Cuenca in the first half of the fourteenth century. The Albornoz lineage descended from a secondary branch of the house of Aza, with Gómez García receiving the village of Albornoz, 35 miles southwest of the city of Cuenca, following its conquest.[103] Little is known about his descendants until García Álvarez de Albornoz appears in the records of the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Then, we find García making strategic expansions in the north of the region, away from the firm grip of Santiago and Juan Manuel, securing through an agreement with the cathedral of Cuenca various incomes from salt mines in Valsalobre and Beamud, while he also purchased land in Sotoca.[104] By the time of his death, he had a band of properties in the northern mountains of Cuenca, including Uña, Ribagorda, Portilla, Valdemeca and Valdecabras.[105] We lack detail as to how exactly he secured these possessions, but the first and last are particularly noteworthy: Uña had been the property of the *concejo* of Cuenca as late as 1282, while on the same date Valdecabras was held in

[99] Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza, PRIEGO, C.1, D.1-2.
[100] Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza, PRIEGO, C.1, D.3.
[101] M. C. Quintanilla Raso, 'El condado de Priego de Cuenca. Un ejemplo de estrategía señorial en la Baja Edad Media castellana', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 19 (1992), 382.
[102] *LBB*, I. 41.
[103] de Moxó, 'Los Albornoz', 21-22.
[104] ibid., 31.
[105] ibid., 32.

tenancy by *infante* Manuel.[106] In addition, he and his son did homage to the Order of Santiago for the castle of Huélamo, located very close to his other lordships north of Cuenca, which they would hold for their lives.[107]

The late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries thus saw a gradual hardening of landed power by low-ranking local lords in Cuenca and Ávila, involving the transfer of *realengo* lands, *concejo* territories and tenancies into the hereditary possession of nascent lineages. The rhythms of local political interaction were therefore substantially different from what we observed further north. There was a less active land market between major noble families; rather, the challenge was to manipulate influence in the cities and links with the crown to secure hereditary lordships from royal grants or from the town councils who by now took it upon themselves to distribute pockets of *realengo*. At the same time, there were major players in the region, especially *infantes* and military orders, who could provide alternative opportunities or assert themselves over the town councils at critical moments.

Turning to our final case study, Murcia was the name given both to a large city and the surrounding kingdom, whose boundaries stretched from Andalucía to the Mediterranean Sea, with Granada to the south-west and borders with Aragón to the east.[108] The crown of Aragón was bound to have a significant influence, not only owing to its proximity but to its involvement from the beginning as a partner in conquest. Indeed, when the Muslim population rebelled in 1264, it was Jaime II of Aragón who carried out the decisive action

[106] F. Antonio Chacón Gómez-Monedero, *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Cuenca, 1190-1417* (Cuenca, 1998), doc. 22.
[107] AHN, Uclés, carp. 151, núm. 4.
[108] F. Calvo García-Tornel, 'Política y Geografía: la delimitación del Reino de Murcia en la Edad Media', in *Homenaje al profesor Juan Torres Fontes* (Murcia, 1987), 196-8.

required to restore order. As Juan Torres Fontes has shown, the conquest of Murcia was followed by a confused process of integration into the crown of Castile. The Castilians had taken over a mosaic of lordships, where Ibn Hud had ruled as king from Murcia without the recognition of every individual territorial chief. The two main conditions of the treaty of Alcaraz of 1243 were: the handing over to the new rulers of a proportion of lordship revenues and, most importantly, the handing over of major fortresses. As a result, in one moment the future Alfonso X suddenly possessed multiple castles in a newly conquered territory that was not entirely subdued, with the key nuclei of Mula, Cartagena and Lorca yet to submit. The solution to this urgent defensive situation was tenancies entrusted to the principal figures of his invading army.[109] However, Alfonso soon changed tack, and within a year abandoned using tenancies to administer Murcia. Instead, from 1244 he issued a large number of hereditary grants, many of which straightforwardly converted the tenancies of 1243 into *solariego* lordships.[110] Nonetheless, this simple conversion was not the end of the complex management of landed interest in Murcia. It is most revealing to trace the fortunes of some these properties through the later decades.

The single most striking feature of the development of the political geography of the region of Murcia is that properties so often ended up in the control of Juan Manuel, the son of Alfonso X's youngest brother, Manuel. In many cases, this took place following grants made by Alfonso X to Manuel. It began with a string of lands created for Manuel for his marriage to Constanza of Aragon, which Kinkade dates to 1256.[111] The most significant of these was Villena, which had in 1243 been held on the king's behalf by the tenant Rodrigo Pérez

[109] J. Torres Fontes, 'Del tratado de Alcaraz al de Almizra. De la tenencia al señorío (1243-1244)', *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana*, 19 (1995), 282, n. 1.
[110] ibid., 286-90.
[111] Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 54.

Pons.[112] Other former tenancies were soon in Manuel's hands: Elche, for example, had in 1243 been entrusted to the tenant Rodrigo González Girón, but in the same year it was donated to Beatriz, Alfonso's sister.[113] In 1266, Elche was given as a hereditary lordship to Manuel by Alfonso X, along with Crevillente, the valley of Elda, and Aspe.[114] Crevillente had been a tenancy of Juan Alfonso de Meneses, before being given to the Order of Santiago by Alfonso X in 1255 (along with Meneses' other tenancy, Callosa).[115] At some point before 1280 Manuel also received Hellín and Iso, which had been made tenancies of Gonzalo Yáñez de Oviñal after the conquest. Manuel was also the beneficiary of Monforte and Novelda, both of which had initially been held in tenancy by the bishop of Cuenca before Alfonso X took them back in 1254.[116]

Another interesting example is Jorquera. Initially it was a tenancy held by Pedro Núñez de Guzmán before, according to Torres Fontes, he managed to convert it into his own lordship.[117] Even if he did, Pedro Núñez did not succeed entirely in siphoning the lordship from the *realengo* since, in 1282, Jorquera was among the lordships conveyed to *infante* Manuel by *infante* Sancho at the start of his rebellion against Alfonso X. At the same time, according to the chronicler, Sancho also gave Chinchilla, Almansa, Aspe and Ves to his uncle.[118] Chinchilla is an interesting case, because, having initially been a royal tenancy held by Pedro de Guzmán and his brother, it swore allegiance in 1281 to *infante* Sancho and asked him to intercede with Alfonso X.[119] Almansa and Ves were similarly convenient gifts for the rebellious Sancho to give to Manuel, since they had remained part of the *realengo*

[112] Torres, 'Del tratado de Alcaraz', 290.
[113] ibid., 289.
[114] Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 95; Note that, following Ballesteros, *CODOM III*, doc. 62, mistakenly reports the date as 1262.
[115] ibid., doc. 21.
[116] *CODOM II*, doc. 80.
[117] Torres, 'Del tratado de Alcaraz', 290.
[118] *CAX*, 61; Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 244.
[119] *CODOM II*, doc. 77.

and therefore he was harming no one but his father.[120] Aspe had, according to the *Crónica de Ramon Muntaner*, composed around 1325, already been given to Manuel in 1266 after Jaime I restored order to Murcia following the Mudéjar rebellion.[121] We have clear evidence that Manuel's son inherited Chinchilla, Jorquera, Almansa and Ves, with each these places pledging fealty to him in 1306.[122] Aspe, meanwhile, was more difficult, with Juan Manuel appearing to lose it to the king of Aragón, claiming only residual rights of income collection in 1297.[123] In all this, it is clear that Juan Manuel's position as a cadet of the royal family was a decisive factor in the unusual concentration of lordships in Murcia.

Clearly, the inexorable gravitation of the fortresses of Murcia from tenancies into the permanent grasp of Manuel and his descendants made it difficult for others to establish footholds in the region. Some did manage to secure lordships that would provide them with a degree of regional influence: Garci Jufre de Loaysa, for example, was given Alfonso Téllez de Meneses' former lordship of Jumilla in 1281, while the Order of San Juan received Archena from Alfonso in 1244, shortly after it had been entrusted to the tenancy of Rodrigo López de Mendoza.[124] A more significant presence was the military Order of Santiago, which was well established around a base in Segura.[125] As the initial tenancies of the 1240s crystallised into more permanent lordships in the subsequent decades, the Order was in a position to benefit. This was especially true when both *infante* Sancho and Alfonso X courted the Order's support in their emerging dispute over the succession. In March 1281, Sancho was prepared to go further than his father to impress the Order's leadership. He

[120] Alfonso X gave *fueros* and estates to Almansa in 1262 and 1264 and a *fuero* to Ves in 1272. See *CODOM III*, docs. 61-2, 64; Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 139.
[121] ibid., 111.
[122] Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, r. 192, ff. 54-64; *Juan Manuel*, docs. 223 and 85.
[123] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 12.
[124] Torres, 'Del tratado de Alcaraz', 288-9.
[125] ibid., 282 n. 2.

promised to give them the Valle de Ricote, 16 miles northwest of the city of Murcia, along with a string of villages, including: Calasparra, a former tenancy of Diego Alfonso de Rojas; Alhama, previously a tenancy of Juan García de Villamayor; Negra; Abarán; Ojos, and Ruelda de la Losilla.[126] A month later, Alfonso X responded with action rather than promises, though he was more circumspect, giving the Order of Santiago the fortress of Cieza, in exchange for the close-by property of Abanilla.[127] This important contest for the loyalty of the Order thus played out in the context of the conversion of Murcian tenancies into permanent alienations of crown land. In the end, Sancho's promises proved more attractive, and the master of Santiago was a key figure in the rebellion, aiding the formation of coalitions against the king in 1282.[128]

When finally king and in a position to fulfil his extravagant promises, however, Sancho IV was more parsimonious. For one thing, Alfonso X had directly countered his promise to give Cieza, issuing a document to the village's council in January 1283 which pledged 'that they shall be royal, and they shall never belong to the Order of Uclés [the headquarters of the Order of Santiago]'.[129] In November 1285, Sancho did give Santiago the Valle de Ricote, but only with Ruelda de la Losilla, and he was less precise than before about the rights associated with these properties.[130] Alhama, meanwhile, was given by Fernando IV's government to the *concejo* of Lorca in 1299 and then the church of Cartagena in 1311.[131] From these transactions it is clear that the king's grace was a decisive factor in the

[126] AHN, Uclés, carp. 293, núm. 1.
[127] AHN, Uclés, carp. 90, núm. 2.
[128] With Segovia, AHN Uclés carp. 260, núm. 10; Madrid, AHN Uclés carp. 260, núm. 11; Toledo, AHN Uclés carp. 326, núm. 30; and the noblemen and prelates of Galicia and León, AHN Uclés, carp. 16, núm. 12.
[129] 'que sean reales et que nunqua sean de la horden de Hucles'. *CODOM III*, doc. 155. Later, in 1330, the master of Santiago came to an agreement with the bishop of Cartagena regarding the division of tithes in Cieza. See *CODOM* XIII,, doc. 12.
[130] AHN, Uclés, carp. 293, núm. 2.
[131] *CODOM V*, docs. 24, 100.

reshuffling of the lordships in Murcia, and, moreover, that powers like the Order of Santiago only occasionally found themselves in a position of sufficient leverage to benefit. Once their support was less decisive than it seemed during the rebellion the Order was liable to be overlooked. Indeed, in a final blow to the church of Cartagena, Juan Manuel managed to convince Alfonso XI to give him stewardship over the castle of Alhama in 1326, despite the fact that his own deputy in the office of *adelantado mayor* had confirmed the right of Cartagena's clerics over that property in 1312.[132]

We can therefore trace a marked transition from temporary and widespread sharing of defensive duties in Murcia to the gathering of heritable lordships into a few hands, especially those of *infante* Manuel and later his son, Juan Manuel. There was, however, one very significant rupture in this linear process, which reflected Murcia's distinctiveness. In 1296, with Castile left directionless owing to the minority of Fernando IV, Jaime II of Aragon seized the opportunity he saw to redistribute the lordships of Murcia in his favour.[133] As Kinkade has shown, there was a latent attitude in Aragón that Jaime I's aid in suppressing the Mudéjar rebellion and the absence of Castilian stakeholders at critical moments had left the subsequent restoration of Castilian power over Murcia conditional on the goodwill of the Aragonese monarch.[134] Whereas the Castilian narrative is unequivocal in describing the events of 1296 as an invasion, for Ramon Muntaner, the territory claimed by Jaime II when he invaded in 1296 was rightfully his owing to his grandfather's heroics during the uprising.[135] In the end, the entirety of the region of Murcia was subjected to Aragonese rule apart from Lorca, Alcala and Mula.

[132] *CODOM XIII*, docs. 4, 9.
[133] J. Torres Fontes, 'El concejo de Murcia en la Edad Media', in *Concejos y ciudades en la Edad Media Hispánica* (Ávila, 1990), 211.
[134] Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 111-2.
[135] *CFIV*, 103; Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 111-2.

When Fernando IV had reached adulthood and restored a semblance of order to Castile, he was able to force a settlement with Jaime II. The case was put to arbitration, and on 8 August 1304 the king of Portugal, *infante* Juan and the bishop of Zaragoza gave their judgement at Torrellas. They divided the region in two along the river Segura, with Alicante, Elche, Elda, Novelda and Orihuela retained by Jaime II. Somewhat strangely, Cartagena, far south of the Segura, was also adjudicated to Aragon, perhaps because of its attractive port. Villena would belong to Juan Manuel but Jaime retained overlordship. At the same time, the de la Cerda brothers publicly renounced their claim to the Castilian throne, and in return were endowed with properties scattered across León and Castile. Fernando IV was left with Murcia, Molina de Segura, Monteagudo, Lorca and Alhama.[136] The agreement was soon found to be untenable and was adjusted at Elche in May 1305: the frontier was moved between Caudete, on the Aragonese side, and Almansa and Pechín, belonging to Castile. The anomaly of Cartagena was also resolved, with Jaime II giving it up partly in acknowledgement of the unworkable nature of the prior agreement, and partly because Fernando IV now compensated Jaime's ally Juan Manuel with Alarcón, a substantial lordship further north in the region of Cuenca.[137]

The events of 1296-1304 and the subsequent arbitration are most important for our understanding of the relationship between land and power in this case study. Not only did they reshape the political geography of the region of Murcia, but they adjusted calculations about the relationship between local power and royal oversight. On one level, the invasion destabilised the connection between the Castilian king's grace and noble power in Murcia.

[136] González Mínguez, *Fernando IV*, 183.
[137] ibid., 199-200.

Now, the division of property relied much more on a balance of power between Castile and Aragón. Indeed, the impact of Jaime II's intervention continued to be felt long after 1304. Juan Manuel had to accept micro-management in some of his lordships from a monarch used to more assertive kingship. He appealed to Jaime II about how to set the boundaries between different lordships, for example between Almansa and Ayora in 1306 and between Sax and Elda in 1314.[138] Directions from the Aragonese overlord could have a specificity rarely seen when Fernando IV had overlordship. For example, in 1308 Juan Manuel responded to a request from Jaime II that he fortify Villena, stating that he had looked into it and asking for the assistance of a certain master of works in Valencia.[139]

Jaime II's desire to understand and exploit his rights in Murcia to the full is demonstrated by a fascinating document written either in 1313 or 1314. In it, Jaime II wrote to his vassal Pedro Garcez de Castellón:

> 'You already know that Villena and the other places of don Juan, son of the departed *infante* don Manuel, are in our jurisdiction and lordship. And we desire to know how we should use our jurisdiction in the said places... And so we order you to speak secretly with the queen doña Maria and to certify with her what right of jurisdiction the king of Castile has... and how they used to use their jurisdiction in Villena'.[140]

This document is extremely revealing. On one level, it confirms the impression of Jaime II as an engaged monarch who expected detailed information about his rights. At the same time, his uncertainty reveals the complexity of lordship in the region of Murcia. It was unclear even to those who negotiated the settlements how the differing patterns of Aragonese and Castilian kingship would overlay onto territories that changed hands multiple times.

[138] *Juan Manuel*, docs. 146, 311.
[139] ibid., doc. 177.
[140] 'Ya sabedes en como Villena e otros lugares de don Johan fijo que fue del infante don Manuel son en nuestra jurisdiccion e senyoria. E nos queremos saber en qual manera devemos usar de jurisdiccion en los ditos lugares... mandamos que uos que secretamente fauledes con la Reyna donna Maria e vos certifiquedes con ella que dreyto de jurisdiccion auie el rey de Castilla... et como ende usaban de jurisdiccion en Villena'. ibid., doc. 300.

Indeed, it was this fundamental uncertainty that left Juan Manuel able to make such extravagant claims in the *Libro de las Armas*, in which he set out his justifications for his unusual ability to dub knights.[141] All these features suggest a distinctive tenor to the rules of political engagement in Murcia: the situation following the conquest had tended towards a concentration of power, only to be destabilised by the influence of Aragón.

In our survey of lordship across our three case studies, we have seen how the different histories, geographies and power groups of each region led to distinct patterns of landholding. The level of fragmentation and congestion of land in Burgos and Valladolid, with multiple old, powerful families rubbing shoulders within easy reach of major cities and ecclesiastical institutions was different from that of Cuenca and Ávila, where opportunities on the margins of large *concejos* and military orders were exploited by newer powers. The kinds of compact, continuous lordships passed down through generations by the Dávila, Carrillo and Albornoz simply could not be replicated in the north, where instead advantage had to be sought by asserting rights in *behetrías* along with judicious activity on the land market. Murcia was different again: the instability of the Castilian hold over the region led to a striking predominance of a few major powers, above all the Manuel. Common to each region, however, was a marked tendency for unstable forms of lordship and especially royal tenancies to become incorporated into patrimonial landholdings, and for passing land to heirs to reach levels previously unknown in Castilian history. These similarities and differences in landholding beg the question of how different patterns would affect political interaction among noblemen, both with each other and with political centres of various kinds; this is where our analysis now turns.

[141] J. M. Blecua (ed.), *Juan Manuel: Obras completas* (Madrid, 1982), I, 133.

Case Studies: Networks

Analysis of networks has long been a fundamental part of the study of aristocratic power and has gained momentum in recent decades.[142] Much work has been done along these lines for individuals and family groups in Castile.[143] The value of our comparative perspective, however, is that it allows us to ask how the local landed situation affected the construction and influence of these networks. By networks we can understand a system of connections, both vertical and horizontal, formed between a lord and other individuals that could lead to a political outcome, whether through obligation, indebtedness, or willing cooperation. There was a whole spectrum of potential benefits that might arise from a network of allies, including direct military or financial assistance, vocal solidarity, neutrality or silence at key moments, or even just the wider prestige associated with having many followers or particularly eminent ones.

Our efforts at reconstructing a full picture of noble networks encounter the familiar difficulties of source material. Even estimates about the size of affinities are problematic. One metric to judge the scale of networks is comment by chroniclers. According to the mid-thirteenth-century chronicler Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, Gutierre Fernández de Castro elevated as many as 500 of his followers to knighthood, though here of course we encounter the notorious problem of numbers in chronicle sources.[144] When Juan Núñez de Lara and

[142] M. Mullett, 'Power, Relations and Networks in Medieval Europe. Introduction', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83 (2005), 255-9.
[143] Barton, *The Aristocracy*; Álvarez, *Ascenso social*; Doubleday, *The Lara Family*; Sánchez, *Los Lara*; Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*.
[144] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 48.

Lope Díaz de Haro made pacts of vassalage with Philip III of France in 1277 and 1281, they promised to serve him with 300 knights, in exchange for a pension of 14,000 *livres*. At the same time, Nuño González de Lara promised 106 knights, and Pedro Ponce de León 60.[145] A somewhat different picture of the kinds of manpower mobilised at any one time is given by entries in the register of the Aragonese crown for 1308. At a meeting between Fernando IV and Jaime II, the number of attendants is recorded for each of the major attendees: Fernando IV had 14, *infante* Pedro 11, *infante* Juan 10, *infante* Felipe 4, Diego López de Haro 8, and Juan Manuel only 4. The numbers are swelled only slightly when we include the minor servants.[146] From the correspondence of Juan Manuel, Hilda Grassotti has counted 31 named vassals; there were presumably many more.[147] We might proceed on the understanding that major lords had a manageable group of dependents for everyday administration and key missions, but that their resources and influence could result in their amassing decisive groups in moments of special need.

Our purpose here is to analyse the connections between the regional landed situation in our various case studies and the kinds of political network that could develop, and under what circumstances these networks could be energised. This is by no means to deny that some of the most important alliances were crystallised through means less explicitly linked to land, above all marriage. Jular has demonstrated just how effective this could be in the case of the links between the Velasco, Carrillo and Sarmiento lineages, but her analysis also shows how strategic management of royal rights and *prestamerías* (loans of lordship that worked much like tenancies) was also important.[148] However, as the processes we have seen so far in this

[145] Grassotti, *Las instituciones feudo-vasalláticas*, 337.
[146] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 190.
[147] Grassotti, *Las instituciones feudo-vasalláticas*, 338.
[148] C. Jular Pérez-Alfaro, 'Familia y clientela en dominios de behetría a mediados del siglo XIV', in *Familia, parentesco y linaje. Historia de la familia, una nueva perspectiva sobre la sociedad europea*, ed. J. Casey and J. Hernández (Murcia, 1997), 68-73.

chapter took hold, with tenancies giving way to more rigid forms of lordship, albeit in an atmosphere of intense competition, one might expect long-term changes in the territorial behaviour and power of the nobility to influence the formation of their networks.

The most straightforward place to begin is with the more modest lords finding their feet around Cuenca and Ávila. The process of territorial consolidation carried out by the Albornoz afforded them a role in the politics of the region. García Álvarez de Albornoz appears in a *fazaña* (a legal judgement that could be cited as precedent) from between 1319 and 1325: in it, he is found assisting Sancho Manuel, Juan Manuel's half-brother, in capturing the castle of Atienza (near García's patrimonies) from the tenant of *infante* Felipe.[149] The power built up by the Albornoz lineage thus made García Álvarez strategically useful to Sancho Manuel, and able to wield non-trivial coercive power against a dependent of a member of the royal family. Very soon after reaching his majority, Alfonso XI was himself to capitalise on the strategic position of the Albornoz. In 1328, when Juan Manuel rebelled and besieged Huete, the king drew on the local support of García's sons, Alvar García and Fernán Gómez, who joined with troops from the *concejo* of Cuenca and Pedro López de Ayala and 'stole and took whatever they could from the land of don Juan'. The chronicler explains that this took advantage of the fact that Juan Manuel had brought all his men with him to Huete, leaving him undefended elsewhere.[150] The hereditary landed power which the Albornoz had amassed, deployed over a modest area near Cuenca but nonetheless compact and coterminous, made them useful in local politics as a counterweight to troublesome enemies.

[149] F. Suárez, 'La colección de "fazañas" del MS. 431 de la biblioteca nacional', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 14 (1942), 586.
[150] 'robaban et tomaban de la tierra de don Joan todo lo que podian aver'. *CAXI*, 212.

The Dávila similarly had sufficient influence to be drawn into regnal politics during moments of crisis. Sancho Blázquez Dávila, son of the first lord of Navamorcuende-Cardiel, became bishop of Ávila in 1312. From this position he was named *notario mayor del reino* by María de Molina.[151] Just as with the Albornoz, the loyalty of these small-time lords was decidedly flexible. During Alfonso XI's minority, the Dávila lineage found themselves divided by Juan Manuel's bid to be recognised as the king's tutor. The bishop strove with Queen María to prevent this, but Juan Manuel counted his brother, Fernán Blázquez, among his vassals, and the latter conspired to hand Ávila over to his master because he was tenant of the royal castle in the city at that time. Juan Manuel's plan worked, and Ávila joined the list of *concejos* recognising Juan Manuel as tutor.[152] The landed situation of Cuenca and Ávila thus produced similar effects in network-building: since opportunities for expansion relied on royal service and grace, it is no surprise that royals expected to draw on these power bases at critical moments, but by the same token the strategic location of these dense lordships made them obvious targets for the patronage of other lords, especially when the *concejos* and their surroundings became such a flashpoint in the contests over the tutorship.

By now it should be no surprise that northern networks bore only slight resemblance to this pattern, given the greater number of players in the congested corridor between Burgos and Valladolid. Here, connections can be seen emerging through the active land market: witnesses, while sharing in *behetrías*, also had the potential to align interests and generate solidarities with the potential for political resonance. The documentation of Burgos and Valladolid reveals a dense network of political associations. Taking the Rojas family as an

[151] Sobrino, *Documentos de la catedral*, doc. 84.
[152] *CAXI*,185.

example, potential connections established through their extensive landholding are revealed in the sale of the patrimony possessed by Juana Gómez in Briviesca to Las Huelgas in 1305. Juan Rodríguez de Rojas had previously possessed the town, having bought it from Ruy González de Manzanedo, before selling it on to María de Molina in 1301.[153] Despite the Rojas properties having ostensibly been sold in Briviesca, the lineage clearly still held some symbolic or material power there, since Ruy Fernández de Rojas was called to witness Las Huelgas' acquisition of Juana Gómez's property in 1305. Ruy Fernández is among a long list of important names: Rodrigo Álvarez de Aza, Juan Pérez de Castañeda, Ruy Gutiérrez de Sandoval and Gonzalo Ruiz de Villegas all bore witness to this significant exchange.[154] The link with the Sandoval family is further confirmed by the 1318 sale of Cayuela by Nuño Pérez de Rojas to Día Gómez de Sandoval.[155] Of course, the presence of the former holders of Briviesca at its sale could well be prudential, something like an English quitclaim, with the Rojas renouncing their claim to prevent future challenge.[156] Even despite this, the frequency with which nobles in this region appeared to confirm one another's documents is striking and merits further investigation.

Another example of the connections drawn to the Rojas was the Torquemada lineage.[157] Confirmation of the powerful friends that the Torquemada had found is revealed in an interesting document, dated 25 August 1319. In it, Juan Rodríguez de Rojas and Juan Rodríguez de Torquemada obtained consent from the abbess of Las Huelgas to bury their lord, the *infante* Pedro, in the *capilla mayor* of that house. They claimed to do so with 'many other knights and squires, vassals of the said lord'.[158] This represents a significant rise for a

[153] *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc. 144.
[154] ibid., doc. 188.
[155] *Las Huelgas*, 1307-1321, doc. 326.
[156] P. Beal, *A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology 1450–2000* (Oxford, 2008), 331.
[157] The connections analysed here are in addition to those discussed in Álvarez, *Ascenso social*, 107, 130.
[158] 'otros muchos caualleros e escuderos, vasallos del dicho sennor'. *Las Huelgas*, 1307-1321, doc. 358.

family group which, though emerging early in the documentation, at first acted on a restricted level. Members of the family were involved in royal service, and Gonzalo García de Torquemada was rewarded with lands and houses in Seville by Alfonso X.[159] In 1257, Gonzalo García de Torquemada and his wife established a chapel in the monastery of Tórtoles, while María Díaz de Torquemada, widow of Lope García, sold a small amount of land to Las Huelgas in 1267.[160] By the end of the thirteenth century, however, we find the Torquemada involving themselves in much more significant business, having built up their patrimony and allied themselves to powerful local figures. In July 1318, Rodrigo González de Torquemada and Alvar López de Torquemada joined with Pedro Ruiz Carrillo and Nuño Pérez de Rojas to sell all the goods and rights which they possessed in Castil de Peones and Revillagodos, both close to Burgos, for 4,000 *maravedís*.[161]

Predictably, the Lara, given their landholdings north of the Duero, also engaged in the negotiation of power in Burgos.[162] The documentation attests to a tangle of relationships which, taken together, reveal the extent of their influence in Burgos and Valladolid. In 1298, for example, Juan Núñez II de Lara transferred lands in Abia de las Torres and Villatut to his *mayordomo*, Fernando Gutiérrez, in recompense for his services. The witness list contains representatives from a large number of intermediate landlords, each of whom clearly sought to use the might of the Lara to their own advantage, including Alvar Núñez de Aza, Fernán Pérez de Valverde, Ruy Gutiérrez de Sandoval and Ruy Fernández de Tovar.[163] There is good reason to believe that this list sees the marshalling of a network of Lara dependents, since members of the Valverde and Sandoval families are named among

[159] AHN, OO. MM. *Calatrava, Registro de Escrituras*,Vol. III, núm. 66, f. 37v.
[160] *Pereda*, doc. 33; Las Huelgas, 1263-1283, doc. 557.
[161] *Las Huelgas*, 1307-1321, doc. 327.
[162] Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 90.
[163] *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc. 129.

those who were killed fighting for Juan Núñez at Alfaro a year later in Loaysa's chronicle.[164] These were varied connections, which extended Lara influence widely: the Tovar, for example, were rising to prominence among the urban oligarchy of Valladolid, reminding us that both urban and rural spaces of power were permeable noble interests.[165]

The gravitational pull of the Lara also exerted its influence over middling lineages through their involvement in *behetría* lordships. The Carrillo lineage is a clear example of this. The Carillo had established horizontal relationships around Burgos with lords of similar standing, such as in 1270, when Juan Alfonso Carrillo acted as guarantor of Rodrigo Rodríguez de Saldaña's sale of Bañuelos de Bureba to Las Huelgas.[166] At the same time, however, their sights were set higher up the social scale. We find numerous references to the Carrillo family 'n the witness lists and sales activity of the Torquemada and Rojas lineages, and in 1322 they were able to call upon the illustrious figure of Diego López de Haro as a guarantor, when Pedro Ruíz Carrillo sold property in Cayuela, roughly 8 miles south-west of Burgos, to Diego Gómez de Sandoval.[167] However, the weight of the Lara is revealed by the *Libro becerro de las behetrías* (henceforth *LBB*), a survey of lordships in northern Castile compiled after 1351.[168] The *LBB* records 39 references to Carrillo rights (excluding 5 that were clearly acquired later through marriage or royal grace).[169] Of these, 11 were individual lordships and a further 7 were *behetrías* in which the Lara were not involved. This leaves 20 lordships in which both the descendants of Juan Núñez de Lara and the Carrillo were entitled to collect incomes and participate in the jurisdiction of various

[164] Loaysa, *Crónica*, 184.
[165] Rucquoi, *Valladolid*, 140-1.
[166] APR, Pergamino 936 (previously Caja 3062, núm. 8).
[167] *Las Huelgas*, 1322-1328, doc. 367.
[168] *LBB*, I, 16, 73.
[169] ibid., XIV.128, XV.65, XV.73, XV.76, XII.70.

behetrías.[170] That these shared lordships could be energised into active political cooperation is suggested by the fact that a member of the Carrillo lineage, Lope Alfonso, died fighting for Juan Núñez in 1298.[171]

It is clear, then, that certain patterns of interaction emerged in Burgos and Valladolid owing to the types of landed power exercised in their vicinity. Proximity to the major cities and one another caused noblemen to make contact in a variety of ways, witnessing one another's documents, collaborating in religious patronage, and sharing rights through *behetrías*. There are major questions as to how rigid these networks could be: certainly, sharing a significant proportion of one's lordly revenues with another dominant family could disincentivise provoking a major conflict with them, but the context of competition and potential disputes over the controlling stake in *behetrías* might lead to enmity just as easily. We shall see as we turn to the chronological developments of 1275-1325 both how these networks could energise very rapidly and how they could dissolve into fluid loyalties. The role of the crown was also significant in its potential to provide alternatives to noble networks near the centres of Burgos and Valladolid: many of the second-rank families discussed here were well known for royal service, as we shall see in Chapter 3. For now, however, we can shed further light on the nature of these networks by comparing them with our final case study.

The foregoing leaves us little reason to suspect that the types of networks amassed would work in the same way in Murcia as those in the time-worn, fragmented north. Tantalisingly, in fact, a singular document from early in the Castilian occupation suggests that the networks

[170] *CFIV*, 107.
[171] Loaysa, *Crónica*, 184.

that coalesced around land transactions might have taken off in Murcia at the stage when multiple different lineages were being entrusted with tenancies to administer the region. In October 1260, Pedro de Guzmán, *adelantado mayor* of Castile, gave a modest income of 50 *maravedís* from the mills of Murcia to the monastery of Santa María de Alcocer. He brought his brother Nuño with him as a witness, but he also called upon some other notable figures: Pedro Ruiz Manrique and García López de Torquemada.[172] This is only an isolated incident and it would be rash to push it too far, but it is tempting to think that these lords were replicating familiar practices in the newly conquered territory. However, these connections were bound to diminish once their tenancies had been replaced by patrilineal holdings for *infante* Manuel.

Throughout his life Manuel maintained a network of supporters of varying kinds. As Alfonso X's most loyal brother he spent significant amounts of time at court, providing ample opportunity for strategic alliances and connections, not all of which had their main landholding base in Murcia or were especially dependent on Manuel's patronage. Manuel's *ayo* (guardian) was Pedro López de Ayala, lord of a string of villages in Vizcaya and near Burgos, notably Pampliega, Villalmuño, Mahamud and Campo de Muño. He had participated in the conquest of Baeza in 1227 and been rewarded with property there in 1232. Likewise, he was given property in Tudela and 1237 and in the partition of Seville in 1253.[173] The Ayala lineage remained closely connected to *infante* Manuel: Pedro's grandson, Juan Sánchez de Ayala, was Manuel's *mayordomo* when he died in 1283. Another of *infante* Manuel's closest connections was Alfonso García de Villamayor, the brother of Juan García, *mayordomo* of Alfonso X. Alfonso García had been a major figure in the governance of

[172] *CODOM II*, doc. 109.
[173] Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 11-13.

Murcia since its conquest, initially receiving the tenancy of Alhama before acting as the kingdom's first *adelantado mayor* in 1258-72.[174] In addition, by 1272 *infante* Manuel was a lay brother of the military order of Santiago and a close friend of its master, Pelay Pérez Correa.[175]

However, when *infante* Manuel died on Christmas Day 1283, his heir was just nineteen months old. By the time Juan Manuel had grown up, his affinity was bound to be rather different. Not only had significant amount of time passed, but he was less closely linked to the royal court in his adolescence than his father had been. There were some signs of continuity: Manuel's physician, don Zag, went on to serve both Sancho IV and Juan Manuel in the same capacity.[176] Juan Sánchez de Ayala was one of the closest allies of Juan Manuel during his minority, first as *adelantado mayor* of Murcia and then *mayordomo mayor* until his death In 1306. Juan Sánchez de Ayala's brother was Pedro López de Ayala, who became *alférez mayor* for Juan Manuel and *adelantado mayor* of Murcia for Juan Manuel in 1309. Juan Manuel's correspondence is full of instructions to Pedro López on all kinds of matters of both regnal and local significance.[177] Otherwise, Juan Manuel does not seem to have made much effort to cultivate continuity from his father's network, and nor was he especially interested in intimate connections with the major families of the north. He was deprived of ongoing collaboration with the Villamayor in the south by the extinction of Alfonso García's line; he had nothing to do with the descendants of Diego Sánchez de Bustamente, who had served as deputy for Manuel as *adelantado mayor* of Murcia in 1280 (they instead gravitated towards royal service and northern connections);[178] and he even ended up in conflict with

[174] ibid., 260-1.
[175] ibid., 154.
[176] ibid., 208; Blecua, *Obras completas*, 155.
[177] E.g. *Juan Manuel*, docs. 3, 19, 91, 155.
[178] B. Vázquez Campos, 'El adelantamiento murciano en el contexto de las reformas alfonsinas. 1258-1283', *Miscelánea medieval murciana*, 29-30 (2006), 118-9; *CODOM I,* doc. 87.

Juan Bretón, his father's servant.[179] Instead, Juan Manuel took a different approach to the management of his network from his father. Whereas Manuel had, by and large, spent most of his time at the royal court and used his connections there, Juan Manuel's supporters were often of lower stock and rooted in lordships over which he was able to exert influence. We have already seen how Juan Manuel used his connections to gain influence in Ávila and Cuenca at critical moments.

Juan Manuel was more obviously a regional magnate in a frontier zone than his father, and his networks reflected this. Two main examples will suffice. First, a knight named Sancho Jiménez de Lanclares regularly appears in the documentation. In 1296, he was referred to as '*merino mayor* of the lands of don Juan Manuel in the kingdom of Murcia', a post he still held in 1306, and he was frequently Juan Manuel's procurator at the court of Jaime II, for example during the handing over of Elche to Aragón.[180] We know very little about Sancho Jiménez's life or lordships beyond this. A document of Alfonso XI from 1325 records that he was lord of Tobarra, for which he requested relief following an attack from Granada, and we may conjecture that he also held Hellín since it was mentioned specifically alongside Tobarra in one document.[181] It seems that Sancho Jiménez was a local knight of limited means. Significantly, however, there is evidence that his service for Juan Manuel allowed him to extend his landed power in the region as a tenant of two of Juan Manuel's major fortresses, Almansa and Yecla, from at least 1312.[182] Sancho Jiménez de Lanclares appears, therefore, to be a case of Juan Manuel deploying the services of a lord heavily dependent on him for his influence. Indeed, as time passed he was given more and more responsibility. In

[179] Vázquez, 'El adelantamiento murciano', 118-9; *Juan Manuel*, doc. 12.
[180] 'merino mayor de las tierras de Don Juan Manuel en el regno de Murcia'. *Juan Manuel*, docs. 6,7, 146; J. Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón* (Zaragoza, 1610), V, 412v.
[181] *Colección de cédulas, cartas-patentes, provisiones, reales ordenes y otros documentos concernientes á las provincias vascongadas* (1829-1833), vol. 6, doc. 284; *CODOM VI*, doc. 31.
[182] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 237.

1320, this culminated with his being entrusted as deputy in Juan Manuel's most important duty, the *adelantamiento mayor* of Murcia.[183]

Another interesting example is the Calvillo lineage. Our first reference to Pedro Martínez Calvillo comes in April 1303, when he carried messages for Juan Manuel.[184] Pedro Martínez had an extremely long career in Juan Manuel's service. In 1330 he was the key messenger for Juan Manuel in negotiations with the king of Granada, and for this subversive action some of Calvillo's messengers were executed by Alfonso XI's agents.[185] Undeterred, in 1339 Calvillo stepped to act as the *adelantado mayor* of Murcia on behalf of Pedro de Xérica, who held the office from Juan Manuel.[186] The *Repartimiento* of Murcia shows that the primary base of operations for the Calvillo was the city of Murcia itself, with an unnamed member of the family holding property in nearby Casillas in 1266 and 1272.[187] Pedro Martínez was clearly an important figure in Murcia's *concejo*, securing a privilege for the city in 1305 and acting as its representative at the meetings of the Cortes in 1307, 1308, 1313 and 1325.[188] He gained several lordships near the city, securing confirmation from Alfonso XI for a *mayorazgo* in Alguazas de Cotillas and Benahedín in 1318 and exercising lordship over Alcantarilla in 1339.[189] The fact that Calvillo was such a significant player in the *concejo* was central to his usefulness to Juan Manuel. Indeed, Pedro Martínez formed the nucleus of a group of his vassals upon whom he relied during his bitter dispute with the

[183] *CODOM VI,* doc. 31.
[184] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 48. See below, 85-7.
[185] F. Arias Guillén, 'Conflictividad en la ciudad de Murcia (1325-1337). El influjo de don Juan Manuel y la intervención de la Corona', in *La Convivencia en las ciudades medievales: Nájera.* ed. Beatriz Arízaga Bolumburu and Jesús Á Solórzano Telechea (Logroño, 2008), 124.
[186] *CODOM VI* doc. 153; *XIV*, doc. 29.
[187] Juan Torres Fontes, ed., *Libro del Repartimiento de las tierras hecho a los pobladores de Murcia* (1991), ff. 10r, 88v.
[188] *CODOM V*, doc. 59; J. C. Domínguez Nafría, 'La nobleza del reino de Murcia', in *Nobleza y sociedad III. Las noblezas españolas, reinos y señorios en la Edad Media* (Madrid, 1999), 117.
[189] *CODOM VI,* doc. 21; *XIII,* doc. 29.

concejo, discussed in the following chapter.[190] When the dust had settled, Alfonso XI ordered the *concejo* to admit a group of vassals to the city and restore their goods. The list was headed by Pedro Martínez Calvillo, and included his relatives Fernán Yáñez and Gonzalo Yáñez. There were also other prominent figures in Murcia's urban politics who appeared as part of this network of Juan Manuel's clients, such as the *procurador*, Juan López de Diacastillo, and Alfonso Fernández Saavedra, who also went on to deputise as *adelantado mayor.*[191] Finally, we should not forget that Juan Manuel's illegitimate half-brother, Sancho Manuel, was *alcaide* of Murcia's castle in 1313, before being violently ejected.[192]

Significantly, several of the clients on whose behalf Juan Manuel exerted himself were *vecinos* of his lordships. For example, in February 1307 Juan Manuel appealed to Jaime II for fiscal exemptions for Velasco Pérez, a merchant resident in his lordship of Chinchilla and his vassal, whom he described as 'a man who has served me a great deal'.[193] The capitulation of Elche provides a rare opportunity to observe that many of Juan Manuel's servants held property from him. In 1303 he wrote to Jaime II to reclaim goods that had been taken from one of his squires and his brothers in Elche.[194] Two years later he commended his *canciller*, Gonzalo Martínez, to the Aragonese monarch, describing how he had given him land and asking him to protect this land against the hostile designs of an Aragonese lord named don Ferrer.[195] These references, though fleeting, suggest that Juan Manuel's extensive *solariego* lordships provided him with a ready pool of servants. Indeed, it appears

[190] Arias, 'Conflictividad en la ciudad', 118.
[191] *CODOM VI*, doc. 201.
[192] Juan Torres Fontes, 'Problemática Murcia-Don Juan Manuel en la minoría de Alfonso XI', *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante: Historia medieval*, 11 (1996), 318.
[193] 'omne que me a seruido mucho'. *Juan Manuel,* doc. 167.
[194] ibid., doc. 51.
[195] ibid., doc. 131.

that Juan Manuel took this connection between owning property in his lordships and serving him very seriously: in 1298, when an Aragonese knight named Martin Jiménez de Alcala left his service Juan Manuel had his properties in Villena confiscated, though he was later forced to accept that this ran contrary to the 'custom of Spain' (*costumbre de Espanna*).[196] Others of Juan Manuel's servants were further afield, but no less useful in their ability to provide streams of sensitive information. In 1303, 'a Jew of mine' in Toledo reported that he had overheard Fernando IV's men discussing the king's intention to go on the offensive against Jaime II and Alfonso de la Cerda.[197]

Indeed, as we have noted several times, the distinctive tenor of Murcian politics was conditioned by the overbearing influence of Aragón, and Juan Manuel was clearly adept at managing an affinity across borders. He wrote repeatedly to Jaime II to commend knights, including Berenguel Dalmao, a Valencian knight 'here with me in my service'.[198] The importance of carefully managed relations between his network and the court of Aragón was revealed in 1303 by Juan Manuel's attempts to secure a meeting with Bernardo de Sarria, Jaime II's counsellor. Pedro Martínez Calvillo, whom we met earlier, weighed in, urging Bernardo to consider 'that don Juan is in the land of Alarcón and is in a great quarrel with the king of Castile', pleading with him that 'if you leave don Juan on friendly terms it could lead to great things'.[199] The value of Juan Manuel's position in Murcia with regard to his lands and networks is hinted at in this episode. At a moment when he was dangerously isolated from royal favour, Juan Manuel was in a strong position to seek Jaime II's support, owing to his border lordship of Jorquera and his network of dependents in both kingdoms.

[196] ibid., docs. 15-16.
[197] ibid., doc. 85.
[198] ibid., doc. 153.
[199] 'sabets que don Johan es en termino de Alarcon e esta en muy gran desabenencia con el Rey de Castiella'; 'si bien amigo vos partides de Don Johan se podra complir mayor fecho'. ibid., doc. 48.

To summarise, our three case studies have shown a strict link between landholding in various localities and the webs of dependency, mutual understanding and service that coalesced within them. Holders of small, but compact, lordships existed in some places whose unstable position indebted them to the king's grace and often saw them operating within royal service, though their strategic power could easily catch the attention of other large powers competing for influence in the region. Elsewhere, politics depended more on sweeping up *behetría* rights and calling one's friends to witness transactions, which resulted in deeply entangled connections between old families used to competing and cooperating close to important cities. Further afield, more recently conquered territories produced different lordship conditions as time passed, with Juan Manuel generating a more self-contained affinity than his father had adopted.

Conclusion

Analysis of noble politics in the locality reveals that power could not be expected to operate in the same way in these different areas of the kingdom, and nor would it remain static over time. And yet, there was also an overall trend towards intensification of lordship. A more territorial nobility had the potential to create more settled and insular networks dependent on one lord in his sphere of regional influence, which might have serious implications for the exercise of royal and noble power alike. Indeed, it is telling that there is a noticeable correlation between Juan Manuel's travel diary and his attentiveness to his humbler vassals: he was most often to be found addressing the concerns of his *vecinos* and fixing local

problems when staying in those lordships.[200] This is, of course, entirely logical. But it also speaks to a wider and more important process: as lords developed more continuous and heritable estates and forged more of a territorial identity, their ability to devote attention to their lordships could result in different kinds of network-management, with potential consequences for their interactions with other powers in the future.

At the same time, it has never been possible in this study of 'local politics' to ignore the influence of the highest centre of patronage and arbitration. This did not map evenly onto these different localities, with political calculations near the Aragonese borders requiring very different strategies to those more insulated from the outside, but it is nonetheless vital to consider how nobles would use their local power to influence royal politics, and how kings would respond to different threats or opportunities. The landholding and networks constructed by the Castilian nobility thus raise all kinds of questions regarding the nature of power, the interaction between local influence and central authority, and the different kinds of responses each move by one party could provoke from another. The increasing intensity and territorial quality of lordship across Castile changed politics for everyone, but it did so in different ways according to circumstance. Some power bases and networks were linked inextricably to royal or conciliar power; others were more permeable to a wider variety of local powers; and others still tended towards striking regional dominance by a small number of significant territorial entities. The conditions examined in this chapter imply consequences in many facets of Castilian political life: they affected patterns of political behaviour in towns and cities and their relationship with the wider polity; they inflected attitudes towards royal office-holding as a route to local power; they shaped the types of

[200] See e.g. ibid., doc. 239, recording Juan Manuel attending to a murder case while visiting his lordship of Almansa in 1312.

strategies available to kings through their public and private political resources; and they left an indelible mark on the course of the crises in the years 1275-1325. These are the subjects of the next chapters.

2. Towns, *Concejos* and *Hermandades*

> 'In all the kingdom or realm he [the king] should know which good people there are in every city, town or village and what they do, and which are good for war, which suitable for offices, or which are greedy and disorganised'.[1]

For the author of the *Libro de los doze sabios*, a manual on ideal governance commissioned by Fernando III, the king's understanding of his kingdom was incomplete if he did not pay attention to the towns and cities. Likewise, any historical appraisal of the changes in local politics would be partial and misleading if it ignored the role of towns in the uneven development of territorial power. The rise of urban agency in medieval Castile is a familiar topic in the historiography. The major cities in the Iberian Peninsula have had definitive treatment, and the municipal and provincial archives have been scoured for the details of conciliar formation, development of urban oligarchies and relationships with churches and monasteries. The work of distinguished scholars, like Estepa, Rucquoi or Torres Fontes, stands the test of time, and it is not the intention of this chapter to attempt to go back over their findings. Instead, this chapter deploys our comparative perspective to focus in greater detail on some key dynamics of local politics.

To advance our understanding of the structural processes at play in the Castilian locality, we need to explore the parameters of conciliar power and how it interacted with other interests. Following an introductory discussion of the structure of municipal government and its relationship with the royal demesne, this chapter analyses the characteristics of municipal power and its connections with the other major players in the political landscape. It asks how the town councils of our case studies responded to and shaped the processes we

[1] 'en todo el reyno o regimiento deve saber qué personas buenas ay en cada çibdad o villa o logar, e cómo usan, e quáles son para guerra o quáles son para ofiçios, o quáles codiçiosos desordenados'. J. K. Walsh (ed.), *El libro de los doze sabios o tractado de la nobleza y lealtad* (Madrid, 1975), 87-8.

observed in the previous chapter: if private lords were establishing a more assertive and territorial form of power and beginning to transmit it in down the generations, would towns and cities feel pressure on their established patterns? Answering this means exploring how far the kind of network-building we observed in the previous chapter penetrated and shaped city structures. Subsequently, analysis turns to the solutions available to town councils for the challenges of the changing political environment. The decisions of town councils, taken individually or, as we shall see, in collectives known as *hermandades*, would have profound consequences, not only in their immediate environs but at every level of the hierarchy.

Introduction: Municipal Government and the Realengo

The town council, or *concejo*, was the institutional structure that governed villages, towns and cities in medieval Castile. The idea of an assembly (*conventus publicus* or *concilium*) for popular representation and public discussion was resurrected in Iberian cities in the early eleventh century. By the thirteenth century, *fueros* (customary law codes) had crystallised the *concejo* into a municipal council with recognised officers, elected for their legal expertise.[2] Over the thirteenth century, the duties of these officials were gradually taken over by *alcaldes*. Beginning with Fernando III, kings attempted to intervene in naming the *alcaldes*, and this remained the case throughout our period: in Ávila, for example, though Sancho IV promised in 1286 and 1293 to cease sending his own nominees, the practice continued.[3] In areas dominated by the *fuero* of Seville, which was conceded later and thus by monarchs accustomed to a more assertive style, the king had the right to nominate

[2] L. McCrank, 'Cities', in E. M. Gerli, *Medieval Iberia. An Encyclopedia* (London, 2003), 237.
[3] Moreno, *Ávila,* 142-7.

officials like the *alcaldes* and *alguaciles*.[4] The uneven right of kings to name officers in the councils was famously addressed by Alfonso XI, who later overhauled the system to allow the royal appointment of *corregidores* to oversee municipal administration.[5] Meanwhile, a consistent factor across the kingdom in this period was the gradual ascent of urban lineages of privileged knights, who dominated conciliar government, swept up influential positions in ecclesiastical institutions, and attempted to dominate the cities' hinterlands with their own property rights. As numerous historians have shown, the ability of the Sarracín group in Burgos, the Reoyo and Tovar in Valladolid, the Dávila in Ávila and so on to dominate is fundamental to understanding the operation of the councils, which can no longer be imagined to be free and equal assemblies of the citizens.[6]

The question of the relationship between Castile's cities and the *realengo*, the term used for the king's properties, has been elucidated in Estepa's fundamental work. *Concejos* were part of the organising structures of the Castilian locality, regardless of whether a population centre was controlled by a private lord or the king. The *villas de señorío* (towns controlled by lords) were generally lesser in size and political importance, but they were nonetheless governed through the same institutions. To some extent, therefore, it is helpful to consider the famous *realengo* councils as *concejos* in the *realengo*.[7] However, these *concejos* derived distinctive qualities from the fact that the king's powers of lordship had expanded since the eleventh century. He now had two types of lordship: that over the properties he possessed directly in the *realengo*, which included towns, and other higher-level powers that extended over all other lordships without immunity (the *señorio real jurisdiccional*, consisting of

[4] González, 'Ciudades y concejos andaluces', 244.
[5] J. A. Bonachía Hernando, 'El concejo como señorío (Castilla, siglos XIII-XV)', in *Concejos y ciudades en la Edad Media Hispánica*, 462-3.
[6] See Ruiz, 'Transformation of the Castilian Municipalities'; Rucquoi, *Valladolid*, 140-3; Moreno, *Ávila*, 73-92.
[7] Estepa, 'El realengo', 467.

military obligations, limited judicial rights and a primitive royal taxation). This wider jurisdiction was extended most tangibly by the concession of *fueros*, but was also exercised through other structures like *merindades*, which we shall examine in the next chapter. As a result, city governments with royal *fueros* were intrinsically linked to royal authority, exercising lordship on the king's behalf. However, as time passed, the exercise of these jurisdictional rights developed in ways that gave a notable degree of independence to the royal *concejos*. The powers of the *realengo* councils, though derived from the king's jurisdiction, depended on the extent to which royal property became conciliar property, royal tax became conciliar tax and royal jurisdiction became conciliar jurisdiction. Of course, the king retained some superior elements of lordship, but in the cases of the most developed councils this royal overlordship would express itself in the same limited way as over the lordship of a private noble.[8]

Critically, the construction of conciliar lordship took place on different timelines. The *concejos* of Ávila and Cuenca followed a typical path. Immediately after the conquest of Toledo in 1085, the king used tenants to establish a form of control over the vast tracts of sparsely populated territory. The town of Ávila, at first in the hands of *conde* Raimundo de Borgoña, was at the centre of a large *alfoz* (dependent territory), covering roughly 3,500 square miles after land had been removed to establish the towns of Plasencia and Béjar in 1186 and 1209.[9] However, a profound transition occurred, whereby royal power (collecting taxes, judicial administration and military organisation) in this region was soon exercised through Ávila's *concejo*, rather than through the tenant.[10] Gradually and almost imperceptibly, the council began to acquire rights of its own, such as the collection of its

[8] ibid., 486, 496.
[9] Barrios, *Estructuras agrarias*, 277-8.
[10] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 75.

own tax known as *cuartillas*.[11] Cuenca is a slightly different case because its configuration took place in 1177, that is, once the conciliar structures of Extremadura and Toledo had fully matured. This meant that, once allowances had been made for donations to the church and the king had reserved territories for his own property, Alfonso VIII gave control of the city and surrounding territory to the council, stretching all the way to the Tajo in the north and including Mantiel, Cereseda, and Viana.[12] When, in 1183, he decided to transfer the village of Avia to the cathedral of Cuenca, he stated that he did so 'with the consent and will of the council of Cuenca'.[13] As a result of these developments, the distinction between the king's owned property and the *realengo* administered on his behalf by the councils was established enough for the king to carry out transactions: for example, in 1246 Fernando III sold properties he had acquired from the archbishop of Toledo to the *concejo*, which then demonstrated their lordship by giving *fueros* to these territories.[14] *Concejos* south of the Duero are thus considered the classic models of conciliar formation, with councils gathering a set of lordship rights over a coherent *alfoz*, derived from royal rights but soon exercised independently.

The major difference between these areas and those north of the Duero was that the fragmentation of lordship structures in the latter areas meant that it was much more difficult for *concejos* to establish uniform control over an *alfoz*. The development of conciliar lordship was therefore later in Burgos and Valladolid than in Cuenca and Ávila and depended above all on a change in royal policy. The move away from tenancy, discussed in the previous chapter, was part of a different approach to administering the royal estates,

[11] Estepa, 'El realengo', 472.
[12] Espoille de Roiz, 'Repoblación', 207.
[13] 'cum consensu et uoluntate concilii de Concha'. Estepa, 'El realengo', 474.
[14] ibid., 475.

which saw the town councils play a much more significant role.[15] In the north, this necessitated a string of transfers from the king's property to the lordship of the councils. The key turning point was the reign of Alfonso X. In 1255, he gave Lara, Barbadillo de Mercado, Villafranca de Oca, Villadiego and Belbimbre to the council of Burgos.[16] In fact, these grants were not fully stable as the last three were separated from conciliar control under Sancho IV and Fernando IV, but the *concejo* compensated for this with the purchases of Pampliega in 1331 and Mazuela in 1332.[17] These acquisitions allowed the town council to control key points on commercial routes and expanded their areas of jurisdiction. Valladolid's *alfoz* was similarly small-scale in the twelfth century, with the city predominantly in the hands of tenants until the first grant to the *concejo* in 1155. It was in the thirteenth century that the council's landholdings began to develop with the grant of Cabezón in 1217. The year 1255 was also foundational, with Alfonso X transferring Peñaflor, Tudela de Duero and Simancas from the *realengo* proper to conciliar control. In 1289, these territories were augmented with Sancho IV's grant of Cigales.[18]

300 miles to the south-east, Murcia was also undergoing a late process of establishing a conciliar landholding. The early phase of recognised Muslim property rights had long faded into memory.[19] The *concejo* was bolstered with early grants by its conqueror and later monarch, Alfonso X, such as the castles of Bullas and Pliego in 1254.[20] After the Mudéjar rebellion was quashed in 1266, Murcia received the *fuero* of Seville, formalising its conciliar institution for the first time. It became one of ten *concejos de realengo* entrusted with administering crown lands in Murcia. These were very much the dominant institutional

[15] See above, 30-2.
[16] Bonachía, *Señorío de Burgos*, 32-7.
[17] ibid., 39-40.
[18] Rucquoi, *Valladolid*, 97-100.
[19] Torres, 'El concejo de Murcia', 201.
[20] *CODOM I*, doc. 19.

structure in Murcia at the beginning of our period. However, a more ambivalent effect of the king's grace was on display over the following decades. Kings encouraged some of the smaller councils in the border regions to take the initiative: the *concejo* of Lorca, for example, 37 miles to the southwest of Murcia, was promised lordship over any castles they managed to capture from the Muslims in 1271, and it appears they had some success with the seizure of Cella in 1277.[21] More dramatically, in October 1299 Fernando IV gave 15 properties to the *concejo* of Lorca, owing to the failure of the previous lords to secure them.[22] It was not entirely a picture of conciliar expansion, however: in the case of the *concejo* of Murcia itself, not only were territories gradually alienated to the *infante* Manuel and his son, but Orihuela, Alicante and Guardamar remained in Aragonese hands after 1304.[23]

Therefore, the timelines of development in different regions resulted in different paths to conciliar lordship. In the long-established *concejos* of Ávila and Cuenca it emerged quite early, but it took a later wave of royal grants, especially by Alfonso X, to bolster the small councils of Burgos or Valladolid or the newer lordship of Murcia. *Concejos* thus had an ambivalent relationship with the *realengo*. Many councils originated as the king's property and derived their powers from his jurisdiction, and hence they urged kings to defend the *realengo* and avoid alienating it to other entities. At the same time, they were recognisably distinct from the *realengo* as defined as the king's direct property, and they exercised their own lordship depending on the extent to which they were able to appropriate royal jurisdiction. As quasi-lords in their own right, therefore, town councils were affected fundamentally by the increasingly territorial nature of power in Castile. They responded to the development of regional lordship in part by pursuing it for themselves, but, as they did

[21] ibid., docs. 113, 142.
[22] *CODOM V*, doc. 24.
[23] Torres, 'El concejo de Murcia', 206.

so, they were caught between a desire for kings to defend royal privileges they relied upon while also aiming to protect semi-independent rights they had claimed for themselves. The choices made by the *concejos* in response to this shifting landscape shaped the field in which everyone else competed.

There were various arenas in which town councils could exercise their power in real terms. Their status as authentic lords was reinforced through ceremonial means, for example in 1304, when the village of Madrigal was incorporated into the *concejo* of Arévalo and 100 men were ordered to travel to pay homage to their new collective lord.[24] The main object of this expression of superiority was to guarantee obedience to the council as tax collectors and judicial heads of their regions. Middling councils, like those of Villalpando, Mayorga and Castroverde near León, constructed conciliar fiscal systems based on *castellaje*, a tax for repairing the walls.[25] Following royal grants, the *concejos* of Burgos and Valladolid had significant rights of income collection usually pertaining to the king: in 1293 Burgos' *alcaldes* received the right to collect the commercial taxes *portazgo* and *marzazga*, along with the various incomes of Lara and Barbadillo.[26] This was a particularly significant moment in the crystallisation of fiscal independence for the *concejo*: whereas they had been given these properties as part of their *alfoz* in 1255, the majority of royal incomes had been reserved for *prestámeros* (tax farmers). Now, in exchange for 500 *maravedís*, the councillors increased their grip on tax collection.[27] Fernando IV later expanded this, granting them 3,000 *maravedís* of further royal incomes which had previously been collected by *infante* Enrique.[28] In Valladolid, it was the abbacy of Santa María, rather than lay noblemen, with

[24] Bonachía, 'El concejo como señorío', 433-4.
[25] Estepa, 'El realengo', 487.
[26] AMB HI – 157.
[27] E. González Díez, ed., *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Burgos (884-1369)* (Burgos: 1984), doc. 144.
[28] AMB HI-101.

whom the *concejo* jostled to collect the major sales taxes, but in 1296 they gained an important grant from Fernando IV, followed by another by Alfonso XI in 1325.[29]

An even clearer sign of agency on the part of the *concejos* than fiscal control was the ability to dispose of their *alfoz* as they chose. This was particularly evident for the more established councils in the middle band of Castile: Cuenca, for example, chose in 1281 to reward Ruy Fernández, an archer and one of their citizens, with the region of Cotillas. The unusually colourful language of this document, which hopes that anyone breaching it 'burns with Lucifer in hell forever', indicates that the *concejo* was acting on its own initiative rather than echoing royal formulae.[30] In 1291, Sancho IV approved the council's request to populate deserted settlements in their region, cementing their effective control over their *alfoz*.[31] As we saw in the previous chapter, councils also made grants to members of urban lineages. It is a sign of the extent to which the *concejo* of Ávila had appropriated older royal incomes in their *alfoz* that, when they gave San Adrián to Velasco Velázquez in 1283, it came with a host of fiscal exemptions, apart from *moneda forera*, which appears to be the only tax still reserved for the king.[32]

By the end of the thirteenth century, therefore, town councils had amassed sufficient power to dominate tax collection in their spheres of influence, and in some cases to take independent decisions about their landed resources. On occasion, this local power wielded by the *concejos* could have a tangible effect on regnal politics. In 1308, for example, the council of Murcia changed royal policy on grant-making when Fernando IV cancelled the

[29] *Mañueco*, doc. 128.
[30] 'con Luzifer arda dentro en los infiernos para siempre'. Chacón, *Colección diplomática*, doc. 21.
[31] ibid., doc. 31.
[32] Estepa, 'El realengo', 489-90.

gift of Fortuna to the Order of Santiago owing to the council's objection.[33] Moreover, town councils occasionally made decisive military interventions, such as when the *concejo* of Burgos seized Villafranca from the rebellious Juan Núñez de Lara in 1298. During the same conflict, the *concejo* of Cuenca was also fundamental in providing military aid to the king, this time in helping prise Moya and Cañete from the hands of the Lara rebel.[34] The council was rewarded with a share of future *servicios* levied in those towns, but their subsequent return to Juan Núñez makes it uncertain whether the *concejo* ever benefited.[35] In sum, the *concejos* were evidently a force with which to be reckoned, even if kings sometimes went back on promises of reward. Juan Manuel himself encapsulated the truth, known to all Castilians, that a hostile town could be as dangerous as an individual enemy: he warned his son not 'to put yourself in the power of a town or man in whom you do not trust fully; for most men will do a great deal to gain favour from kings'.[36]

It is therefore clear that, in dialogue with long-standing patterns of royal lordship and with shorter-term decisions by certain monarchs, town councils in our case study regions had developed a sufficiently robust style of lordship to become significant players in local politics. This status, however, was bound to draw them into conflict with other interest groups. The opposition of interest should not always be overdrawn: we have seen, for example, how in some circumstances the *concejos* were directly involved in the establishment of minor lineages, while conversely noblemen had always shown interest in cities as focal points for prestigious buildings and ceremonies. Nonetheless, it is essential to trace how the changes we have observed, namely the new approaches to managing the

[33] *CODOM V*, doc. 77.
[34] Chacón, *Colección diplomática,* doc. 32.
[35] *CFIV*, 126.
[36] 'De poner en poder de villa, nin de omne de [qui] non fie muy conplida mente: ca los mas de los omnes mucho fazen por ganarse con los reys'. Blecua, *Obras completas*, 160-61.

realengo, the increasingly territorial nature of noble power and the different networks operating in different localities, shaped the political agency of the *concejos*.

Conflict and Competition

We saw in the previous chapter how the growing territorial power of noblemen caused serious anxiety among ecclesiastical institutions. This was no less true of the municipalities. It is common to find kings repeatedly confirming grants they had made to towns 'because some knights seize these properties'.[37] Complaints ranged from outright seizure of property to fiscal abuses and other crimes: in 1305, for example, Fernando IV heard complaints in the kingdom of Toledo (which included Cuenca) that noblemen were abusing their right to *yantar* and even forcibly removing people to different lordships. He outlined an ambitious response, stating that royal municipal officials would discover these abuses and arrange direct compensation from the guilty party to the victims.[38] Whether or not this was ever successful is, unfortunately, not possible to ascertain from the surviving documentation. What is evident, however, is that the strength of the challenge posed by noble power to the integrity of *concejo* lordship was strictly linked to the characteristics of that noble power and the networks it could deploy. We noted in the previous chapter the proximity of Lara possessions to the *concejo* of Burgos, which spawned military strategies for the council when they rebelled, whereas the more sheltered situation around Valladolid and Ávila gave them a very different relationship with the nobility, in which it was their own urban oligarchies who were pushing most ambitiously into their hinterlands. Cuenca, meanwhile,

[37] 'por razón que algunos cavalleros enbargan los heredamientos'. Á. Barrios García, *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila* (Ávila, 1988), doc. 11.
[38] Chacón, *Colección diplomática*, doc. 43.

was an interesting hybrid between the two: it occasionally felt the effects of its proximity to Juan Manuel's substantial power base, but at other times proved resilient to noble influence, such as when the village of Torralba successfully rejected the lordship of *infante* Juan in 1311 and instead became incorporated into the conciliar *alfoz*.[39] Elsewhere, Palencia was an important battleground during the minority of 1295-1301, owing to its position within easy reach of Valladolid. We shall see in Chapter 8 how the networks embedded there by *infante* Juan and María de Molina were pitted against each other in an attempt to gain control of the city at a crucial moment.

Perhaps the clearest example of the problems that a predominant noble network could create is the case of the Murcian towns' struggles with Juan Manuel. By the time of Alfonso XI's minority, the *concejo* of Murcia found itself worryingly hemmed in by the lord of Villena's territories to the north-east and his recent acquisition of Cartagena to the south.[40] In 1313, the townsmen erupted in their strongest show of resistance to Juan Manuel yet, expelling Sancho Manuel from the city and taking the castle from his control.[41] In 1314, Jaime II assured the council that he would work towards a settlement of their *discordia*; the Castilian regent *infante* Pedro, meanwhile, took more direct action by replacing Juan Manuel as *adelantado mayor* with Diego López de Haro.[42] He also sought directly to bolster the *concejo*'s landed power at Juan Manuel's expense, granting them Molina Seca, held by Juan Manuel's supporters since 1312.[43] Diego López did not last long as *adelantado*, but the council were loath to accept the reality of Juan Manuel's dominance, once again rejecting Juan Manuel as *adelantado* in 1317. In their anxiety over Juan Manuel's threat to allow

[39] ibid., doc. 46.
[40] Torres, 'Don Juan Manuel, señor de Cartagena', 46.
[41] Arias, 'Conflictividad en la ciudad', 120.
[42] *CODOM VI*, doc. 13.
[43] ibid., doc. 12.

migrants from Granada free passage via Lorca, they appealed again to *infante* Pedro, who confirmed their privileges in Alfonso XI's name.[44] However, the sudden death of *infantes* Juan and Pedro in 1319 was disastrous for Murcian resistance, since Juan Manuel was now guaranteed to dominate the regency. The *concejo* sent messengers in January 1320 to accept Juan Manuel as regent, and the agreement reached at Santisteban del Puerto attached conditions on each side: Juan Manuel demanded free access to the city, payment of various incomes that had been withheld from him, and obedience to his deputy; for its part, the council demanded that his deputy should be a royal vassal, and duly accepted his designation of Alfonso Fernández de Biedma.[45] The concern shown here by the Murcian council to restrict the influence of Juan Manuel's own dependents within the city was demonstrated again in a new rebellion of 1325, when one of Juan Manuel's knights, Sancho Sánchez de Lariega, was seriously wounded.[46]

The full extent of the penetration of Juan Manuel's network into the ruling structure of Murcia is only revealed in the numerous documents issued by Alfonso XI during his adult reign to resolve the mess. He acknowledged that, in the past, numerous citizens of Murcia had become vassals of Juan Manuel and had repeatedly been expelled, as had their opponents when the winds of fortune changed. The names that appear consistently in the documentation include those familiar from the earlier analysis of Juan Manuel's affinity, including several members of the Calvillo family, Alfonso Fernández Saavedra and Juan López de Diacastillo.[47] There were repeated demands to restore the goods of exiles on both sides, but these claims proved extremely difficult to resolve.[48] The conflict raged until

[44] ibid., doc. 20.
[45] ibid., doc. 32; Torres, 'Problemática Murcia-Don Juan Manuel', 327.
[46] ibid., 329.
[47] *CODOM VI*, doc. 201.
[48] Arias, 'Conflictividad en la ciudad', 122.

Alfonso XI sought to resolve the issue of Juan Manuel's web of allies in Murcia first by rewarding 16 of those who left his lordship in 1332, and then by ordering in 1336 that no inhabitant of Murcia should be the vassal of anyone other than the king or the heir apparent.[49] Even so, the influence of the nobleman's affinity continued as a source of contention, intrigue and rumour: three months later, Alfonso XI issued a document which angrily rejected suggestions that as many as 25 of the 30 *regidores* (the new officials of the council) were vassals of the lord of Villena: 'we would not believe it, for we are certain that you all safeguard our service'.[50]

Though undoubtedly an extreme case, the travails of the Murcian *concejo* demonstrate the new challenge posed to conciliar power by the increasing territoriality of the nobility. The affinity built up by Juan Manuel near the city allowed him to exert an exceptionally strong influence over its institutional make-up and attempts to resist him plunged the region into conflict for over twenty years. The proof that this is a product of a new territorial and geopolitical phenomenon, rather than simply the product of Juan Manuel's position as a member of the royal family, comes when we compare the agreement made at Santisteban del Puerto in 1320, in which Murcia accepted Juan Manuel as tutor, with the deal that he struck with a different council. Juan Manuel courted the favour of several town councils in his bid to become tutor, and among them was Talavera la Reina, some 240 miles away from Murcia.[51] This time, his promises were much fuller: he guaranteed their privileges and properties, insisted that all the king's servants would be royal vassals, and promised that their *alcaldes* would always be involved in any judicial intervention by the tutors.[52]

[49] *CODOM VI*, doc. 303.
[50] 'non lo creeriamos nos, que cierto somos nos que tales sodes todos et uosotros que guardariades nuestro seruicio'. *CODOM VI*, doc. 321.
[51] *CAXI*, 184.
[52] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 354.

Comparing these two acts as Juan Manuel scrambled to gain support casts a revealing light on the interaction between conciliar and noble power. *Concejos* were evidently too powerful to ignore and could pose significant problems if they were not brought onside. But the ability of a lord like Juan Manuel to impose himself depended on two factors: the proximity of his power base to the municipality, and, closely related, his ability to install his affinity in strategic positions. He therefore had to promise substantially more generous terms to a distant council, as Juan Manuel needed to with Talavera la Reina, than he would with a closer target, like Murcia, where he could even impose his own forceful conditions. Political agents thus had to consider proximity and geopolitical power balances in new ways following the development of new forms of lordship.

Despite all this, it would be over-simplistic to suggest that town councils only found themselves contending with noblemen. For a start, a major site of competition for town councils was often their borders with other *alfoces*. Ávila, for example, had ongoing disputes with the council of Plasencia, whose territory was separated from theirs in 1186.[53] On a smaller scale, the nearby town of La Adrada appealed to Fernando IV in 1305 over the abuses of neighbouring councils, Escalona and Cadalso.[54] The fragmentation of lordship in the north of Castile meant that the *concejos* were especially prone to disputes among themselves. In 1279, for example, the councils of Belbimbre and Barrio de Muñó resolved their dispute over tax collection, agreeing to collect five royal tributes together, and others separately.[55] Similarly, there was a struggle for collection rights between the councils of Valladolid and Medina del Campo, the latter of which belonged to the Infanta Blanca of Portugal.[56] Elsewhere, these conflicts occasionally acquired a violent edge: in 1293, the

[53] Moreno, *Ávila,* 10.
[54] Á Barrios García, *Documentación medieval de la Catedral de Ávila* (Salamanca, 1981), doc. 112.
[55] *Las Huelgas*, 1263-1283, doc. 598.
[56] AMV, Pergaminos y documentos singulares, 25.

monastery of Las Huelgas stepped in to provide a settlement between two feuding villages, Nogal and Población de Soto, since the latter were vassals of the monastery. The document records witness testimonies to the violent seizure of flocks by men of Nogal. This rare chance to hear direct testimony reveals an interesting dynamic. Those accused of invading Población de Soto and stealing livestock state that they did so because Pedro Sánchez, an official of the village, had taxed them unjustly, and add the key detail that they were ordered to do this by their own lord, Juana Gómez.[57] The multiplicity of competing lordship structures meant that noble power cannot always be separated straightforwardly from collective activity of the councils.

A final element in this brief overview of the rhythms of conciliar politics is suggested by the most recent example: it is impossible to ignore the role of ecclesiastical institutions and the military orders in shaping the politics of the localities. The sheer scale of the activity of these institutions is illustrated by the *cuentas* (accounts) of the monastery of San Salvador de Oña, near Burgos, which show that the monastery spent almost 9,000 *maravedís* a year on pleas and procurations to contest the fragmented jurisdictions in their northern environs.[58] Religious institutions often found that their rights, both within the city walls and without, brought them into conflict with the city council. As Lizoain Garrido argues, disputes of this kind in Burgos arose over two issues: the *concejo*'s attempt to regulate the economic life of the city, and its effort to subject religious institutions to the same rules as everyone else.[59] In 1285, for example, the abbess of Las Huelgas appealed to Sancho IV to prevent the council from collecting taxes from her own vassals and those of the monastery in San

[57] *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc 85.
[58] C. Díez Herrera, 'El obispado de burgos en la baja Edad Media. Formas de fortalecer su jurisdicción frente al monasterio de san salvador de oña', *Anuario de estudios medievales,* 45 (2015), 774.
[59] *Las Huelgas,* 1263-1283, 345-6.

Felices.[60] A decade later, representatives of the cathedral chapter and the *concejo* came to an agreement on a wide variety of disputed issues, such as rights over waterways, the right of the *concejo* to access to certain streets and gates, the right to build in certain neighbourhoods, and, most importantly, the right to collect taxes of various kinds.[61] Sometimes points of contention could appear minute but spawn lengthy conflicts, such as the attempt by the *concejo* of Ávila to include 40 cathedral choristers in assessing various taxes, while the bishop tried to exempt them.[62] Elsewhere, the bishopric of Cartagena frequently clashed with the *concejo* of Murcia as it attempted to capitalise on its rights to tithes. Later, following the Order of Santiago's acquisition of Cieza and the valley of Ricote, the *Santiaguistas* entered the competition for these incomes too.[63]

In summary, the development of more assertive, territorial lordship on the part of nobles was matched by a more independent form of conciliar lordship, which focused on domination of commercial taxes and exploitation of the *alfoz*. This led inevitably to competition and conflict between towns, noblemen and ecclesiastical institutions, whose rights tended to be more invasive in the older structures of the north. The development of each power structure was intertwined, with the *concejos* as institutional entities increasingly dominated by urban oligarchies that aspired to the forms of power associated with noblemen. Similarly, *concejos* had an ambivalent relationship with the *realengo*: they relied on royal jurisdiction for their powers and benefited from grants from the king's properties, but they also appropriated jurisdiction and incomes, pursued their interests independently and occasionally suffered amputation of their lands through royal grants. The *concejos* were willing to turn to the defence of the *realengo* as a banner for their interests, but they could

[60] *Las Huelgas*, 1284-1306, doc. 30.
[61] *Pereda*, docs. 312-3.
[62] Barrios, *Documentación medieval*, doc. 103.
[63] *CODOM I*, docs. 4-6; AHN Uclés, carp. 85 núm. 2.

also suffer from the king's policy towards his lordships. The imperative to compete for landed rights produced contradictory strategies, and as such it is ultimately impossible to delineate clearly separate forms of royal, noble and conciliar power. Conversely, what we can show is that there was a critical convergence: lordship everywhere was becoming more insistent on its domination of the rights and incomes of territories on the ground and was willing to seek any allegiance to achieve it.

The Hermandades

In an atmosphere of increasingly assertive lordship, it is no surprise that a variety of tactics were deployed to counter perceived threats. One of the most notable of these was the capacity for town councils to gather into leagues or brotherhoods, known as *hermandades.* On one level, this was an extension of the kinds of associations that were natural and habitual parts of medieval political life, as Susan Reynolds argued so eloquently.[64] At the same time, however, there were institutional features of the *concejos* that allowed *hermandades* to become a recognised and repeatable structure. Though the word *hermandad*, literally meaning 'brotherhood', did not have a fixed meaning in medieval Iberia, and there were various specific uses to which leagues might be put, it gradually became accepted that representatives of town councils could establish associations by swearing oaths, drawing up documents to formalise the terms of collective action, and subsequently choosing delegates to represent the *hermandad* in other contexts.

[64] S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford, 1984).

The *hermandades* have been an appealing topic for historians of a variety of different stripes. The ambiguities of the *hermandades* and their apparent embodiment of structural conflict made them an empty vessel, capable of sustaining interpretations from across the political spectrum. Historians interested in social phenomena scour the *hermandades* for evidence of class tensions and solidarities; economic historians seek in them the beginnings of a more integrated model for Castilian commercial activity; and regional historians identify in certain *hermandades* a distinctive flavour of separate localities. Diverse historiographical interest has produced three clashing interpretations. For some, following Suárez Fernández and García Fernández, the *hermandades*, and especially the unprecedentedly large *Hermandades Generales* of 1282-1325, were the consequence of a severely weakened royal authority, which led to cities to secure their defensive interests.[65] This interpretation has an occasional tendency to view the town councils as the unwavering allies of the monarchy against a grasping nobility, which was the inherited view from the historiography of the early twentieth century, typified by Puyol y Alonso.[66] González Mínguez took an alternative line, arguing that the *hermandades* represented a deliberate and lasting effort to insert the *concejos* into the structure of the Castilian state, which was strongly rejected at the first opportunity by kings threatened by their power.[67] José María Mínguez Fernández turned the traditional view entirely on its head, arguing that the *hermandades* are best understood as a rejection of the centralising tendencies of the Castilian monarchy.[68] Both he and María Asenjo González sought their explanations primarily in the internal structure and divisions of the towns and the *hermandades* they formed, suggesting that they represented an attempt

[65] L. Suárez Fernández, 'Evolución histórica de las Hermandades castellanas', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 16 (1951), 29; M. García Fernández, 'Algunas consideraciones sobre los objetivos políticos de la Hermandad General de Andalucía', *Medievalismo*, 2 (1992), 62.
[66] J. Puyol y Alonso, *Las hermandades de Castilla y León* (Madrid, 1913), 7, 20-1.
[67] C. González Mínguez, 'Aproximación al estudio del "movimiento hermandino" en Castilla y León', *Medievalismo*, 1 (1991), 52.
[68] J. M. Mínguez Fernández, 'Las Hermandades generales de los concejos de Castilla (objetivos, estructura interna y contradicciones en sus manifestaciones iniciales', in *Concejos y ciudades en la Edad Media Hispánica*, 560.

by urban elites to resist the rise of the non-noble *caballeros villanos* who had been championed by kings in contravention of traditional privilege.[69] These countervailing interpretations highlight the fact that the *hermandades* are a key structural indicator of the major dynamics of Castilian politics: one's understanding of the impulse to association reveals much about one's overall picture of political interaction.

As early as the twelfth century, according to Álvarez de Morales, there may well have been a significant number of *hermandades*, but we only have direct notice of a few.[70] The first documented conciliar *hermandades* date from the reign of Alfonso VIII and were established between several towns around the Tajo in 1188-1202.[71] This group formed shortly after the towns were repopulated and allowed them to guarantee free movement for citizens within their area. Later, in an indication that more *hermandades* existed than have survived in the documentary record, Fernando III issued two prohibitions against unlicensed associations: against Uceda in 1231 and Segovia in 1250.[72] The early history of the *hermandades* demonstrates that it was a long-standing and habitual tactic in local politics for small groups of neighbours to gather together when their interests aligned, though it is most notable that it was not often the most fundamental central crises of the kingdom that provoked them (Rivera Garretas has shown that the *hermandad* of the Ribera del Tajo came after Alfonso VIII's minority, not before it, and the accession of the boy king Enrique I in 1214 does not seem to have triggered an instinct to unify).[73] The early *hermandades* are characteristic of the more cellular modes of politics in the late twelfth and early thirteenth

[69] M. Asenjo González, 'Ciudades y hermandades en la Corona de Castilla', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 27 (1997), 117-8.
[70] A. Álvarez de Morales, *Las Hermandades. Expresión del movimiento comunitario en España* (Valladolid, 1974), 13.
[71] Asenjo, 'Ciudades y hermandades', 118.
[72] Álvarez, *Las Hermandades,* 22, n. 24.
[73] M. Milagros Rivera Garretas, 'Alfonso VIII y la Hermandad de Villas de la Ribera del Tajo', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 49 (1979), 519-31.

centuries, with local concerns addressed through specific forms of agreement and jurisdiction just beginning to be contradicted by the more universal ambitions of Fernando III. As Duncan Hardy found for late medieval Germany, there was a 'continuum' of associative behaviour, ranging from short-term alliances and peer-group associations to more formalised, longer-lasting structures.[74]

The early reign of Alfonso X also saw some associations, though now the king began to show support rather than hostility. There was a notable *hermandad* in 1265 established between Córdoba, Jaén, Baeza, Úbeda and the local nobles Diego Sánchez de Funes and Sancho Martínez de Jodar.[75] In 1269, Alfonso X endorsed another southern association between Seville, Carmona, Jerez, Arcos de la Frontera, Medina Sidonia, Alcalá de los Gazules, Vejer, Huelva and Gibraleón. The intention was to secure free use of pasture for the inhabitants of the member towns, without having to pay taxes like *montazgo* or *asadura*.[76] There were also bilateral arrangements ensuring safe conduct and equal treatment between towns. Examples of this include agreements between Ávila and Escalona, Plasencia and Escalona and Escalona and Segovia. Between 1248 and 1274, Plasencia and Talavera had a bilateral agreement to defend themselves from the *concejo* of Ávila.[77] From 1277, *hermandades* began to appear more frequently in Asturias, between Avilés, Grado, Pueblas de Pravia, Salas, Somiedo, Valdés, Tineo, Cangas and Allende. Their agreement aimed to counter noble incursions on their lands, but it was a significant moment because their *carta* was the first to make an explicit connection between the defence of their own lands and the cause of the king. They established that the crimes they were opposing were could be

[74] D. Hardy, *Associative Political Culture in the Holy Roman Empire. Upper Germany, 1346-1521* (Oxford, 2018), 120-1.
[75] Álvarez, *Las Hermandades,* 25.
[76] M. González Jiménez, 'La Hermandad entre Sevilla y Carmona (Siglos XIII-XVI), in *Actas del I Congreso de historia de Andalucía.* (Córdoba, 1978), 3-6.
[77] Asenjo, 'Ciudades y hermandades', 120.

described as 'the king's disservice' (*deservicio del rey*'). They also agreed to hold regular meetings, to which each council would send two 'good men'.[78] This is a clear movement towards a settled form of associative behaviour, legitimated to an extent by its support for the king.[79] In addition, beneath groups that received royal attention, we must always remember that there were natural aggregations of peer groups for all kinds of interests: mercantile cities formed associations, such as the *Hermandad de las Marismas*, a grouping of towns on the Cantabrian coast in 1296, while there were also *hermandades* made by professions, such as that of the beekeepers and crossbowmen of Toledo, Talavera and Ciudad Real.[80]

By the beginning of our period, then, there was a settled and often legitimate process for establishing leagues between cities and other local players. Having memorialised the principles of their arrangement with a sealed document, the *hermandad* would set out procedures for regular meetings, also taking into account gatherings of the Cortes which might achieve the same objectives. For example, at the beginning of Sancho IV's reign the *hermandades* of Castile, León, Toledo, Galicia, Extremadura and Andalucía held their meeting in Medina del Campo. They agreed to cooperate with the Cortes, and that they would send representatives to its meetings. They declared that, if Sancho called the Cortes before the feast of San Miguel, 29 September, they would move their meeting to coincide with it, and if not they would proceed as planned.[81] The final general feature of the *hermandades* was the inclusion of neighbouring lords, sometimes very eminent ones. In 1313, for example, when the *hermandad* of Seville, Córdoba and their neighbours met, they made an agreement with the powerful Fernán Pérez Ponce, noting his good disposition

[78] ibid., 121-2.
[79] See below, Chapter 6, for further discussion of the resonance of *servicio.*
[80] Suarez Fernández, 'Evolución histórica', 6-7.
[81] González Mínguez, 'Aproximación', 34-5.

towards them and that his wife and sons resided in Seville.[82] This a reminder of the power of the entangled networks identified above, and is inconvenient for interpretations of *hermandades*, or town councils for that matter, as inherently anti-noble. Suggestions that the nobility was not likely to sit on the sidelines during a power grab, as advanced by González Mínguez, miss the point, which is that town councils were more than willing to marshal any local power structures necessary to achieve their objectives.[83]

The terms typically set down by *hermandades* fall under four headings: *fueros*, fiscality, security and local jurisdiction. There were, of course, variances according to their circumstances, but it was extremely common for the *hermandades* to set themselves up to defend their privileges and they would often list abuses against these by a variety of hostile entities. They often dwelt at length on being forced to pay taxes from which they should have been exempt, but in other circumstances their clauses on tax raised special tributes, either for the running of the *hermandad* machinery or for other purposes. The most expensive purpose was defence, which was the third heading under which *hermandad* activity can be grouped. It was extremely common for these brotherhoods to agree mutual aid pacts, by which members would come to the assistance of any of their number, whether they had been the victims of a crime or called unjustly before a court. Finally, the *hermandades* sometimes made arrangements for specific types of local jurisdiction, with *alcaldes* who could hear cases of malpractice against the *hermandad* or the *fueros* and pass them on to the attention of royal officials.[84]

[82] M. J. Sanz Fuentes, 'Cartas de hermandad concejil en Andalucía: el caso de Ecija', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 5 (1978), 419-24.
[83] González Mínguez, 'Aproximación', 50.
[84] Álvarez, *Las Hermandades*, 51.

The *hermandades* were therefore indicative of the development of Castilian political structures in the locality. They reflected how the move towards more formal and intensive lordship and the general growth of governmental structures by lords, towns, churches and kings produced more systematic governance in towns and cities, and more insistent defence of privileges that came under threat from various sides. *Hermandades* were irreducibly local entities, always founded on agreements between specific, named places. The geographical areas they covered varied, but they never lost their local designations or focus on local practice. On one level, then, the *hermandades* were predictable, since they drew on old traditions of cellular politics and the natural tendency towards peer-group associations. At the same time, they were also responses to new problems. The changing landscape of conciliar politics, in which lordship of every kind became more intensive, more intertwined and more likely to come into conflict, provoked increasingly formalised responses.

Conclusion

In summary, conciliar lordship developed in tandem with both royal and noble forms of local power. Castilian towns and cities joined noblemen and kings in attempting to exploit the resources of their territories more systematically and appropriated rights to collect taxes and dispose of their *alfoz* wherever possible. The growing formalisation of the town councils, their burgeoning wealth and that of their urban lineages, and their ability to gather into *hermandades* left the *concejos* with an unquestionable influence in Castilian politics. The capacity to dominate cities at crucial moments was a vital factor in the survival of kings and noblemen alike. This led noblemen to embed their networks wherever possible in conciliar governance within their sphere of influence, though the case of Murcia in particular

shows the mechanisms deployed by town councils to stop this from happening. Similarly, kings found powerful councils to be extremely convenient tools for administering royal territories, but they occasionally found that the powers they afforded the *concejos* could force their arm. Overall, though, the key feature to emphasise is the thickening web of connections between local forces and the political centre. In this context, thorough analysis of royal agency in the locality cannot be postponed any longer.

3. Royal Agency in the Locality

> 'With regard to the other things you wrote to me to say, I am here in Moorish territory, in the service of God and in mine, and I have many things to do here, and afterwards when God wills me to leave here and I have done many things I have to do, I will attend to your business'.[1]

These words, from a letter of Alfonso XI to Murcia's *concejo* in 1327, might resonate with many an overworked manager, struggling to contain their annoyance at repeated requests for attention and frustrated at the seeming inability of subordinates to understand their priorities. Seen from the other perspective, however, they reveal the desperation that ensues when a single individual's sign-off or arbitration is required in a contentious matter, and the potential paralysis of a structure revolving around a single point. The interplay of these dual perspectives is the subject of this chapter.

At various points in this thesis, I describe the king and his court as the centre of the Castilian political system. Nonetheless, royal power, like every form of power, must describe the ability to affect something, somewhere. Kings interacted with the geographical space around them: they battled its weather and hunted its wild beasts; they collected resources from the land and its people; and competed all the while with others who were trying to do the same. As such, they travelled incessantly: Arias Guillén has calculated that they sometimes travelled over 1,800 miles in a single year.[2] When not detained by illness or campaigns, they moved through their own properties and were received in by others, racking up substantial bills for their hosts. Part of the reason for the cost was the large train of dependents and court

[1] 'Et quanto en fecho de las otras cosas que uos et el me enbiastes dezir, yo esto aca en tierra de moros, en seruiçio de Dios et mio, et tengo muchas cosas de librar aca que me cunple, et despues que Dios quiera que daqui salga et tome a esto et a otras muchas cosas que tengo de librar, yo lo librare'. *CODOM VI*, doc. 92.
[2] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 60-1.

officials who accompanied the king, both personal servants and chancery officials who travelled almost as energetically. On some occasions the king left his official apparatus behind, such as when Fernando IV in 1309 left the royal seals with his mother in Toledo while he went on campaign, but in general the full governmental apparatus followed the king.[3] However, no matter the paper trail left by the king's peripatetic chancery, as the letter from Alfonso XI shows, the king's personal time and attention was always prized above the decisions of his deputies, and indeed Fernando IV in 1309 continued to issue personal writs from Algeciras.[4] The vision of an engaged monarch visiting his people personally and hearing their claims may have been a literary ideal that clashed with the monarch's own whims,[5] but that does not mean that the king's words and actions in the locality were not genuinely significant for the practice of politics.

The subject of royal power in the locality thus has various aspects. First, by what means was royal authority expressed, upheld and delegated in the locality? When the king's agency was represented through officers, what kinds of opportunity did this afford for local networks? Relatedly, did kings have any effective control over what was done in their name? Finally, how was royal power received and disputed? To answer these questions, this chapter begins with an account of the growth of the network of royal officials and frameworks of accountability and oversight, before turning to the growth of royal fiscality and the negotiation of royal power in the Cortes. Finally, it discusses the terms in which royal power was debated by various figures in the locality.

[3] Arias, 'El Estado sobre ruedas', 185.
[4] *Benavides*, docs. 473, 477, 487.
[5] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 58.

The Royal Offices and their Origins

The most significant aspect of the king's influence in the locality was the activity of his officers. The specifics are not always easy to follow given the absence of much royal documentation, but it is evident from the petitions that exist that a network of royal officers was making itself felt more insistently than in the past. We must bear in mind, however, that the king's officers sat above and within a huge substructure of more minor officials, some connected to the royal apparatus and others entirely separate from it. As John Sabapathy has shown, these *mediocres* also proliferated following the expansion of institutions of all kinds from the late twelfth century, and in many ways their modes of operation were shared by royal officials.[6] There were innumerable points of contact between ecclesiastical offices, postholders in military orders, conciliar officials in towns, and household officials of private lords: for example, lords of all kinds used *adelantados menores* to administer estates and carry out judicial functions.[7] There was even cross-fertilisation from officials from elsewhere in Europe, as evidenced by the extended stay of the *échanson* (cupbearer) of Philip the Fair (1285-1314) at Sancho IV's court in 1291-3.[8] One should not assume automatically, therefore, that Castilian royal officials were necessarily different from their non-royal counterparts or always the result of forward-thinking state-building by ambitious monarchs. As Sabapathy suggests, we must ask 'whether a statist part has been mistaken for a bigger whole'. Instead, he argues, competing powers used various forms control over a structure of officials and, when kings did so too, state-building followed.[9]

[6] J. Sabapathy, *Officers and Accountability in Medieval England 1170-1300* (Oxford, 2014), 5.
[7] C. Jular Pérez-Alfaro, 'The King's Face on the Territory: Royal Officers, Discourse and Legitimating Practices in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Castile', in *Building Legitimacy. Political Discourse and Forms of Legitimation in Medieval Societies*, ed. I. Alfonso, H. Kennedy, and J. Escalona (Leiden, 2004), 114.
[8] *Gaibrois*, docs. 341 and 484.
[9] Sabapathy, *Officers and Accountability*, 240-1.

At the same time, however, Sabapathy's brilliant argument does not quite cover the full extent of the changes witnessed in Castile in the two centuries before our period. The scope of royal office and its brief in the locality changed fundamentally, from a set of agents responsible for the royal court and the administration of the royal demesne to an officialdom designed to carry the king's justice to every corner of the kingdom. Indeed, it is not possible to draw too neat a distinction between offices of the king's household and those that had gone 'out of court', and it was not until the late fourteenth century that the royal household was formally separated from the royal council.[10] Courtly and territorial offices were intertwined from the beginning. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the kingdom of Asturias and León was governed through counties (*condados*), with the king's power deriving almost entirely from his control over his estates – this remained true following the creation of a kingdom of Castile out of the former county.[11] Beneath the noble counts (*condes*), who oversaw military organisation, there were *praepositi* or *villici* who took charge of public order and tax in the king's lands. Gradually, these *villici* were replaced in the management of the royal *fisc* by the *maiordomus* of the palace. As a result, the term *villicus* was substituted with the diminutive *maiorinus* from the tenth century, and in early eleventh-century León there was a *maiorinus regis* with a suite of fiscal responsibilities. Meanwhile, lay lords instituted similar figures to manage their households and estates and kings granted immunities to institutions and town councils from the royal *maiorini*.

[10] Gerli, *Medieval Iberia*, 16.
[11] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real,* 37.

Though the *merinos* were initially subordinate in judicial matters to royal tenants, by the last decades of the twelfth century two changes were afoot.[12] First, as we saw in the previous chapter, large chunks of administrative responsibility were handed over to the *concejos*, accelerated by the policy of founding royal towns. Often this urban development came at the expense of tenancies: for example, the conciliar *alfoz* of Benavente absorbed the castles of Castrogonzalo, Castropepe, Bretó, Peña Castillo and Mira that had formerly been held by *tenentes*.[13] As well as affording the *concejos* a greater role, the crown also began to centralise its administration of other lordships and the royal demesne together, entrusting fiscal and judicial duties to the *merinos* who were more explicitly their servants than the former tenants. Soon, royal *merinos* were responsible for representing royal justice in entire kingdoms: from 1170 we find references to *regis maiorino in terra Legionensi*, *maiorino regis in Castella*, or *maiorino in Asturias et in Galletia*.[14] This involved a vital shift in ambition: kings now extended their authority beyond just the royal demesne, gathering taxes from and providing general justice to subjects beyond the royal estates.[15] At the turn of the thirteenth century, the qualifications *maior* and *menor* emerged to identify hierarchies within these officials. Their roles transitioned towards recruiting for the royal host and collecting the *fonsadera*, as well as maintaining the king's peace. In general, they were not nobles, but rather trusted royal servants, and they could be removed from their post at any time.[16] Beneath them were *alcaides* and smaller-scale tenants, part of a growing band of salaried royal officers, including notaries, judges (known as *alcaldes*) and investigators (*pesquiridores*). The royal structure developed rapidly in size and complexity, particularly

[12] J. Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal, 'La administración de justicia en León y Castilla durante los siglos X al XIII', in *Jornadas sobre documentación jurídico-administrativa, economico-financiera y judicial del reino castellano-leonés (siglos X-XIII)* (Madrid, 2002), 34.
[13] Monsalvo, 'De los alfoces regios', 68.
[14] C. Jular Pérez-Alfaro, *Adelantados y merinos mayores de León (siglos XIII-XV)* (León, 1990), 150-1.
[15] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 75.
[16] Sánchez-Arcilla, 'La administración de justicia', 31-33.

from the reign of Alfonso X. This was confirmed with the creation of the office of *justicia mayor* or *alguacil mayor*, executor of justice in the court from 1282 onwards.[17] By the reign of Sancho IV, the chancery had developed multiple arms, with a separate *canciller* responsible for the king's secret seal, used to send letters outside the increasingly automatic production of public privileges and confirmations.[18]

Returning to the top of the office-holding structure, Fernando III's reign was critical for the crystallisation of the *merindades*. Following the annexation of Murcia and the incorporation of Baeza, Fernando installed a *merino mayor*, driven especially by the need to collect the tributes imposed on the *mudéjares*. Not everywhere had a *merino*: the system, as it was bequeathed to Alfonso X, left the three kingdoms of Andalucía - Córdoba, Jaén and Seville – outside of the system of *merindades*, along with Toledo and Extremadura. The latter two omissions are explained by the presence of large *concejos*, military orders or archbishoprics with privileges that would preclude interference by a *merino mayor*.[19] Further south, there were other representatives of royal power on a smaller scale imposed by Fernando III: for example, the *Primera crónica general* informs us that Fernando III installed Álvar Pérez de Castro as tenant in Córdoba and its surrounding castles in 1236-9.[20] However, these fell short of the widespread territorial reach of the older *merindades*, prompting Alfonso X to address this imbalance. However, he did not follow the pattern laid down by his predecessors. Rather than create a new *merindad*, he decided instead to create an *adelantamiento* in 1253. This would comprise the territories of Córdoba, Jaén and Seville.[21]

[17] See Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 165-7, 73.
[18] D. Torres Sanz, *La administración central castellana en la Baja Edad Media* (Valladolid, 1982), 93-6.
[19] B. Vázquez Campos, '"Frontera" y adelantamientos en época de Alfonso X', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 30 (2003), 513-4.
[20] R. Menéndez Pidal (ed.), *Primera Crónica General* (1955), 737.
[21] B. Vázquez Campos, 'Sobre los orígenes del adelantamiento de Andalucía', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 27 (2000), 348.

The creation of the office of *adelantado* has been taken to signal the need for a different kind of governance in the *frontera*, as Andalucía was also called, while others have suggested that this was the first phase in a programme of overhauling the royal officials for all of Alfonso's kingdoms.[22] In 1258, he replaced Murcia's *merino mayor* García Suárez with an *adelantado mayor*, Alfonso García de Villamayor.[23] He did the same in Castile and León, with Pedro Núñez de Guzmán and Gonzalo Gil. Galicia followed five years later. Suddenly, however, towards the end of the 1260s, the king reversed this policy, reimposing *merinos mayores* in León, Castile and Galicia, though not in Murcia or the *Frontera.*[24]

Alfonso X's tinkering with his officialdom has sparked a significant debate over the differences between the major offices. Some of these judgements are based almost exclusively on the edicts of legislation, without referring lived experience.[25] The theoretical differences matter, not least because technical questions did occasionally burst through to the surface of political discourse in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. In their demands at Burgos in 1272, the noble rebels complained of the abuses of *merinos*, and later that year asked for them to be replaced by *adelantados*. The king responded that he would do so 'when the land was pacified in justice'.[26] This episode has caused confusion among historians trying to unravel the logic of this request, in part because it seems to contradict some of the most long-standing assumptions about the politics of medieval Castile. In particular, it is assumed that noble rebellion was a rebuke of Alfonso X's legal and judicial innovation, which undoubtedly included the *adelantados mayores.* To uphold this view,

[22] P. Arregui Zamorano, 'Algunas cuestiones en torno a los adelantamientos en el reinado de Alfonso X el Sabio (1253-1272)', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 70 (2000), 263.
[23] M. Martínez Martínez, 'La territorialización del poder: los Adelantados mayores de Murcia (siglos XIII-XV)', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 25 (1995), 550.
[24] Sánchez-Arcilla, 'La administración de justicia', 35.
[25] R. Pérez-Bustamente, *El gobierno y la administración territorial de Castilla (1230-1474)* (Madrid, 1976).
[26] 'cuando la tierra fuese sosegada en justicia'. *CAX*, 22.

Manuel González Jiménez took a particularly extreme approach, suggesting that the chronicler had mistakenly recorded the precise opposite of what the nobles demanded, and that in fact they must have requested *merinos* in place of *adelantados.*[27] The logic of this argument is that, since *adelantados* were more powerful royal officials and the nobility were, in the traditional historiographical interpretation, inherently and consistently opposed to royal power, they must have hoped to reimpose the weakest officials. González Jiménez therefore considers it a mark of the victory of noble ambitions that Diego Pérez Sarmiento and Rodrigo Rodríguez Osorez were recorded as *merinos mayores* of León and Castile respectively in 1273. Pilar Arregui also struggled to believe that the noblemen might ask for powerful royal officials, but suggested that that the nobles desired to remove the *merinos menores*, not the *merinos mayores*, leaving the *adelantados mayores* free to name their own subordinates.[28] Finally, Cristina Julár suggests the opposite correlation between the strength of kingship and the type of officer they relied upon: the use of *adelantados*, she suggests, indicates a weak king and a dominant nobility.[29]

Since the legal distinctions between the two offices have been studied in detail elsewhere, it is not my intention to rehearse them beyond registering that there were some aspects of the description of *adelantados* that suggested they had greater military responsibilities and a fuller judicial role, whereas *merinos* were described as more executive.[30] It is important to note, however, that the Alfonsine legislation did have relevance as a touchstone for private jurists wishing to manipulate its contents for their own purposes.[31] This is particularly shown

[27] González and Carmona, *Crónica*, 87, n. 142.
[28] Arregui, 'Algunas cuestiones', 275.
[29] Julár, *Adelantados y merinos mayores*, 282.
[30] ibid., 417-40; eadem, 'The King's Face on the Territory', 112; R. A. MacDonald, *Leyes de los adelantados mayores. Regulations, Attributed to Alfonso X of Castile, Concerning the King's Vicar in the Judiciary and in Territorial Administration* (New York, 2000).
[31] See Chapter 4, below, for further comment on the social and political impact of Alfonso X's legal changes.

by the apocryphal legal text known as the *Leyes de los adelantados mayores.* The provenance of these six laws is uncertain, though several factors point to the work being a private production from roughly 1268-72.[32] The most important of these is that the work is based on the *Espéculo* but makes changes that almost certainly preclude their being a production of the king's jurists. As Benito Fraile explains, the laws systematically pull material from the *Espéculo* that deals with the *adelantados mayores* and the *merinos mayores*, and stitches it together as a set of laws only for the *adelantados*, even where this produces repetitions.[33] This underlines the point that, despite the tidy work of institutional historians, in the last quarter of the thirteenth century there was confusion between the offices of *adelantado mayor* and *merino mayor*, with some parties interested in deliberately emphasising the role of one or other type of official. Clearly, it is important to turn to the practice of these officials in our case study regions to understand the operation of royal agency on the ground.

Royal Officers in the Locality

Comparing the respective actions of *adelantados mayores* and *merinos mayores* in our case studies is one way in which we can deepen our understanding of royal agency in the locality. Take, for example, the brief tenure of Diego López de Haro as *adelantado mayor de Castilla*, compared with that of the *merino* he replaced. The *merindad mayor* of Castile saw great stability in its office-holding, with Sancho Martínez de Leiva serving from 1284 to 1293. However, there was a hiatus from March to June 1287, when Diego López de Haro took

[32] R. A. MacDonald, 'Law and Politics: Alfonso's Program of Political Reform', in *The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned and James the Conqueror*, ed. R. I. Burns (Princeton: 1985), 200.
[33] E. Benito Fraile, 'En torno a las Leyes de los Adelantados Mayores', *Cuadernos de Historia de Derecho*, 3 (1996), 293-4.

over. [34] In a document dated 12 March 1287, we glimpse Diego López in action. Using the title of *adelantado mayor* of Castile, he gave a sentence in a complaint made by the monastery of San Pedro de Gomiel against the *merino menor* of Santo Domingo de Silos. He found in favour of the monastery, declaring that the house should not have been made to pay various tributes to the low-ranking official, because of their royal privileges.[35]

Examining a selection of the documents issued by Sancho Martínez de Leiva as *merino mayor* does not suggest that he conceived of his duties in a different way from that shown in Diego López's singular trace as *adelantado*, contrary to the impression that comes from relying too closely on legal texts. Most of the communications between Sancho IV and his *merino mayor* reminded the officer of the privileges of various institutions, following their complaints that he had overstepped. In 1288, for example, Sancho Martínez was ordered to respect the privileges of the abbot of Valladolid which prevented royal officers from entering their lands and taking *yantar*.[36] At other times, however, the *merino* was more active. He carried out an enquiry in 1286 into the proper rates of *yantar* in the lands of the monasteries of Latas and Cudeyo, and the king later confirmed the findings of the royal *pesquiridores* that they should be exempt.[37] This type of document gives us an insight into the actual workings of the king's officers in the locality. It reminds us that powers of lordship and income collection were the dominant issues in local politics, but also shows that the *merinos mayores* had the capacity to command officers to seek out information and act upon it. On a different occasion, in 1292, Sancho Martínez responded to a complaint from the monastery of Aguilar de Campóo, this time concerning private lords of *solariegos* and *behetrías* who had attempted to collect *fonsadera*; the *merino mayor* declared that this nefarious practice

[34] *Gaibrois*, doc. 158
[35] ibid., doc. 147.
[36] *Mañueco*, doc. 95.
[37] *Pereda*, doc. 215; *Gaibrois*, doc. 474.

should cease.[38] It is difficult to see too much difference between these actions against inappropriate income collection and Diego López de Haro's judgement against the *merino menor* of Santo Domingo de Silos, though it is nonetheless noteworthy that the *merino* targeted private lords whereas the *adelantado* sought to restrain a royal officer.

Another individual to operate under the title of *adelantado mayor* was Juan Alfonso de Albuquerque. Not to be confused with his more famous namesake who dominated politics under Pedro I, Juan Alfonso was a well-connected nobleman in his own right. He descended from Alfonso Téllez de Meneses, as did María de Molina, and his second wife was Teresa Sánchez, one Sancho IV's two illegitimate daughters.[39] Juan Alfonso can be documented as *adelantado mayor* of Galicia from December 1289 to the end of 1291, replacing the *merino mayor*, Diego Gómez. The use of the title *adelantado mayor* confirms the pattern observed by Julár that higher nobility seemed to prefer it to *merino mayor*. One is sceptical, however, that anything particularly significant in institutional terms was intended by this. On 12 September 1292, Ruy Fernández, a *merino menor* in Pruzos, gave a judgement to the monastery of Monfero.[40] In doing so, he referred to his superiors, both past and present. He quotes a letter of Martín Pérez Caraele, '*merino mayor* for don Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, who was *adelantado mayor* at the time in Galicia'. However, he refers to himself as *merino* of Pruzos 'for don Diego Gómez [señor?] de Roa and *adelantado mayor* of the king in Galicia'.[41] This usage is surprising for two reasons. First, because for the

[38] ibid., doc. 425.
[39] C. Cawley, 'Castile and León. Counts and Kings', *Foundation for Medieval Genealogy*, version 4.0.
[40] *Gaibrois* incorrectly dates this letter to 1291 (era 1329), arguing that in 1290 Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque was in post, and in 1292 it was Pay Gómez. (*Gaibrois*, III, 234 n. 1.) In fact, Diego Gómez was *adelantado mayor* from January 1292, and the first appearance of Pay Gómez is in November 1292. 15 September 1292 is therefore a more plausible date, and there is no need to assume that Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque's tenure from 1289-1291 was interrupted. See *Gaibrois*, docs. 395, 438; c.f. AHN Leg. 125, 1121.
[41] 'meryno maor por don Johan alfonso dalborquerque que era endeantado maor en saçón en Galiçia'. 'por don Diego Gomez… de Roa e endeatado maor del Rey en Galiçia'. *Gaibrois*, doc. 368.

entirety of Diego Gómez's first stint as the king's officer in Galicia, he had used the title *merino mayor*.[42] Second, because the usage of these terms as spelled out in the legislation would not expect a *merino mayor* to be operating as a deputy for the *adelantado mayor*.[43] This document should therefore be understood as a minor official's best effort at cutting through the confusion of the titles, referring to the highest officer put in by the king as *adelantado mayor* and his deputies as *merinos*. This seems to support the overall sense that, beyond the precise legislative mind of Alfonso X, the institutional differences of the offices were relatively minor, though it remains possible that the word *adelantado* had a more exalted set of associations that made it more appealing for the highest nobility.

To return to the controversy of 1272, then, prestige is perhaps a more helpful clue to the intentions of the nobility. First, we cannot sustain González Jiménez's view that the chronicler mixed the officers around. The idea that the chronicler might have made such a mistake, not only in the demand but in the king's response, is very difficult to believe, especially in a passage as well informed and richly supported by documentation as this. As for Arregui's rather ingenious suggestion that the *merinos menores* were the target, Vázquez Campos has convincingly shown how the specific description of the targeted *merinos* as having the power to *fazer justiciar* brings them in line with the technical description of the *merinos mayores*, not their subordinates.[44] A more convincing interpretation has been provided by Jular. Her study of the *merinos mayores* of León demonstrates the way in which the *hidalgos* occupying the office had been able to enrich themselves but not enter courtly circles. She therefore argues that the desire for *adelantados* was a fight for privilege by the

[42] See ibid., docs. 206, 243.
[43] *Partidas*, II.9.xxiii.
[44] Vázquez, '"Frontera" y adelantamientos', 531.

nobility, who feared the enrichment of the *merinos* and the pressure of the oligarchies from below.[45]

This argument requires a different logic, which has some interesting implications. First, it assumes that *adelantados* were more commonly members of the upper nobility than the *merinos*. This does have some merit, judging from the diplomatic evidence, which we shall examine more closely in Chapter 5. Following on from this, Jular suggests that the rationale for the 1272 demand was to ensure that it was noblemen who occupied the highest posts in the territorial administration, rather than the king's men. To some extent this is a phenomenon seen elsewhere in Europe, since it was common for communities to prefer officers to be 'one of their own' rather than outsiders: English counties tended to prefer sheriffs from the local gentry rather than careerists who had held different shrievalties, and so on.[46] These comparisons are not perfect, however, because the issue is not the status as geographical 'outsider', with many *merinos mayores* hailing from the *merindad* that they administered. Indeed, we often find examples of requests for different officers in a locality to be *naturales* of that place, but the issue is not couched in those terms here.[47] Instead, it is a question of status and prestige. Within the same set of demands we find a call for the nobility to be judged only by members of their own rank, and hence it seems that the desire for *adelantados* was driven by a similar hope that the king's administration might be headed by one of their number. This argument is important for our appraisal of the changing nature of royal agency in the locality. Alfonso X and his father developed a superior caste of royal posts with enormous territorial designations: these both advanced a self-confident view of royal jurisdiction and were highly prestigious for those chosen to hold these offices. In a

[45] Jular, *Adelantados y merinos mayores*, 187.
[46] Sabapathy, *Officers and Accountability*, 231.
[47] E.g. *Cortes*, 110.

context where the former system of tenancy had lost its importance apart from in the administration of specific portions of the royal estates, local politics would now be fundamentally affected by the personnel and priorities of the *adelantados* and *merinos mayores* and their substructures.

The Benefits of High Office

The growth in size and prestige of the royal officialdom produced opportunities to participate in the king's agency in the locality. Following what we saw in the previous two chapters, those with well-positioned networks (whether in size, proximity to key cities or connection with other significant regional players) were clearly in advantageous positions. For the author of the *Libro de los doze sabios*, the main concern was that a local man might be prejudiced towards his allies, so the king should correct this by imposing someone from elsewhere:

> 'If you see that in some places the justices do not measure justice as they ought to in the use of their office, through being natives of that land or for another reason, put in those places foreign executors who do not hesitate to punish evils and are not swayed by love nor belonging'.[48]

However, the opportunities of office went beyond turning a blind eye to malfeasances by those whom the officer knew. There were several other sources of advantage, though the nature of the sources can make it difficult to know whether the office was the cause of the advantage or one of its effects. For instance, where an officer is the beneficiary of a string of royal grants, one might be tempted to infer that the influential position at court and the

[48] 'Sy vieres que en algunas partes non se ygualan las justiçias al que ha de usar su oficio, por ser naturales de la tierra o por otra ocasyón, pon en los tales logares corregidores estraños a que non duela castigar los malos nin los enbargue amor nin naturaleza'. *Doze sabios*, 95.

chance to carry out high-level royal service afforded by the office led to more material remuneration; on the other hand, the same favour that made the king inclined to give gifts of property to an individual might have been the reason for their being given the office in the first place, such that office-holding did not generate much additional advantage.

One way in which we see officers enriching themselves is in the annexation of land, by fair means or foul. This was evidently an issue of great concern. The mid-thirteenth-century *Deuysas que han los señores en sus vasallos*, a private legal collection, record an order that no *adelantado* or *merino* should seek to acquire more land, specifically *behetrías*, than they had when they took up office.[49] Similarly, at the Cortes of Valladolid in 1307, it was complained that 'the *alcaldes* hold castles from me [Fernando IV] and have palaces and fortresses of my towns and properties, from which they [the petitioners] have received many evils and damages'.[50] This betrays a feeling that the royal officers were gaining in material power at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Observing this in the documentation is sometimes difficult, and indeed the most successful annexations of land would leave no trace of complaint or reversal. Nonetheless, we do have some clear signs that there was a basis for these concerns. For example, the accounts of the monastery of Arlanza, just south of Burgos, record that Miranda and its dependent villages were held by Juan Martínez de Leiva by force in 1337-8, costing them more than 600 *maravedís* a year.[51] Juan Martínez was a regular servant of Alfonso XI, having occupied the post of *merino mayor* of Castile on two previous occasions, and being the king's chief steward (*camarero mayor*) at the time

[49] G. Sánchez, 'Para la historia de la redacción del antiguo derecho territorial castellano', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español,* 6 (1929), 323.
[50] 'quelos alcaldes que tienen los castiellos por mi e los alcaçares e las ffortalezas delas mis villas e delos mios logares auian rreçebido muchos males e muchos dannos'. *Cortes*, 191-2.
[51] J. J. García González, 'Libro de las cuentas de los monasterios benedictinos de la provincia de Toledo de 1338', in *Vida económica de los monasterios benedictinos en el siglo XIV* (Valladolid, 1972), 220.

that his transgression was recorded.[52] In more general terms, the years of office-holding by prominent members of the Rojas, Velasco and Villamayor lineages correspond with the intense activity in land sales and exchanges we traced in Chapter 1.[53] A final case is revealed by a document of 1296, in which Fernando IV's regents ordered a farmhouse to be returned to the daughter of Diego Sánchez de Funes. The document records how the former *adelantado de la frontera*, Fernán Pérez Ponce, took this property away from her without calling them to trial or offering any justification, and gave it to Fernán Gutiérrez Quijada (himself later an officeholder).[54] This evidence suggests that holding office could provide illicit opportunities to increase one's landed power or that of one's allies, or, at the very least, that holding a royal office did not always impede a nobleman from engaging in the full range of tactics deployed by competing landholders.

Much more common (or, at least, more visible to the historian) was for officers to seek greater reward through the king's grace. A straightforward example is the grant of Poza and Pedrajas to Juan Rodríguez de Rojas, *merino mayor* of Castile, in 1298, when the minority government was particularly reliant upon the support of its allies.[55] Another is the grant of Valdemoro and Rabrido to Juan Manuel by Fernando IV: Juan Manuel had long been *adelantado mayor* of Murcia, but had more recently taken up the post of *mayordomo mayor*.[56] The sense that the *mayordomo mayor*, through proximity to the king and direct service, was particularly well placed to benefit is reinforced by the favour shown to Juan Osorez, master of Santiago. In 1301, Fernando IV gave the master and his successors the right to collect half of the tributes usually owed by their vassals to the king, and in the

[52] A. Sánchez de Mora, *Juan Martínez de Leiva*, Diccionario Biográfico Electrónico, Real Academia de la Historia, http://dbe.rah.es, accessed June 2021.
[53] See above, 59-62.
[54] *Benavides*, doc. 71.
[55] ibid., doc. 109.
[56] ibid., doc. 559.

following year Juan was given the other half for himself, for as long as he lived.[57] Moreover, Sancho IV had to reassure the council of Palencia in 1287 that he did not intend to diminish their rights by giving more than he should to his chancellor and the bishop of Palencia, Juan Alfonso.[58] Clearly, Juan Alfonso's position as bishop was a likely source of local influence that the city council felt aggrieved by, but it is important to note that his long tenure of the chancellorship also presented opportunities. At other times, royal officers used their position to confirm grants to third parties. In 1288, Sancho IV gave what appears to be a routine confirmation, reassuring the monastery of Trianos that properties given to them by Juan Fernández would be theirs in perpetuity.[59] What is interesting about this action, however, is that this came at the request of Juan Fernández himself, who only two days earlier appeared for the first time as *mayordomo mayor*, and that it was ordered by Juan Mathé, the king's steward, on Sancho's behalf.[60] It is possible, therefore, that Juan Fernández was taking advantage of his new control over the apparatus of the royal household to secure his investment in a local monastery (Trianos lay only 25 miles from his lordship of Castroponce).[61] Clearly, office-holders used their position close to the focal points of decision-making to secure grants and consolidate local advantages, whether through the king himself or by through influence over the royal household. This took place in a context of increasing paperwork, more assertive judicial oversight and heavier emphasis on royal confirmation of local arrangements, meaning that domination of these mechanisms was even more valuable than in the past.

[57] AHN, Uclés, caj. 5, vol. I, nos. 18-19.
[58] *Gaibrois*, doc. 144.
[59] ibid., doc. 212.
[60] ibid., doc. 211.
[61] M. Villar y Macías, *Historia de Salamanca* (Salamanca, 1887), 197.

The final attraction of royal office was financial remuneration. Controlling a major judicial office like an *adelantamiento* or *merindad* provided various incomes (though not direct tax collection), including fines, victualing rights, fees for cancelling debts, seized goods or booty from war.[62] As Vázquez Campos has shown, the chance survival of some books of accounts (*cuentas*) for the reign of Sancho IV gives us a unique insight into the astonishing monetary value of holding high office. These accounts are an indispensable reminder of the sheer number of individuals benefiting from the king's office-holding structure by the end of the thirteenth century. They also leave us in no doubt as to the value of offices, stemming as they did from the era of expanded taxation. The *Nómina de la frontera* of 1290 shows that the *adelantado* at that time, Fernán Pérez Ponce, collected 54,000 *maravedís* for his office, in addition to 28,000 for his military service with 23 knights. At the same time, he also received 88,670 *maravedís* in León, the region where most of his landholding was concentrated. A later text, the *cuenta* of Juan Mathé regarding the incomes of Andalucía, shows that the new *adelantado mayor*, Juan Fernández, was owed 81,000 *maravedís*, of which he had received 67,000 by December 1294.[63] To put these numbers into perspective, the nobleman who received the highest cash sums of all in 1292 in both León and Castile was the *infante* Juan, Sancho's brother, who received 168,600 *maravedís*, while Juan Núñez II de Lara received 151,544, and Juan Manuel 149,300.[64] The sheer size of the sums involved, and the importance of having liquid assets in a political climate dominated by salaries, illustrates a connected set of critical dynamics.[65] As the ambitions of royal fiscality grew, the financial rewards for royal service became more apparent. The lack of accounts books for previous and subsequent reigns makes it difficult to know for sure how dramatic

[62] Martínez, 'La territorialización del poder', 557.
[63] B. Vázquez Campos, 'Hacienda regia, jerarquía social y grandes oficios', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* 31 (2004), 710-11.
[64] ibid., 709.
[65] See Ladero, 'Las transformaciones de la fiscalidad', 397-8; Hernández, *Rentas del rey*, 34-43.

these changes were, but there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that the prizes at stake for dominance in Castilian politics were changing, and that politicians knew it.

Control and Accountability

Royal power in the locality was therefore expressed through a far-reaching system of officers, who busied themselves judging cases and collecting incomes both on the monarch's behalf and in pursuit of their own interests. The key question, then, is what structures were in place to ensure that the king's officers were subject to his control. What is clear in Castile's case is that there were two types of procedure for holding officers to account, which we might characterise as 'passive' and 'active'. The main 'passive' form was petitioning. Individuals or institutions could approach the king at his court or send representatives to do so for them, though if the matter was urgent this could present logistical difficulties in reaching the king as he travelled. Indeed, it was common for plaintiffs to approach the king when he visited them, either having waited or simply to make the most of the opportunity, rather than seeking the king out at great distance. This passive system, in which the king was informed of abuses by his officers after the fact, was inefficient and perceptions that the king was ignorant of his officers and their business drew criticism. At the end of his reign, Fernando IV promised the Cortes that he would do better at knowing all of his officials and what they did, so that he could better prevent them from overstepping.[66] At the same time, there were also active mechanisms for the correction of abuses, primarily based on the system of enquiry.[67] The *Partidas* discuss this procedure at length, which allowed royal

[66] *Cortes*, 209.
[67] E. S. Procter, 'The Judicial Use of 'Pesquisa' (Inquisition) in León and Castille, 1157-1369', *English Historical Review. Supplement* 2, (London, 1966).

officers to initiate prosecution or resolve a disputed case without a prior complaint or charge, often on the basis of common knowledge or reputation.[68] This was based primarily on canon law inquisitions, though the *pesquisa* constituted investigation before charges, whereas in canon law the inquisition was the trial itself.[69] This was not without its difficulties, not least the possibility that officials could call enquiries that suited them rather than the king's interests, and the Cortes sought assurances that this would not happen in 1286.[70]

When it comes to enforcement of the royal will in practice, there is evidence that kings had a reasonable measure of control over officials. Often the king must have been entirely in the dark as to the actual behaviour of private lords and officials alike, with a multitude of abuses never recorded. However, the surviving documentation does uphold the idealised vision of the *Partidas*, in which the king sat at the head of a complex and living body composed of his servants and officials. Not only did kings habitually call on their *adelantados* or *merinos mayores* to prevent abuse or provide redress in various matters, but they could exercise direct control much lower down the hierarchy. In 1292, for example, Sancho IV took action to resolve a complaint of the church of Cartagena in Murcia, about incomes that had not been rendered to them by the council of Alcaraz. Sancho directed his order to a 'Bernalt Mecyan, *merino* for Juan Sánchez de Ayala, *adelantado* in the kingdom of Murcia'.[71] Juan Sánchez himself was a lieutenant, since the *adelantamiento mayor* had been held by Juan Manuel since 1284 and delegated to a string of other officials. This process whereby the king could intervene at a lower level could sometimes take a more dramatic form: in 1289, when Sancho

[68] R. I. Burns and S. P. Scott, *Las Siete Partidas,* 3 (Philadelphia, 2001), xviii-xix.
[69] H. Ansgar Kelly, 'Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy: Misconceptions and Abuses', *Church History,* 58 (1989), 441.
[70] *Cortes*, 96-7.
[71] *Gaibrois*, doc. 429.

found Toledo riven by crime, he executed his *alcalde mayor* in the city, Garci Álvarez, his brother and several others for their failure to address the problem.[72]

Another case of close oversight by Sancho IV can be seen with the aforementioned Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque. The documents show Juan Alfonso following the king's orders: on 16 October 1291, Sancho IV commanded him to protect the rights belonging to the cathedral of Badajoz in Azagala.[73] Then, on 15 November, Juan Alfonso wrote from Medina del Campo to the bishop of Badajoz about a very similar issue, though this time dealing with slightly different incomes from Cosodera and Benavente.[74] The location of these places, all within 15 miles of each other and within 10 miles of Juan Alfonso's lordship of Alburquerque, suggest that the *adelantado* was one of the many lords putting pressure on ecclesiastical landed rights at the end of the thirteenth century; this is especially likely given that the second document is addressed not to a subordinate royal official but to the *alcalde* of Alburquerque itself. It is revealing, however, that both instances in which the bishop of Badajoz pushed back against this followed what we can assume to be positive intervention by the king. The first is a royal letter issuing a direct command, which the bishopric could use to prevent usurpations of their rights. The king's influence in the second instance can be inferred from the fact that, on the very same day, Sancho IV also issued a document from Medina del Campo.[75] It is hard to believe it is coincidental that Juan Alfonso ordered men in his own lordship to cease aggressive income collections in ecclesiastical lands on a day when he and the king were together at Medina del Campo. Of course, if witness lists can be trusted, the lord of Alburquerque was frequently present at court to witness the major

[72] *CSIV*, 82.
[73] *Gaibrois*, doc. 377.
[74] ibid., doc. 382.
[75] ibid., doc. 383.

privilegios, but this had last happened at Burgos in May.[76] It seems highly probable that the king had spoken to Juan Alfonso about this matter at court at Medina del Campo, especially given that the king had only a month earlier issued a letter on a similar issue.[77] This is an unusually close glimpse at the interface between centre and locality, and one which would seem to counteract any assumption that *adelantados* were, by the institutional nature of their office, more difficult for the king to control than *merinos*. There is no comparable evidence to suggest that *merinos* were more securely under the thumb of the monarch; and though it may well be true that some *adelantados mayores* were occasionally very difficult to compel, this had more to do with their personal means and inclinations, rather than the freer licence of their office.

These examples, showing both documentary and coercive intervention by the monarch in local justice, suggest that there was some degree of accountability if he chose to take an interest. Indeed, in some circumstances, Sancho IV turned to royal vassals rather than officers to carry out their usual business. In May 1293, he sent his vassal, Pedro Núñez de Guzmán, to resolve a complaint of the abbot of San Pedro de Gomiel.[78] The document references a *pesquisa* carried out by the *merino mayor*, Sancho Martínez de Leiva, but curiously the royal vassal is preferred to the royal officer. However, we might question whether the *merino* was capable of carrying out this task, since the last time he appeared confirming a royal document was on 23 May, and we could speculate that his health may have been waning.[79] Nevertheless, whatever the reason for doubting that his officer's capability, Sancho was nonetheless able to deploy a powerful royal vassal to stand in. At

[76] ibid., doc. 355.
[77] Note that after Juan Alfonso was no longer *adelantado* he issued a letter to the council of Azagala confirming the king's order. See ibid., doc. 439.
[78] ibid., doc. 477.
[79] ibid., doc. 482.

other times, direct disobedience by royal officers is not in doubt. Sometimes high-ranking royal officials are found supporting or leading rebellions, such as when Tello Gutiérrez supported Juan Núñez de Lara in 1289, or Juan Manuel's protracted conflict with Alfonso XI while *adelantado mayor* of Murcia.[80] One document issued by Fernando IV's minority government shows the profound consequences of errant royal officers: in a privilege to the town of Villalpando, it was proclaimed that 'for the many evils and many grievances which they received from the *adelantados* and *merinos* of the land of León, and from those who went with them when they entered the town and its territories, I decided to give them the favour that, from now on, no *adelantado* or *merino* or anyone who goes in their stead shall enter there in the town for the purpose of doing justice'.[81] This is a highly unusual case in which lawlessness by the king's officers led, through the central government's own assent, to permanent alienation of jurisdiction. Even though the circumstances are exceptional, the case demonstrates that there was more to the politics of office-holding than a straightforward push by monarchs to expand the royal power. Clearly, there were circumstances where improper action by royal officers so undermined the legitimacy of royal government that it was better to concede jurisdiction as compensation.

Indeed, the serious impact of official disobedience on the king is clear in the rhetoric deployed by the chancery. In one case, Sancho IV displayed a rare burst of emotion in the often formulaic documents, responding to the complaint of the cathedral of León about apathetic royal officers: 'I am astounded that they dared not to carry out my order.'[82] This kind of emotional rhetoric might, perhaps, be dismissed as a device intended to achieve a

[80] *CSIV*, 83.
[81] 'por muchos males y por muchos agraviamientos que recibian de los adelantados y de los merinos de tierra de Leon, y de aquellos que andaban con ellos que entraban en su villa y en su término, que yo toviese por bien de les facer merced que daqui adelante que ningun adelantado, ni merino, nin otro ninguno que por ellos andudiese no entrase y en la villa por razon de facer justicia'. *Benavides*, doc. 139.
[82] 'Et so marauillado conmo ellos fueron osados de non conplir mio mandado'. *Gaibrois*, doc. 102.

specific result, in line with English kings' use of 'we marvel that...'. However, the chronicles corroborate the connection between the king's presentation of his emotions and his control over officers. The chronicle of Sancho IV tells us that, in 1286, the king was approached in Sahagún by Esteban Núñez Churruchano, his *merino mayor* in León and Asturias, who said, 'don Fernand Pérez Ponce, who is here before you, obstructs justice in all of Asturias, and he took the prisoners which I brought in your chains from me; so that I, who am your *merino*, cannot fulfil your order nor do justice properly because of him'. The king was enraged, but before he could respond a vassal of Fernand Pérez, an Asturian knight called Juan Martínez Negrita, asked the *merino* how he could say such a thing. This angered Sancho even more: 'the king was infuriated by the words which Juan Martínez had uttered, and he ordered him to be silent, and he took a staff from a nearby hunter and hit him [Juan Martínez] with heavy blows, until he fell from the mule that he was riding and fell dead at the king's feet'.[83] Following this breath-taking display, Sancho shouted against those who would obstruct his *merinos*. The chronicler wraps up the episode with an optimistic statement on the impact this made, imagining that 'they were all so terrified that, from then on, none dared to obstruct the justice of his *merinos*'.[84]

This moralising incident underlines several points that have been developed in the course of this discussion. The royal officers and their efficacy were a matter of fundamental importance for politics in the locality. But more than this, they were clearly a major issue of royal prestige, a matter of competition and honour for noblemen and their vassals, and a

[83] 'D. Ferrand Perez Ponce, que está aquí ante vos, nos embarga la justicia en toda Astúrias, é los presos que yo traia en la vuestra cadena tomómelos; asi que yo, que soy vuestro merino, non puedo cumplir lo que mandastes nin facer la justicia con derecho por él'; 'e el rey tomó muy grand saña por las palabras que dijera Juan Martinez, é mandólo que callase, é tomo un palo á un montero que estaba antél, é dióle grandes palos, en guisa que cayó de una mula en que estava por muerto á los piés del Rey'. *CSIV*, 74.
[84] 'escarmentaron en tal manera todos, que de allí adelante non se atrevió ninguno á embargar la justicia de los sus merinos'. ibid.

fundamental point of contact between influence at the centre and enforcement in the locality. A significant consequence of the Romano-canonical conception of the king as the head of the body politic was that the king must have control over his officers, and where he did not, his enemies could use this to discredit his rule and frustrate his ambitions. Control over the behaviour of officers from the centre was still far from guaranteeing automatic accountability, and still relied upon the transitory attention of the monarch, but nonetheless we can trace a clear desire to seek central correction and direction, and to turn readily to the centre for advantage in the locality.

Royal Taxation

For many Castilians, the most frequent encounter with the king's image came when using his money and paying his tax. The royal purse was swelled by a complex system of customary taxes, with enormous geographical variation and specific exemptions from this or that duty held by royal privilege by towns and ecclesiastical institutions of all sizes. Moreover, as we have seen, *concejos* were gradually appropriating the collection of these incomes according to their different means. As the studies of Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada and Carlos Estepa have conclusively demonstrated, the fiscal system changed fundamentally from 1265-1342. The details of these transformations are well understood, but a summary is nonetheless essential here to understand how the king's fiscal relationship with the locality changed.

The traditional *pechos* and *derechos* (customary taxes) were collected by the king by virtue of his position as the first lord of the kingdom. This meant that the agrarian taxes he collected

annually in the *realengo* were the same as those collected by other lords in their own lordships, such as *martiniega*, *marzazga* and *infurción*. Other similar taxes were tied to an action or occasion, such as a lord's staying in a particular city, like *yantar*, *conducho* and *hospedaje.*[85] By the second half of the thirteenth century, these were often collected annually whether or not the king had visited, and were also levied by private lords, institutions and some royal officers. In addition, there were monies collected by the king alone by virtue of his preeminent power, such as *fonsadera*, paid in lieu of attendance in the royal host, and taxes of Islamic origin such as the *quinto* or fifth part of spoils of war.[86] As these traditional incomes stagnated, diminished by inflation, exemption or lapsed collection, monarchs in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries experimented with new taxes due only to the king, such as the *pedido* (request) and *moneda* (levied periodically in exchange for a promise not to debase the coinage). Having begun as extraordinary taxes, by 1252 these had also become customary, as signified by the phrase *moneda forera.* The *pedido* disappeared almost everywhere, while *moneda forera* was collected once every seven years and at the start of reigns, as a recognition of royal sovereignty. The same process occurred in ecclesiastical taxes. The *tercias reales*, assessed as two ninths of the *diezmo* (tithes), was collected by kings since at least the time of Alfonso VII, but by 1295 collection was so habitual that there was a set figure for each bishopric. Despite the occasional chagrin of popes, especially Boniface VIII, collection of *tercias* continued, alongside other occasional forms of taxation granted by the Roman Pontiff, such as the *décima* and *cruzadas*, granted for campaigns against the Muslims, and the *ius spolii*.[87] This was the right of the king to administer a deceased bishop's goods until a successor was elected.[88] Though renounced by Alfonso IX,

[85] Estepa, 'La construcción de la fiscalidad', 65-94; idem, *Los territorios del rey*, 340-4.
[86] Ladero, *Fiscalidad y poder real*, 27.
[87] J. F. O'Callaghan, 'The Ecclesiastical Estate in the Cortes of León-Castile, 1252-1350', in *Alfonso X, the Cortes, and Government in Medieval Spain*, ed. Joseph F. O'Callaghan (Ashgate, 1998), 190; Ladero, *Fiscalidad y poder real*, 185-202.
[88] P. Linehan, *The Spanish Church and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1971), 218.

Fernando III and Alfonso X, this right continued to be exercised, prompting a papal legate to investigate in 1279.[89] Finally, kings collected traditional revenues from the Jews and Muslims who lived under his protection, and from royalties on, for example, salt and other mining.

Customary taxation was clearly insufficient by the second half of the thirteenth century. Despite the deceleration of southward conquest, defence was still a significant drain on resources, with the garrisoning of Tarifa alone costing two million *maravedís* a year. Collaboration with the other peninsular kingdoms was also costly: for example, Jaime I's timely intervention in Murcia following the Mudéjar rebellion in 1266 was compensated with 100,000 *maravedís*. The stipends (*salarios* or *sueldos*) owed to noblemen who retained soldiers to fight for the king became exceptionally burdensome.[90] At the same time, yields from the customary incomes declined, such that whereas *moneda forera* brought in 1,500,000 *maravedís* under Sancho IV, by the minority of Alfonso XI it yielded only 1,000,000. [91] The result was a very substantial deficit if a king tried to rely only on his customary incomes. In 1309, a budgetary inquiry found that the king's customary incomes were 4,500,000 *maravedís* short of covering his costs, and by 1317 the deficit was an eye-watering 8,000,000 *maravedís*.[92]

Clearly, then, additional fiscal innovations were required, especially after 1258, when Alfonso X was faced with a large bill to buy votes in the Imperial elections. Closely connected to his Imperial project was a new conception of monarchical authority. Indeed,

[89] C. de Ayala Martínez, 'La política eclesiástica de Alfonso X: el rey y sus obispos', *Alcanate: Revista de estudios Alfonsíes*, 9 (2015), 47.
[90] Grassotti, *Las instituciones*,788-844; Doubleday, *The Lara*, 71; Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 735-8.
[91] Ladero, *Fiscalidad y poder* real, 317-18.
[92] J. F. O'Callaghan, 'Las Cortes de Fernando IV: cuadernos inéditos de Valladolid 1300 y Burgos 1308', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 13 (1986), 319.

Alfonso X was bullish about his kingdom's obligations: 'the king can demand and take from the kingdom not only what previous kings used to take, but even more, when he has such a great need for the common good of the land that he could not avoid it'.[93] Alfonso's innovations in extraordinary taxes came in three forms. First, he made extraordinary demands for clerical *tercias*, levied in 1255 and 1275, copied by later regimes in 1291, 1316 and 1326. These levies provoked frequent requests for assurance that *tercias* would always be subject to clerical consent. Second, the nobility, though usually exempt from direct taxation, were occasionally asked for contributions. In 1269 the nobles consented to an extraordinary levy on their vassals, though three years later at Burgos they protested the amount and secured an adjustment. Thereafter, magnate consent was given only once more in our period, at Carrión in 1317.[94] By far the most important extraordinary tax, however, was the *servicio*. There is some doubt over the precise moment when it was created, but it certainly emerged early in Alfonso X's reign. In 1258 a double *moneda* was raised to finance Alfonso's bid for the Imperial throne. The collection of a tax explicitly called a *servicio* began at the Cortes of Burgos in November 1269, for the marriage of the king's son, Fernando, to the daughter of Louis IX of France.[95] As time went on, *servicio* was the name given to any extraordinary taxes granted by the Cortes. These usually took one of two forms: either it was equivalent to a *moneda forera*, and was therefore a capitation tax; or otherwise it came as a tax on moveable property.[96] Sancho IV also experimented with a new tax called the *sisa* in 1293, amounting 1% of all sales transactions except those of clergy, knights and their families.[97]

[93] 'el rey puede demandar et tomar del regno lo que usaron los otros reyes que fueron ante que él, et aun mas á los sazones que lo hobiese tan grant mester para pro comunal de la tierra, que lo non pueda escusar'. *Partidas*, II.1.viii.
[94] J. F. O'Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile-León, 1188-1350* (Philadelphia, 1989), 133.
[95] Ladero, *Fiscalidad y poder real*, 56.
[96] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 135.
[97] ibid., 137-8.

It would be redundant to catalogue every extraordinary tax granted by the Cortes, for such lists have already been published.[98] Instead, it suffices to note two vitally important trends. First, like *monedas*, the yields of *servicios* declined dramatically, such that the 5 *servicios* levied in 1302 barely matched the revenues of the single *servicio* of 1269.[99] Second, as a direct result, *servicios* were levied more frequently and in greater numbers. Fernando IV's reign demonstrates this unchecked acceleration: the Cortes of Cuéllar in 1297 gave him one *servicio*; that of Valladolid in 1298, two; that of 1299, three; of 1300, four *servicios*, with a further one for papal bulls legitimating Fernando IV; the Cortes of 1301 gave the same amount; and two meetings in 1302 gave 5 *servicios*, earmarking one for the king and the remainder for noble stipends.[100] The very high tax rate continued almost yearly until Fernando IV died, though his son's minority saw a more restricted tally amid intense criticism of royal spending.

The story of royal taxation, then, is one of immense expansion, but also of frustration: despite each painful concession, tax yields struggled to keep pace with administrative costs. In addition to amplifying demands, kings also experimented with different forms of collection. Castile's heterogeneous political geography produced different norms in different places: some of the oldest duties were still collected by *merinos*, while in the south there were officials adopted from Muslim practice called *almojarifes*, who acted as collectors and treasurers. As a rule, however, royal fiscal agents called *recaudadores* were responsible for receiving incomes, either directly or through deputies, and generally kept 2.5-3%. Often the *recaudadores* received monies through the urban conciliar administration,

[98] ibid., 136-43; Ladero, *Fiscalidad y poder real*, 57-68.
[99] ibid., 213.
[100] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 138-9.

which had organised prior collection through their *alfoz*, or through debt farmers. This allowed the *concejos* to maintain control over the *servicios*, avoiding over-zealous collection and benefiting from any surplus in the quotas, though the Cortes often asked for greater powers of oversight in the appointment of collectors. Occasionally, monarchs made concerted efforts to collect shortfalls from previous subsidies, such as Alfonso X's 1276 effort to rake in all arrears since 1261.[101] When this failed, kings often turned to wealthy tax farmers. Despite repeated promises not to lease royal incomes to nobles, knights, Jews or *alcaldes* and *merinos*, kings regularly did so, with evidence of everything from minor fines to *tercias* being leased to all kinds of individuals.[102]

We shall see in the final section of this thesis the impact all these activities had on the political dynamics of Castile. For now, however, we can see how the king's expanded fiscality would make a dramatic impression in the locality. It produced great opportunity for those in the position to participate in the system or appropriate it illegally, whether individuals or town councils, but also gave rise to grievances and modes of consultation that would have a dramatic effect on local political interaction.

Royal Agency in Dialogue: The Cortes

The dramatic expansion of royal office-holding and fiscality, occurring in tandem with the developing structures of noble and conciliar lordships, therefore created both opportunities and tensions for local political actors. So far, however, little has been said about the reaction

[101] Ladero, *Fiscalidad y poder real*, 238-9.
[102] ibid., 243-4.

these changes provoked in the locality. Importantly, the very justifications used by monarchs in their expansion provided the terms for dialogue about royal power with elements of the locality.

While Roman Law was most useful to Alfonso X in his construction of a sense of a public *fisc*, it also suggested other principles in the interface between a king and his subjects. The most important was the maxim *quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus approbari debet*, one of the main justifying principles for European representative institutions at this time.[103] The growth of the conciliar system discussed in the previous chapter, which left significant amounts of *realengo* resources under the day-to-day direction of town councils, meant that Castilian towns were in a strong position to expect to be consulted on important matters. Second, Roman Law provided formulae for proctors to be invested with *plena potestas*. According to this principle, the *procurator* had a responsibility to act in the real interests of the *dominus* whom they represented, but they nevertheless had full power to act as if that master were present.[104] This principle had been used routinely by towns as supplicants before the king's court and, as interaction with royal justice proliferated, so did the notion of productive and binding dialogue between the monarch and his subjects through *procuradores*.[105]

These ideas built on the long tradition of kings seeking counsel and consent from their subjects. As early as 1157, kings of León and Castile may have summoned representatives of the towns to join the bishops and nobles in the royal *curia*.[106] The *curia* was the habitual surrounding of the king by noblemen and prelates who advised the monarch. From the reign

[103] Watts, *Making of Polities*, 74-8.
[104] G. Post, 'Plena Potestas and Consent in Medieval Assemblies: A Study in Romano-Canonical Procedure and the Rise of Representation, 1150–1325', *Traditio*, 1 (1943), 356-64.
[105] E. S. Procter, 'The Towns of León and Castille as Suitors before the King's Court in the Thirteenth Century', *The English Historical Review*, 74 (1959), 12-13.
[106] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 4.

of Fernando II, this gradually acquired broader participation and, crucially, began to feature representatives from the *concejos*.[107] A meeting called by Alfonso IX of León in 1188 to Benavente was the first to record explicitly the presence of the townsmen (*cum electis civibus ex singulis civitatibus*) while a later meeting in 1202 was attended by *multis de qualibet villa regni mei*.[108] At this early stage, the calling of the townsmen could not be described as an institutional structure, with these meetings often considered expanded *curie* for particularly significant events like royal weddings or acclamations of new monarchs. However, with the crystallisation of powerful *concejos* responsible for administering large tracts of newly conquered territory, procedures began to formalise. Fernando III summoned the townsmen to Seville in 1250, and then early in his reign Alfonso X was the first to use the term *cortes*, citing an assembly held at Toledo in March 1254.[109]

The formal structure of the Cortes developed through its more regular summoning: in his first 20 years on the throne, Alfonso X convened 12 assemblies, and in 1274-1284 there were 6. Despite the procedural uniformity that began to characterise these meetings, however, there was nonetheless an important degree of flexibility stemming from the fact that the royal summons was the defining element of a Cortes. Indeed, the *Siete partidas* referred to the assemblies called by the king as 'his Cortes' (*sus cortes*).[110] As a result, the king could exercise discretion in the composition, timing and regularity of the meetings. Cortes assemblies could be plenary, consisting of the prelates, noblemen and townsmen of Castile, León and Extremadura (though Andalucía, Galicia, Toledo and Murcia were sometimes mentioned separately), or regional, gathering the three estates of one or more of these territories. When a full meeting was called, O'Callaghan has calculated 180 towns

[107] E. S. Procter, *Curia and Cortes in León and Castile, 1072-1295* (Cambridge, 1980).
[108] C. Estepa Díez, 'Los orígenes de las cortes', in *El reino de León*, 181-90.
[109] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 21.
[110] *Partidas*, II.5.v.

which were likely to send representatives (usually two each, but sometimes up to four): 78 from Castile, 45 from León, 29 from Extremadura, 18 from Toledo, and 10 from Andalucía and Murcia.[111] The geographical spread was extremely uneven: very few towns were summoned from Galicia, for example. In addition, almost all of those summoned were directly dependent on the king, such that even a city as symbolic as Toledo did not have a separate representation from their lord, the archbishop, until 1348.[112] There were, however, some exceptions in cases where seigneurial towns were represented: for example, Alfonso X summoned Ourense (Galicia), whose bishop was its lord, in 1256 and 1278, while other *villas de señorío*, such as Palencia in 1295, 1301 and 1302 or Buitrago in 1305, received *cuadernos*, which might suggest that they participated on occasion.[113] As a result of the fundamental role of the king's summons, the Cortes was prevented from attaining a fully automatic role in the royal government.

The Cortes, in their plenary or regional forms, are therefore best understood as an expression of local power in a central context. They provided a forum for dialogue, petitioning, counsel and consent on the king's agency both in the locality and in terms of the common interest. This forum sat alongside other ways of approaching to the king: we must remember that towns, churches and monasteries increasingly petitioned the king and sought royal confirmation of their privileges from each successive monarch, to the extent that confirmation became a habitual part of political culture and forms a large proportion of the surviving documentation.[114] However, the king's ability to address an assembly with the full legal responsibility to represent the entire kingdom gave the Cortes special functions that

[111] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 54.
[112] Vladimir Piskorskiĭ, *Las Cortes de Castilla en el período de tránsito de la Edad Media a la moderna, 1188-1520* (Barcelona, 1977), 35-6.
[113] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 55.
[114] ibid., 76, 125; Procter, 'The Towns of León and Castile as Suitors', 1-22.

could not be replicated through other structures. First, it had a vital ceremonial importance, for example in the swearing of an oath of loyalty to Alfonso X at Seville in 1252 and Sancho IV in Valladolid in 1284 (though he does not seem to have gathered the Cortes for his earlier coronation in Toledo).[115] Related to this, during royal minorities the acceptance of the Cortes was fundamental to the establishment of a legitimate regency, though as we shall see this could be difficult to agree in practice. The most important function of the Cortes, however, as with every medieval representative assembly, was consenting to taxation. We have seen how forcefully Alfonso X claimed the right to use the material resources of his kingdom in times of need, but from the inception of his new extraordinary taxes he provided assurances that he would not allow them to become customary, and would instead always ask their permission. He promised this to the prelates at Valladolid in 1255 and to the whole Cortes in 1277, while Sancho IV in 1293 agreed to ask when he had need. Fernando IV in 1306 was felt to have abused the *servicios*, and in the subsequent backlash in 1307 explicitly acknowledged that 'if it happens that I have need of some taxes, I have to ask for them, and I will not raise taxes in any other way'.[116]

We ought not to draw any rash conclusions from the fact that there is no evidence of any rejected request for taxation between 1250 and 1350. The closest sign of reluctance came at Alcalá in 1275, when the representatives of Burgos delayed their consent to a tax granted by the other towns until they had informed their *concejo*.[117] However, as Post made clear, the legal ability to give consent to a tax did not imply straightforward right of refusal, because, if the king had proven necessity, the responsibility of the proctor to pursue the best interest of the represented party gave little space for denial. As he put it, consent to taxation

[115] ibid., 79-82.
[116] 'si acaesçiere que pechos ouiere mester algunos, pedir gelos he, et en otra manera no echaré pechos ningunos enlla tierra'. *Cortes*, 187.
[117] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 132.

'was therefore consultative and judicial, not political'.[118] As part of this consultative consent, representatives could negotiate the value of the subsidy and could defend local interests by submitting petitions. Indeed, this petitioning left a distinctive mark on how the Cortes records come down to us, with the practice of documenting both the petitions and the king's answer in the *cuadernos* well established by 1325.[119] There is certainly an element of *quid pro quo* here (and hence, to this extent, the process was political after all), though the king still framed his summons of the Cortes and his answers to petitions as acts of grace to reward loyal services, meaning that there was never an acknowledged transaction of grievance for tax. In any case, the Cortes *cuadernos* present a litany of complaint touching all manner of aspects of the king's government, both in the locality (his territorial officers, the diminution of the royal demesne, the breakdown of law and order, the activities of Jews and Muslims) and at the centre (his household, chancery and so on).

1275-1325 was therefore a critical moment for the construction of mechanisms to debate the relationship between the royal centre and local society. There was now a recognised framework for dialogue at an assembly with the legal power to represent the whole kingdom. While the rights of that assembly were still contested, in general the proceedings were largely on the king's terms, because of his power to summon meetings, the petitioning format and the fact that the main product was a set of royal concessions. Nevertheless, the revolutionary changes in royal fiscality and the economic challenges induced by inflation gave significant negotiating powers to the Cortes, which its *procuradores* used to regulate the most burdensome aspects of the king's impact in the locality.

[118] Post, 'Plena Potestas', 375.
[119] O'Callaghan, *The Cortes*, 124.

Abuses in the Locality

Throughout this section, we have consistently seen the interface between different groups in the locality generating competition, conflict and negotiation as each adapted to changing forms of power. From one perspective, this was no different when a local party interacted with an element of royal power operating in the locality: as we have seen, noblemen, churches and towns alike engaged in regular transactions with the king, purchasing, exchanging and contesting property as they might with each other. However, there can be no doubt that the intersection of local society and the king would have a different edge: there were different contexts at play in any interaction with the crown that produced different strategies.

The feature that demands our attention is the fact that there was a shared language of complaint, used to set limits on the irruption of royal power. Whenever there was a perceived transgression raised by a town council, an *hermandad*, the Cortes or even a noble league, a key argument used very frequently was that a certain action contravened the privileges or *fueros* of the aggrieved party. Correspondingly, an action could be described as an 'abuse' (*desafuero*), which derived its despicable nature from its contravention of privilege or custom. This catch-all phrase echoed throughout these decades as a refrain allowing the critique of external power in local contexts. For example, we regularly find kings promising to revoke *cartas desaforadas*, or letters which ran contrary to privilege.[120] It also underpinned the *hermandades*, when breaches of law were invoked to legitimise actions, in a way that made a specific connection between a particular place, its people and their law.

[120] E.g. *CODOM VI*, doc. 10.

In 1282, for example, the *hermandad* at Segovia denounced 'many crimes, many damages, abuses and murders', through which 'we are abused and mistreated'.[121] Finally, the Cortes regularly demanded redress for breaches of custom, whether by the king's officers, by the letters of his chancery or through 'uncustomary taxes' (*pechos desafforados*).[122] The Cortes of Medina del Campo in 1302 went so far as to request that letters should not have to be obeyed if they overrode *fueros*.[123] What emerges from the use of this language is a clear sense that localised action could be legitimised through the allegation crimes and abuses against the rights they believed they possessed.

Certainly, the swiftest to shelter beneath the ample protection of custom and privilege were the towns and churches, replete as they were with institutional means for preserving information about their rights, having them confirmed and defending them regularly. Indeed, it was a reasonable expectation that the king would recognise their right: the towns because their rights were also his in some sense; the church because he was the sworn defender of its liberties; and because it was broadly in his interests to play that role. However, a striking feature of the political world of the late thirteenth century was that the idea of *desafuero* was widely shared, and even found its way into the best documented noble expressions of the period. As Isabel Alfonso argued, the noble rebellion of 1269-1272 saw ideas about breaching custom take centre stage.[124] In 1271, when Felipe, Alfonso's brother, had united with the heads of the Lara, Haro and Castro lineages and gone into exile in Granada, they railed against the suppression of 'the good *fuero* that you used in antiquity'.[125] The messages

[121] 'por muchos malfetrias e muchos daños e muchas fuerzas e muertes'; 'que eramos desaforados e maletrechos'. AHN, Uclés carp. 260, núm. 10.
[122] E.g. *Cortes,* 111, 152, 187.
[123] *Cortes*, 163.
[124] I. Alfonso, '*Desheredamiento* y *desafuero* , o la pretendida justificación de una revuelta nobiliaria', *Cahiers de linguistique et de civilisation hispaniques médiévales*, 25 (2002), 99-129.
[125] 'el fuero bueno que usábades en antigüedad'. *CAX*, 18.

conveyed on the king's behalf to the key protagonists in the rebellion leave us in no doubt over the rhetorical strategy they used to attack the king. One of Felipe's messengers, for example, explained to the king that he had left Alfonso's allegiance 'because of the abuses (*desafueros*) which the king carried out in the land and the inheritance he took from him [Felipe]'.[126] The language of *desafuero* was therefore sufficiently flexible to refer not only to the king's overriding of specific *fueros*, but also to a vaguer sense of a remembered 'good old law' and as a general label for misgovernance.[127]

Ideas about custom, then, were deployed at key moments in Castilian history by a variety of different agents. This begs the question of the responses offered by kings. The simplest option was denial. Fernando IV's mother, María de Molina, is frequently found in the chronicles rejecting accusations of wrongdoing on the part of her son.[128] A more subtle tactic, and potentially a more explosive one, was not just to deny the accusation, but to turn it on opponents. The chronicler recorded the vitriolic words apparently spoken by Alfonso X's messengers to the 1272 rebels. In the case of Lope Díaz de Haro, for example, he listed Lope's transgressions, most of which involved usurpation of crown lands and incomes rather than any particular overriding of local law. Nevertheless, he concluded with a stinging attack: 'in all of these things which we have said, you, don Lope Díaz, have abused the king and all the knights of Castile and León, and all the royal and ecclesiastical lands, and what you do is against custom and against law; and so you cannot say that the king has abused you, but you have abused yourself.'[129] This fierce exchange highlights the fact that the language of custom and local privilege was not just a stick with which to beat an over-

[126] 'por los desafueros quel Rey facia en la tierra é desheredamiento que vos facia'. ibid., 24.
[127] See M. T. Clanchy, 'Remembering the Past and the Good Old Law', *History,* 55 (1970), 165-76.
[128] E.g. *CFIV*, 130.
[129] 'en todas estas cosas que avemos dicho, vos, don Lope Diaz, avedes desaforado al Rey e a todos los fijosdalgo de Castilla e de Leon e a todos los realengos e abadengos, e lo que facedes es contra fuero e contra derecho, e non podedes decir quel Rey vos desafuera, mas vos os desaforades'. *CAX*, 27.

reaching king, but could be turned on the subjects just as easily. Later, Alfonso X's great-grandson would use the same tactic to blacken the reputation of a former favourite, informing the *concejo* of Murcia in 1328 that he had expelled count Alvar Núñez Osorio 'because all of you in my lordship have received many outrages and abuses (*desafueros*) from the said count without my knowledge when he oversaw my estate'.[130] Once again, Alfonso XI demonstrated the flexibility of the semantic field around custom in Castilian politics, to the extent that what had begun as a private feud at the centre could be presented in the locality as an outrage against the entire kingdom's time-honoured custom. The process of homogenisation in local Castilian politics, in which power groups everywhere pursued their interests in new ways, thus extended to a homogenised political discourse; but, as these latter examples show, it was not uniformly successful in setting limits on external intervention in local affairs.

Conclusion: The Pull to the Centre

Across the thirteenth century, therefore, the structural mechanisms for royal involvement in the locality changed beyond recognition. The royal fiscal system expanded dramatically, levying unprecedented sums and necessitating new forms of collection, tax farming and negotiation for consent. The king's officers multiplied and found ample scope to use the prestige and jurisdiction afforded by their posts to expand their networks and power bases, whether through activity in the locality or through grants from the centre. These changes were bound to provoke reaction, not because there was something inherently incompatible

[130] 'porque todos los del mio sennorio auiades recebido mucho sagrauiamientos et desafueros por el dicho conde en quanto ouo de veer la mi fazienda'. *CODOM VI*, doc. 113.

about royal power in local contexts, or solely because lordship of all kinds competed for similar privileges, interests and powers, but because powerholders were forced to engage with a new set of structures that brought both challenges and opportunities. They could engage with these collectively, individually or both at once, as they had both public and private interests.

Castilian politics was fundamentally conditioned by space and place. Proximity to or distance from aggregations of power fundamentally altered the kinds of local politics in each of our case study regions; differing timelines of incorporation into the polity meant that central authority mapped unevenly onto regions with different configurations; and layers of political influence built up around focal points of various sizes. The king's involvement in this mix could be destabilising as well as ameliorating: in 1273, for example, Alfonso X acknowledged the townsmen of Burgos' complaint that 'when it happens that I stay there in Burgos, noblemen and knights and others enter their houses by force.'[131] The fact that the king's presence in the city caused such disruption, in part because of burdensome claims to hospitality by aristocratic patrons, is extremely revealing. It reminds us that Castilians were often caught between their 'local' concerns and those affecting the entirety of the kingdom and highlights how the king's powers of decision-making were becoming extremely important to a variety of people. At the same time, it is abundantly clear that there were moments and regions where the expansive claims of the central government were not matched by the capabilities of communication and control. This demanded careful manipulation of networks even by central figures, as Alfonso XI revealed when he ordered Pedro López de Ayala to stay put in Murcia in 1330 owing to his strategic usefulness in

[131] 'Sepades que el cabilldo de la eglesia de uuestra villa se me embio querellar, e dizen que quando acaesce que yo he de fazer mi morada y en Burgos, que ricos ommes e caualleros e otros que entran en sus casas por fuerça'. *Pereda*, doc. 110.

defending the *concejo* of Murcia, despite the nobleman's desire to come and serve Alfonso at court.[132]

And yet, López de Ayala's desire to leave the locality and come to court tells its own story. There were integrating and homogenising dynamics at play too: lords of all stripes were seeking more insistently to expand their interests into more coherent blocks that they could pass down through the generations. One of the most important steps to achieving this, as I have argued in this section, was to reach for the centre, whether for grants, for office or for legal redress. Moreover, this period saw the practice of having local privileges confirmed regularly by successive monarchs become a routine part of royal relations with towns, churches and monasteries, cementing the importance of central guarantee. As highlighted recently by Tom Johnson, this offers a different, but no less useful, perspective from the 'enforcement' model. However much the state pushed into the locality, legal structures also reached up from the bottom, 'overlapping and interlacing with those that reached down from the centre'.[133] The real story of central power in medieval Castile was one of expansion and resistance, certainly, but also demand and negotiation. Geopolitics affected this process at every turn, from the structures of the locality to the mobility of the monarch.

This section has analysed the under-explored forces pulling Castile together in the decades around 1300. While impulses from the locality are now familiar from our case studies, they throw up their own questions. What was the centre, and how did it work? How did the realities on the ground affect central calculations? What were the institutional patterns for

[132] *CODOM VI,* doc. 155.
[133] T. Johnson, *Law in Common. Legal Cultures in Late-Medieval England* (Oxford, 2020), 272. See also W. Blockmans, A. Holenstein, and J. Mathieu (eds.), *Empowering Interactions. Political Cultures and the Emergence of the State in Europe, 1300-1900* (Ashgate, 2009), 1-34.

approaching the king, and what benefits could be hoped for in return? These questions, and many more, are the subject of the next section.

Part Two: The Centre

4. Law and Justice

At the momentous Cortes of Alcalá de Henares of 1348, the three estates reacted to Alfonso XI's decision to promulgate the *Siete partidas* for the first time. His great-grandfather, Alfonso X, had an active role in producing the text, which continued to evolve after his death, but it had never been officially proclaimed as law. Now, when Alfonso XI did just that, he prompted a debate over the history of royal law in Castile. A passage from the third petition reads:

> 'In times gone by, kings and lords did not pay heed to the words of the *Partidas* or the *Fuero de las Leyes* [commonly known as the *Fuero Real*] and those works did not contain what was required to give them [the lords] jurisdiction, but they, and those where they had lordships, had usage of justice for a long time - for such a long time that no one remembers the contrary. And that the kings from whom we descend never made a demand over such things as this, nor did they use what the *Partidas* say about this matter.'[1]

The delegates asked the king to continue his forebears' policy and to promise not to apply the *Partidas*, which Alfonso X had made 'to the great harm, abuse and disinheritance of those of the land'.[2] At first sight, this exchange in 1348 seems to express an assumption, shared among politicians of the mid-fourteenth century and historians up to the present day, that Alfonso X's bold legal programme was rejected and ignored from its creation until the monarchy was sufficiently authoritative under Alfonso XI for the laws to be imposed.[3] Of the 1348 ordinance, Robert MacDonald wrote that Alfonso's law 'at last prevailed – and with it, for better or for worse, the institutionalization of the stronger central authority for which he had laboured'.[4] The notion that Alfonso XI's reign marked the completion of

[1] 'antiguamente los rreyes e los sennores non parauan mientes alas palabras delas Partidas e del Ffuero delas leyes et non sse contiene enellos queles daua la justicia, mas que vsaron ellos e aquellos onde ellos an los lugares por muy grand tienpo dela justicia, de tanto tienpo aca que non es memoria de ommes en contrario ssegund dicho es. Et quelos rreyes onde nos venimos que ffasta aqui nunca ffizieron demanda sobre tales fechos commo estos, nin vsaron delo que dizen las Partidas enesta razon.' *Cortes*, 595.
[2] 'en grand perjuizio e desaffuero e desheredamiento delos dela tierra.' ibid.
[3] O'Callaghan, *The Learned King*, 214.
[4] MacDonald, 'Law and Politics', 198.

Alfonso X's project following decades of reversal and failure has been challenged from multiple perspectives, especially insofar as it invokes a diametric opposition between 'royal' and 'noble' conceptions of the law. However, there has been less consideration of the way in which Alfonso X's changes filtered through political society and altered political practice for his successors.

What follows is divided into two parts. The first is a short introduction to the legal culture of Castile in the mid- to late thirteenth century and the major components of Alfonso X's legislation. The second part discusses how Alfonso X's successors engaged with this legacy. At every turn the lack of documentation frustrates our attempt to understand what went on in the sphere of applied justice; through the surviving evidence, however, we can see that there is more to the story than the simple reversion to a pre-1252 model of royal law, necessitating an examination of wider institutional and social developments.

Law in Medieval Castile

When considering types of law in Castile, we must bear two major characteristics in mind. First, territorial scope: some laws were particular to certain regions, lordships or kingdoms, while others were to be universal, or at least apply to the entirety of the king's dominions. The kingdom's development through centuries of conquest and repopulation produced extreme juridical diversity on the peninsula, but at the same time Castilian law had several potential universal legal frameworks, drawn from the Spanish Christian past, imported from the European schools or issuing from the scriptorium of their own monarch. The second important question is the origin of the law. The key distinction here is between royal law,

promulgated by the monarch, and customary law, purporting to be derived from usage, but it is important to note that ecclesiastical law and private or forged collections also existed and competed for application.

The disintegration of the Visigothic state, Muslim governance and subsequent Christian conquests led to legislative diversification and assisted the predominance of municipal power as a means of social organisation. When legal historians speak of diversity in Castilian judicial frameworks, they most often refer to the system of *fueros*. The first instances of the term *fuero* date from the early Christian conquests in the eighth century and meant law in a general sense, but the word soon came to mean the local community's own juridical code. These documents, emerging in the tenth and eleventh centuries, recorded the obligation of inhabitants to fight for and pay tributes to a lord, but in exchange provided a number of fiscal and judicial benefits.[5] *Fueros* were thus inherently specific, since a privilege meant exception from ideas of general arrangements (especially when it came to tax), whether or not these arrangements were clear in practice.[6] The use of *fueros* to formalise juridical arrangements in the aftermath of disruption accords with Chris Wickham's findings for Italian communes in the eleventh century, with the instructive difference that the Castilian municipalities had a more solid royal framework for confirmation and direction.[7] Nevertheless, *fueros* could be given by noblemen, the church, the military orders or even some powerful town councils, as well as by the monarch.[8] In particular, the central zone spreading from Soria and Segovia to the Tajo saw a wave of *fueros* of non-royal origin in the early twelfth century (Soria, Medinaceli, Guadalajara, Calatayud and Daroca) and the

[5] A. Palacios Alcaine, ed., *Alfonso X el Sabio. Fuero Real* (Barcelona, 1991), ii-iii.
[6] MacDonald, 'Law and Politics', 169.
[7] C. Wickham, 'The 'Feudal Revolution' and the Origins of Italian City Communes', *Trans. R. Hist. Soc*, 24 (2014), 53.
[8] J. Alvarado Planas, 'El Derecho medieval', in *Historia del derecho Español*, ed. Javier Alvarado Planas et al. (Madrid, 2010), 346-7.

late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (Molina, Uclés, Madrid, Alcalá, Sepúlveda etc).[9] Alongside these locally specific documents, a body of custom began to develop, encompassing recurring practice (referred to as *usos* or *costunbres*) and case law recording individual or community conduct (*fazañas*).[10] *Fazañas*, as they are preserved for us, are usually narratives of cases followed by the verdicts of the presiding judge, lord or king, to be used as precedent.[11] Later, this customary law, an amalgamation of sentences, practices and arrangements that often bordered on local mythology, was committed to writing, and this saw the emergence in the first half of the thirteenth century of *fueros extensos.*[12]

Above the purely local level of these *fueros*, regional blocs of legal practice also emerged. This took place in two ways. First, 'families' of *fueros* developed, when the same document was issued to multiple locations, especially those conquered under Fernando III. The *fuero* of Cuenca was one example, being issued identically to Alcaraz, Huete, Zorita de los Canes, Iznatoraf, Úbeda and other places.[13] While legal uniformity therefore often had a royal dimension, other lords followed suit, for example when *infante* Manuel gave Elche the same *fuero* as Seville in 1267.[14] The result was that the older northern kingdoms had significantly more fragmented legal traditions than newer conquests in the south. Indeed, northern fragmentation was exacerbated by a second factor: the creation of compilations of customary law by private nobles, historians, jurists and ecclesiastics. These could have a local, territorial or general scope. A primary example is the *Libro delos fueros de Castilla*, which appears to have been drawn up in or near Burgos at some point after 1248. The *Libro* collects

[9] A. Palacios Alcaine*, Alfonso X el Sabio. Fuero Real* (Barcelona, 1991*)*, v.
[10] MacDonald, 'Law and Politics', 169.
[11] J. L. Bermejo Cabrero, 'Fazañas y historiografía', *Hispania*, 32 (1972), 62-3.
[12] *Fuero Real*, iv.
[13] Alvarado, 'El Derecho medieval', 347.
[14] *CODOM II*, doc. 35.

general and local principles together with a small collection of *fazañas*.[15] Also dating from the mid-late thirteenth century is the *Fuero viejo de Castilla.* This is an anonymous work composed without the official sanction of the king, covering public, penal and civil law, as well as judicial organisation and procedure.[16] It drew on a combination of customary and pseudo-royal legal texts, such as the *Deuysas que han los señores* and the Pseudo-Ordenamiento (I) de Nájera, purporting to be a concession by Alfonso VII in 1138.[17] The close focus of these texts on the *behetrías*, mostly found in the north, and on negotiation with a monarch whose kingdoms did not extend much further south than Cáceres, indicates that these texts were understood as a form of territorial law in *Castilla vieja*, extending more broadly than a municipal *fuero* but not necessarily recognised universally.[18] As we shall see, these texts occasionally provided fodder for forms of legal antiquarianism when it was desirable for lords to invoke their privileges.

The customary law thus had a clear local and territorial dimension. At the same time, customary law did have a general aspect, thanks to the continued application of the Visigothic *Liber iudiciorum*. There is here an important blurring of the boundaries between the general and the local: while the *Liber* itself was general in scope, regulating situations like inheritance, marriages, contracts and crimes, only some areas of the kingdom retained its use (León and Toledo are the most important examples). In 1241, Fernando III commissioned a translation of the *Liber* with the title *Fuero Juzgo*. However, from the eleventh century a new form of universal law was being synthesised elsewhere in Europe. Beginning in Bologna and swiftly followed in other European centres of learning, scholars

[15] G. Sánchez (ed.), *Libro de los Fueros de Castiella* (Barcelona, 1924).
[16] Á. Barrios García, B. González Alonso and G. del Ser Quijano (eds.), *El Fuero viejo de Castilla* (Salamanca, 1996), 70-5.
[17] Sánchez, 'La historia de la redacción', 317; A. García Gallo, 'Textos de Derecho territorial castellano', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 13 (1936), 308-96.
[18] Escalona, 'Los nobles contra su rey', 131-62.

began to piece together the *ius commune* (common law) from Justinian and other Roman jurists.[19] This was helped by the emergence of a more clearly defined canon law, especially following the reforms of Gregory VII and the redaction of Gratian's *Decretum* in 1140.[20] These forms of universal law had found little currency in Spain before the middle of the thirteenth century, but the rise of *ius commune* in other parts of Europe and the interest with which the papacy pursued the application of canon law made it increasingly difficult to ignore.

We can therefore see that, when the 'Wise King' took the throne in 1252, he was faced with two predominant characteristics in Castilian legal culture. The first was the dramatic diversity of legal frameworks in terms of scope, with a combination of local, territorial and general law. The second was the apparent co-existence of different sources of legitimate law, both from kings and customs, but also from noblemen, religious orders and even private jurists. Alfonso's legislative program is best understood as a response to these two problems of scope and origin, informed by external doctrinal influences. It should be noted that there have been, and remain, lively debates over the order, authorship, dating and practically every other technical aspect of Alfonso's legislation.[21] It lies beyond the scope of this thesis to weigh in on these issues, but a rough sketch of the accepted chronology is as follows: the *Setenario*, a largely moral work, was conceived by Fernando III shortly following the conquest of Seville in 1248, and completed by the end of 1253.[22] The *Fuero real*, a model municipal code, was completed in August 1255 and granted to numerous Castilian towns

[19] P. Stein, *Roman Law in European history* (Cambridge, 1999), 38-70; J. J. Montes Salguero, 'La recepción del Derecho común', in *Historia del derecho español*, 355-6.
[20] J. A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London, 1995), 48-69.
[21] A. García Gallo, 'El libro de las leyes de Alfonso el Sabio. Del Especulo a las Partidas', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* XXII, (1952); A. García Gallo, 'Nuevas observaeiones sobre la obra legislativa de Alfonso X', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, XLVI (1976); J. R. Craddock, 'La cronología de las obras legislativas de Alfonso X', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 6 (1981).
[22] C. López Rodríguez and P. Redondo Reyes, 'Tradición clásica y voluntad política en el Setenario de Alfonso X El Sabio', *Humanitas*, 61 (2009), 8; MacDonald, 'Law and Politics', 175, n. 74.

beginning in July 1256.[23] The *Espéculo*, a first attempt at a comprehensive legal code, might have been approved in part in May-June 1255, and was applied in a sentence of 1261, but otherwise was interrupted in 1256 when Alfonso began to pursue the Imperial throne.[24] A new project began on 23 June 1256, which evolved into Alfonso's most ambitious legislative code, the *Siete partidas*. Many chapters of the *Partidas* incorporate material directly from the *Espéculo* and the *Setenario.* This text had three separate redactions: one in June 1256-August 1265, another in 1275-1278, and a final one around 1290 in the chancery of Sancho IV.[25]

Regarding legal diversity, Alfonso's legislative works leave little doubt that one of their aims was to eliminate the harm that comes from the fragmented legal situation. This has two aspects. First, there was the regional context of Old Castile, which, as we have seen, was particularly lacking in legal unity. Addressing this, the *Fuero real* opens with a statement about discords arising among men and the king's responsibility to provide justice through laws (standard tropes of legislation in many quarters).[26] It goes on to say that some places 'did not have a *fuero* until our time and were judged by *fazañas*, and by diverse precedents, and by illegal customs'.[27] To remedy this, the *Fuero real* was given to: Soria, Alarcón, Peñafiel, Burgos, Atienza, Buitrago, Cuéllar and Talavera in 1256; Escalona and Béjar in 1261; Madrid and Guadalajara in 1262; Niebla in 1263, various councils in Extremadura in 1264; Valladolid in 1265; and Campo-mayor in 1269.[28] The second aspect was bringing all

[23] *Fuero Real*, xxiii; Craddock, 'La cronología', 376-82.
[24] G. Martínez Díez (ed.), *Alfonso X, Espéculo* (Ávila: 1985), 32-9; J. L. Bermejo Cabrero, 'En torno a la aplicación de las Partidas. Fragmentos del *Espéculo* en una sentencia real de 1261', *Hispania*, 30 (1970), 169-80.
[25] Craddock, 'La cronología', 396; J. D. Rodríguez Velasco, *Dead Voice. Law, Philosophy, and Fiction in the Iberian Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2020), 7-8.
[26] Watts, *Making of Polities*, 74-5.
[27] 'et iudgáuasse por fazannas, et por aluedríos departidos de los omes, et por usos desaguisados'. *Fuero Real*, 2.
[28] ibid., xxiii.

of Alfonso's kingdoms under one legal framework. The *Espéculo* is emphatic on this point. It also laments legal confusion and abuse by judges who 'change them [the laws] as they wish to their own benefit and to the harm of the people'.[29] As a remedy, 'we give this book to every *villa* sealed with our lead seal, and we hold this written version in our court from which all those we sent to the *villas* were copied, so that if any doubt should arise over the understanding of the laws and they come up to us, it will be dispelled in our court by this book'.[30] The two works thus impose an increasingly hard line on the diversity of legal practice and an ambitious programme to address it. However, there are many reasons to doubt that such a widespread distribution of the *Espéculo* ever took place, not least because it survives in just three manuscripts, all of them incomplete. Rather, it appears that only some parts the code were presented to the royal court in Palencia in May-June 1255 before the project was broken off.[31] The *Partidas*, which similarly aimed at uniting all the king's dominions into a single framework, was also not fully proclaimed until 1348, as we saw earlier.

While Alfonso X's legislative works thus (somewhat unsuccessfully) targeted the fragmented legal frameworks, they also asserted the principle that law is created only by the monarch.[32] As we shall see, this did not mean the total rejection of customary law, and Alfonso was forced to clarify this point on a number of occasions; it did, however, mean the suppression of judicial decisions taken without the right of appeal to the king. It also meant insisting that customary law derived its validity from the king's confirmation. The prologue

[29] 'camiáuanlos commo ellos sse querían a pro de ssí e a danno de los pueblos'. *Espéculo*, 102.
[30] 'damos este libro en cada villa ssellado con nuestro sseello de plomo e touiemos este escripto en nuestra corte, de que sson ssacados todos los otros que diemos por las villas, porque sse acaesçiere dubda ssobre los entendemientos de las leys e sse alçassen a nos que sse libre la dubda en nuestra corte por este libro'. *Espéculo*, 101-2.
[31] ibid., 15-16, 39.
[32] For a discussion of the wider European trend, see Watts, *Making of Polities*, 74-6.

to the *Espéculo* describes a collaborative process: 'this book which we made with the counsel and agreement of the archbishops and bishops of God and the noblemen and the most honoured learned men of the law available and also of others in our court and kingdom; and we took and sought out all the most valid and best fu*eros* and we put them in, both the *fuero* of Castile and León, and those of other places which were lawful and reasonable'. Within this consultative framework, however, the king 'did not allow diminishing of our incomes or our rights, so that this book might be for the good of all'.[33] This establishes a firm connection between the common good and the king's rights and emphasises the centrality of the king's interests when legislating. Later, the *Segunda partida* established the principle of the king's sole right to create law with greater force than before. Emboldened by a more thorough reading of Roman Law and influenced by Alfonso's greater focus on the concept of *imperium*, a distinction was now made between the king's *de jure* and *de facto* power. The king's *de jure* power allowed him to make a new law and change an old one, 'if he thinks that this is for the common good of his people', and 'where a dispute arises concerning the privileges which he, or other emperors who preceded him, conferred, he and no one else, must decide a contest of this kind'.[34] This statement was explicitly aimed at the multiple sources of law, with the *fazañas* in particular constituting a major means for noblemen, ecclesiastics and other judges to create legal precedent. [35] As he wrote in the *Partidas*, 'no judgement given by *fazañas* or by any means shall be valid, apart from where that *fazaña* is taken from a judgement given by the king'.[36] Therefore, the twin aims of

[33] 'este libro que ffeziemos con consseio e con acuerdo de los arçobispos e de los obispos de Dios e de los rricos omnes e de los más onrrados ssabidores de derecho que podiemos auer e ffallar e otrossí de otros que auíe en nuestra corte e en nuestro rregno; e catamos e escogiemos de todos los ffueros lo que mas valíe e lo meior e pussiémoslo y, tan bien del ffuero de Castiella commo de León, commo de los otros logares que nos ffallan que eran derechos e con rrazón … E non catamos menoscabamiento de nuestras rrendas e de nustros derechos porque este libro ffuesse a pro de todos'. *Espéculo*, 102.
[34] *Partidas*, II.1.ii.
[35] A. Iglesia Ferreiros, 'Derecho municipal, derecho señorial, derecho regio', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 4 (1977), 135-36.
[36] 'non deve valer ningun juyzio que fuesse dado por fazañas de otro, fueras ende si tomassen quella fazaña de juicio que el rey oviesse dado'. *Partidas*, II.22.xiv.

Alfonso X's programme of legal writing were to tackle the diversity of legal frameworks in Castile and the confusion that derived from it, and to assert the Romano-Canonical principle that the king was the sole creator and interpreter of the law.

The Immediate Response to Alfonso's Programme

Much has been made of political society's response to Alfonso X's legal innovations. The broad consensus is that the municipalities and the nobility alike rejected the imposition of these legal codes as a threatening novelty that would deprive them of their rights, forcing Castilian kings to retreat until Alfonso XI's adult reign.[37] Much of this interpretation rests on narrative accounts of the confrontations between Alfonso X and the nobility in 1272, and on the eye-catching point that the *Siete partidas* were not promulgated fully by their author. In fact, the first expression of the narrative that Alfonso asserted a legal code, encountered resistance and then withdrew it is found in the middle of the fourteenth century. This was the interpretation presented by the anonymous organiser of the *Fuero viejo* in 1356, who edited the original text dating from the last quarter of the thirteenth century.[38] Looking back on the events of the 1270s, the prologue states that from the time of Alfonso VIII the nobles had been judged according to the customs that they had gathered together and presented to him for correction and confirmation, until Alfonso X had issued the *Fuero real.* Then, in November 1272, he had received a petition from the magnates and other nobles for them to be judged according to the previous *fuero*.[39] Since the prevailing narrative is thus rooted in a perspective warped by hindsight and Alfonso XI's propaganda, it is worth re-examining

[37] Escalona, 'Los nobles contra su rey', 150; *Fuero Real*, xxi.
[38] Sánchez, 'Historia de la redacción', 308.
[39] *Fuero viejo,* 79.

both the legal codes and the documentation of 1275-1325 to ask whether Alfonso X's legislation had a more complex legacy.

When, from 1269, Alfonso X became embroiled in increasingly bitter disputes with noble factions and the mode of dispute changed from interpersonal feud to full-blown rebellion complete with manifestoes,[40] his legal programme was sometimes a key focus of complaint.[41] In 1271, *infante* Felipe and the other leading rebels presented three main protests: the king's uncustomary requests for extraordinary taxation, the prevalence of forged coins, and, as we saw in the previous chapter, the suppression of 'the good *fuero* that you used in antiquity'.[42] Later, outside Burgos, a list of more specific demands was presented to the king. This time, the previous vague argument about the *fuero bueno* had disappeared. Instead, among a longer list of fiscal and procedural grievances was a complaint that there were no *alcaldes* to judge them, and that the concession of royal *fueros* to so many towns forced the nobles to accept these codes for municipalities in their lordships.[43] In the final iteration, this time at the Cortes of Burgos of 1272, the rebels presented further complaints: the king should reverse his foundation of new towns, should install *adelantados* in place of *merinos mayores*, and return certain specific lordships to Lope Díaz de Haro and Fernán Ruiz de Castro. Moreover, they stated that no one should be able to judge them unless he was a nobleman, and so the king should appoint two noble *alcaldes* in his court for that purpose. Alfonso granted this request, although he emphasised its novelty.[44]

[40] J. M. Bjerke, 'A Castilian agreement and two English briefs: writing in revolt in thirteenth-century Castile and England', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 8 (2016), 75-93.
[41] For a detailed discussion of the revolt, see H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, the Learned. A Biography* (Leiden, 2010), 294-333.
[42] *CAX*, 18.
[43] ibid., 20-21; Escalona, 'Los nobles contra su rey', 141-2.
[44] *CAX*, 22.

The position taken by the nobles in 1269-1272 has long been interpreted as a rejection of the king's centralising monarchy and especially his attitude to kingship as the supreme power in the kingdom. This is often taken further, to suggest that the nobles were asking for the restoration of a body of law that was specific to them: Martínez, for example, writes that the nobles' various complaints 'could be reduced to one: the restoration of their old privileges and the *fueros viejos*'.[45] This rather overstates the case. It is true that, in the second half of the thirteenth century, apocryphal legal texts like the *Fuero viejo* and the Pseudo-Ordenamiento (II) de Nájera, appeared, which could have contributed to a sense that customary law was being overridden.[46] However, it is not straightforward to connect these texts to the rebellion. It was only in the first articulation of the rebels' position that there was a clear vision of restoring a lost *fuero*, and even then the reference is unreliable. These first complaints in 1271 were conveyed indirectly, via a letter from Aben Yusuf of Granada to Nuño de Lara, and hence were broad and imprecise, intended as a summary rather than a specific set of actionable demands. When precise demands were presented at Burgos, there was no mention of this *fuero bueno*. It seems that the nobles aimed not at the restoration of a specific set of *fueros*, but rather attempted to handle various aspects of misrule by Alfonso X, most notably in his fiscal and jurisdictional expansions, which breached Castilian custom. In fact, to find evidence of specific texts like the *Fuero real* being rejected, we have to turn to the municipalities. For example, in July 1262, Alfonso X declared that 'the council of Miranda sent to me to say that they were aggrieved by the book of the new *fuero* that I gave them' and that 'they do not understand the book'.[47] These rejections are much more

[45] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 329.
[46] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 199.
[47] 'el conceio de Miranda me enuiaron dezir que se agrauiauan del libro del ffuero nueuo que les yo diera'; 'que non entienden el libro'. MacDonald, 'Law and Politics', 185, n. 99.

restricted in number and scope than many historians have held, and in any case are confined to the immediate aftermath of the promulgation.

Instead, it makes more sense to understand the noble rebellion as addressing the relationship between an assertive centre and the interests of wider political society. Juridical issues were certainly crucial: the desire to have dedicated noble *alcaldes* in the king's court stands out in this respect, underlining the sense in which nobility was a privileged group that ought to be beyond the jurisdiction of a non-noble legal machinery. Beyond this, the grievances focused far more on the king's fiscal exactions and on the pressure exerted by his reinforcement of the *concejos de realengo* in the congested north of the kingdom, as Julio Escalona has shown so persuasively.[48] In this context, we should note the complaint made by the rebels that the king's *fueros* had infringed noble jurisdiction in their lordships. This is evidently a consequence of the developing territorial lordship that we observed in Chapter 1.[49] Where noblemen contested the king's jurisdiction, it was not part of an overall resistance to central power, for a strong centre was still necessary and provided ample opportunity for advancing noble interests. Rather, it was an attempt to manage the incursion of this central jurisdiction into the regional power bases treasured by increasingly assertive lineages. The 1272 rebellion expressed the complexity of the nobility's position at this moment in their development: they wanted both to limit royal jurisdiction in some quarters and to participate in it in others, while their main complaint was with short-term aspects of Alfonso's kingship. Therefore, as Escalona insists, historians have been too ready to accept the trope of an ideological clash between the worldview of the nobility and the monarchy. The response to Alfonso's legislation was not a call for the revocation of specific legal texts, but rather a

[48] Escalona, 'Los nobles contra su rey', 161.
[49] See above, 24-32.

political challenge to the shortcomings of Alfonso's monarchy both at the centre and in the locality, in which the king was held to account using the watchword of *desafuero.*

It is in this context that we ought to read the proceedings in the Cortes of Zamora in 1274. It is frequently held that this was the culmination of the rebuke to Alfonso's legal innovations, particularly with the definition of the *casos de corte* (the cases in which the king has sole jurisdiction).[50] Item 46 declared that there were nine cases which had always been reserved for the king's judgment: *muerte segura* (murder committed against bonds of loyalty), rape, broken truce, breach of *salvo* (king's letter of safe conduct), arson, disrupting the king's road, treason, *aleve* (a less severe breach of loyalty), and *riepto* (repudiation of friendship).[51] The 1274 statement was in essence a rejection of the new definition of the king's cases in the *Partidas*, in which Alfonso had claimed jurisdiction over forgery, orphans and the poor, as well as notorious theft.[52] In addition, Alfonso confirmed in 1274 the principle that *fueros* from elsewhere should not be used in the wrong places, and that the nobility should have a direct voice, speaking for themselves at court rather than through lawyers.[53]

At the same time, however, it is too extreme to see this as stemming from an 'anti-monarchical' or strictly 'noble' conception of the law. Alfonso had never denied the validity of *fueros* and the nobility's desire to represent themselves displays both a readiness to engage with the king's justice and fear that the process could be manipulated by officials. There was a clear interest in the proper functioning of the king's justice, with the Cortes

[50] See A. Iglesia Ferreirós, 'Las cortes de Zamora de 1274 y los casos de Corte', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 41 (1971), 945-7 for a critique of this view; see also J. F. O'Callaghan, 'Alfonso X and the 'Partidas'', in *Las Siete Partidas*, ed. R. I. Burns (Philadelphia: 2001), xxxix.
[51] *Cortes*, 94.
[52] *Partidas*, III.3.v.
[53] *Cortes*, 90-4.

insisting that the king keep three days a week to 'speak with the nobles and with others who have something to discuss with him'.[54] The nobles might have resisted the extension of the royal jurisdiction when it appeared to interfere with their own, but they nonetheless remained very keen on his capacity to arbitrate between them. Indeed, the *casos de corte* of 1274 represented an advance in royal jurisdiction since the Ordinance of Valladolid of 1258, which did not mention arson, murder, the king's road or safe conduct, though forgery of coinage and letters was included.[55] The assembly at Zamora of 1274 is thus indicative of more than the consolidation of the concessions secured by the nobility after their rebellion and should certainly not be characterised as a rejection of royal law. On the contrary, it demonstrates a recognition of, and keen interest in, the king's court and its significance in the creation and interpretation of the law. It had, in the end, proven impossible for the king to achieve his ambition of uniting Castile under one law while simultaneously championing himself as the defender of the privileges of his kingdoms, because his political failings and especially his fiscal demands led to a widespread rhetoric of *desafuero* that undermined his attempts, but there nonetheless remained a significant demand for royal justice. Thus, the rebellion of 1272 and the Cortes of Zamora are both part of a wider pattern of changing dynamics between the centre and locality which were neither one-sided nor harmonious, but which were more complex than a rejected project of centralisation.

Indeed, there are further suggestions that Alfonso's legal activity had a more lasting impact than the traditional narrative would allow. Many *fueros* continued to be confirmed and issued by Alfonso X, and these sometimes included passages from the *Fuero real*, as Martínez Díez notes in the case of the *fuero* of Soria.[56] At other times, the active application

[54] *Cortes*, 89, 93.
[55] Iglesia, 'Las cortes de Zamora', 958.
[56] V. G. Martínez Díez, 'El Fuero Real y el fuero de Soria', *Anuario de Historia del derecho Español*, 39 (1969), 545-47.

of the laws is clear in the documentary evidence. For example, a letter from Alfonso X to the *concejo* of Burgos in 1279 reads, 'I saw your letter, in which you communicated to me that you have doubt over a law of the *fuero* which I gave', over the matter of insulting words in the council.[57] Alfonso confirmed that it was a punishable offence to label another a *fududincul* (akin to a sodomite).[58] More significantly, the *Fuero* continued to be operational in the king's tribunal. Evidence for this is provided by the *Leyes nuevas*, a compilation of documents from Alfonso X clarifying the *Fuero real*. It covers issues including the formula for oaths made by Christians, Jews and Moors, and resolves problems like retroactivity in the law.[59] The collection was not an immediate addendum to the *Fuero*, but rather arose as a result of the attempts by *alcaldes* to apply it. When they encountered doubts or unsolved questions, they turned to the king, who upheld his unique right to amend and interpret the law, hence the repeated phrase 'these are the things on which the *alcaldes* are uncertain'.[60] Of course, there were also disputes which would have been dealt with locally, especially when it was in no one's interest to approach the king, but the evidence we have points to a process that drew Castile's mixed caste of judges into a hierarchy dependant on the monarch. Interestingly, some of the clarifications he made drew directly on precepts in the *Espéculo*, demonstrating that while that work did not become a legal code for all of his kingdom, it did continue to have juridical relevance.[61] The *Leyes nuevas*, which appears in different forms in a number of manuscripts, appears to have been a working body of royal law, since it continued to receive clarifications and additions from letters of Sancho IV.[62] The critical

[57] 'vi vuestra carta en que me enuiastes dezir que tenedes dubda en una ley del fuero que yo di'. AMB HI – 2917.
[58] J. Blackmore, 'Poets of Sodom', in *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. idem and G. S. Hutcheson (Durham, North Carolina: 1999), 197.
[59] J. López Ortiz, 'La colección conocida con el título de 'Leyes nuevas' y atribuída a Alfonso X el Sabio', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 16 (1945), 33-7.
[60] 'Estas son las cosas en que dubdan los alcaldes'. *Opúsculos legales del Rey Don Alfonso El Sabio* (Madrid, 1836), II, 183.
[61] López, 'La colección conocida', 20-22.
[62] *Opúsculos legales*, 202.

point, therefore, is that Alfonso had largely achieved one of his two aims: supremacy in the creation and final interpretation of the law.

Alfonso's legislation also seems to have had a secondary impact: emboldening the royal officials in their right to judge. Substantial sections of many legislative works describe the functions of the judicial officials, leaving the reader in no doubt as to their centrality to the king's justice. The *Espéculo*, for example, has passages on how each respective office should be 'guarded and honoured' (*guardados e onrrados*), and states that they deserve this honour because 'they suffer such great effort and injury to relieve the king of his labour'.[63] The *Leyes de los adelantados mayores* are a particularly good example of how the agenda pursued by different individuals could be reinforced by Alfonso's legal texts. As this private collection lumped together passages from the *Espéculo* to create a longer set of duties for *adelantados mayores*, at the same time, its authors diminished the role of the source text as a legal code, insisting that the *adelantados* should judge according to the *fuero* of the land.[64] This encapsulates the way in which the contest over jurisdiction evolved in the aftermath of Alfonso X's legal innovations: there was always an interest in maintaining local privilege and custom, but Alfonso's works provided discourses and arguments that could reinforce the individual authority of those who held office. We saw in the previous chapter how mechanisms of control and accountability struggled to keep pace with the ambitions of officials, and it is easy to imagine how these officials could have been emboldened by the strong emphasis placed on them in the written legislation that proliferated throughout the thirteenth century.

[63] *Espéculo*, 258.
[64] *Opúsculos legales,* 173.

Ultimately, therefore, Alfonso's aim of unifying the kingdoms beneath one legal framework was a failure, and that territorial variation in legal practice continued – indeed, this underlines the point of the previous section that authority of every kind mapped unevenly onto Castile's variegated localities. However, the Wise King's legal programme did leave two fundamental legacies: the principle of the king's monopoly on judicial innovation and prerogative as the final arbitrator, and the provision of arguments and discourses that might leave both kings and their officials in a stronger position to assert themselves in the following decades. How effectively this assertion might be carried out, however, remained to be seen.

Law and Legal Culture After Alfonso X

With the death of Alfonso X, the interest of legal historians immediately declines and many discussions skip to his great-grandson, Alfonso XI. Those authors who do pause to consider the intervening period tend to construct a teleology: a march towards the triumph of Alfonso's law and accompanying centralisation. MacDonald, for example, writes that 'although the opposition was successful for the moment, the resulting definition of royal powers, together with the juridical ideas that had been sown, in time yielded positive results for the Alfonsine program'.[65] Likewise, Aquilino Iglesia considers that 'with the passage of time, the royal will imposed itself, this process culminating with Alfonso XI'.[66] The twin legacies of Alfonso X's reign, however, invite a closer look at this evolution, and demand

[65] MacDonald, 'Law and Politics', 199.
[66] 'con el transcurso de tiempo, la voluntad regia se fue imponiendo, culminando este proceso con Alfonso XI'. Iglesia, 'Derecho municipal', 137.

that we ask whether there was anything more to the development of law and legal culture than the mere passage of time.

The first point to note is the continued awareness of the texts and contents of Alfonso's legislation. As Craddock has shown, successive redactions of *Partidas* changed on vital matters of political controversy. The second version, carried out between 1275 and 1278, made two significant alterations: first, it states that a royal minority ends at 16 years old, whereas the original had indicated 20.[67] This was extremely important, because when Alfonso's eldest son and heir, Fernando, died in November 1275, Sancho was only 16. The adjustment of the age of majority would thus avert the need for a minority government. However, for Sancho to inherit the throne at all, a second alteration had to be made. In the original version, it had been decreed, following a principle provided by Justinian, that the grandsons of the dead monarch would inherit the throne even if their father had not done so himself. Two manuscript copies, however, add a critical clause to the law: 'if the eldest son dies before he inherits, if he leaves a legitimate male heir he will have it, but if there remains another son of the king, he will inherit and not the grandson.'[68] It thus appears that Alfonso acquiesced in two politically expedient changes in the law to avoid a minority government or a further rift with Sancho. After Alfonso's death and Sancho's successful inheritance, however, a third redaction was made. This version, compiled around 1290, returned to the previous statement about minority ending at the age of 20, perhaps because the temporary expedient of Sancho's premature age had now passed.[69] Frustratingly, the manuscript does not preserve the passages on inheritance laws, and therefore it is not possible to verify

[67] Craddock, 'La cronología', 410-11.
[68] 'e aun mandaron que si el fijo mayor muriese ante que heredase, si dexase fijo legitimo varon que aquel lo voiese, pero si fincare otro fijo varon del rey que aquel lo herede e non el nieto'. ibid., 408-9.
[69] ibid., 396.

Craddock's plausible hypothesis that Sancho would have followed the revision of 1275-8.[70] What is certain, however, is that the *Partidas* were politically relevant and potentially destabilising; whether Sancho sought to rewrite inheritance laws in 1290 or not, the revision and continued production of new copies indicates that legislation could not simply be ignored. Indeed, this was acknowledged even in 1348, when the *Partidas* were finally promulgated. The petition with which we began makes a distinction between distant kings who ruled 'in times gone by' (*antiguamente*) according to different assumptions from the *Partidas*, and the more recent kings who had decided not to apply the law code's provisions.[71] The fact is that Alfonso's legal texts and their arguments about the supremacy of royal justice were known and relevant in the decades following his death, even if their maximalist spirit was not observed.

Indeed, the continuing salience of the *Partidas* is reinforced by the existence of interpretations provided by monarchs, which continued to solidify the sense of the king at the apex of the judicial system with the sole right to decide points of contention. This is something we noted earlier in that the collection of *Leyes nuevas* incorporated adjustments made by the letters of Sancho IV; likewise, the *Leyes del estilo*, compiled under Fernando IV, also responded to queries made by royal officials in the application of the law.[72] While these can often be difficult to date precisely, there are indications of continuous interest in the adjudication of the royal centre well into Fernando IV's reign: for example, two decisions by María de Molina, acting as regent, can be dated to 1309 by the statement that the king was at the siege of Algeciras.[73] Perhaps an even more important record of the crown's dominant position as arbiter in uncertain legal circumstances is provided by the

[70] ibid., 412-3.
[71] *Cortes*, 595.
[72] *Opúsculos legales*, 235-337.
[73] ibid., 237, 52.

fazañas collected in MS. 431 of the Biblioteca Nacional de España.[74] Contrary to Iglesia's suggestion that Alfonso X had sought to eliminate the *fazañas*, the manuscript reveals that the Wise King had repeatedly handed down such judgements, and that these were being remembered and followed in later reigns.[75] What Iglesia should perhaps have said was that Alfonso cracked down on *fazañas* issued by other authorities. This triumph of royal jurisdiction over the *fazañas* was confirmed in practice by Law 198 of the *Leyes del estilo*, which stated that 'it should be known that the *fazañas* of Castile by which they should judge are those by which the king judged or confirmed through related cases, with he who invokes a *fazaña* saying or showing the matter about which the king judged... or the lord of Vizcaya judged and the king confirmed.'[76] Alfonso's assertion of the king's sole right to decide in doubtful cases was thus recognised and reinforced in later decades, though it is significant that there was an awareness that the king might have a confirming role in the case of the lordship of Vizcaya.

The collection of *fazañas* in BNE MS. 431 provides exceptional insight into the legal priorities and frameworks of Castile in the reigns of Alfonso X, Sancho IV, Fernando IV and Alfonso XI. At first, the most notable feature is the fact that the cases overwhelmingly consider the priorities of noblemen: features of noble life such as repudiation and feud (*riepto* and *desafio*), which seldom arise in Alfonsine legal texts beyond reserving them for the king, here take centre stage. One, for example, illustrates Alfonso X's response to a quarrel between Martín Alfonso de Rojas and some knights who dishonoured him. When Martín Alfonso took the law into his own hands and executed the knights, the king sent his

[74] Suárez, 'La colección de "fazañas"', 579-92.
[75] Iglesia, 'Derecho municipal', 135.
[76] 'es a saber que las fazañas de Castiella porque deven judgar son aquellas por quel rey judgó o confirmó por semejantes casos, diciendo o mostrando el que alega a façaña el fecho sobre quel rey judgó... o el señor de Vizcaya e lo confirmó el rey'. *Opúsculos legales,* 318.

merino mayor, Diego López de Salcedo, to arrest him, and the Rojas nobleman fled to Nuño González de Lara. This magnate declared that the king was right to order his death, but that he would nonetheless seek to intercede on his behalf with the monarch.[77] Other records show Sancho IV's decisions in further noble feuds, both within lineages (the Velasco were embroiled in a murder case), and between houses. The most interesting features of these cases are the evident willingness of noblemen to bring their cases before the king's court rather than pursue extra-judicial solutions, and to employ lawyers to pursue their case: Martin Alfonso de Angulo, for example, was spoken for by a lawyer named Pero Lopez de Fontecha.[78] This is of extreme importance for the political history of Castile, because it helps correct the mistaken assumption that the period saw an increasingly bitter conflict between 'royal' and 'noble' forms of power. On the contrary, the continual resort to royal arbitration demonstrates that such distinctions confuse the multiplicity of Castilian society with a sense that the different elements were necessarily in conflict. Far from constituting an 'anti-noble policy designed to limit the predominance' of the high nobility, the practice of royal justice at the turn of the fourteenth century was an essential part of the management of complex interests and the resolution of conflicts through a reliable and predictable royal will, even when that will presented itself as merely upholding custom.[79]

Naturally, the availability of decisive royal arbitration suffered immensely during the successive minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI, and this led to a search for appropriate means of representing the final word in judicial quarrels. MS. 431 does record one *fazaña* from Fernando IV, which states that it was given 'when the king Fernando was in Ayllón'.[80] According to the itinerary of Fernando IV, the king was in Ayllón on 12 September 1303,

[77] Suárez, 'La colección de "fazañas"', 583.
[78] ibid., 584.
[79] Quoting A. Palacios Alcaine in *Fuero Real*, xiii.
[80] Suárez, 'La colección de "fazañas"', 585.

but since this is after the death of *infante* Enrique *el Senador* (who is mentioned repeatedly in the document), the *fazaña* must date from the period between 15 July and 23 August 1300, the only other documented visit by this monarch to Ayllón.[81] The judgement was therefore handed down during the king's minority, and this explains the more hesitant phrasing of the decision to include the court: 'and the king and those of his court decided that this was lawful'.[82] The case warrants further scrutiny for its discussion of the different languages and jurisdictions governing inter-noble dispute.

Before the young king and his court, Fernán Álvarez de Sotomayor denounced Fernán Yañez de Leiro for the death of his uncle; Fernán Yañez said that he lied and that he could not be declared as a legal enemy ('renounced' - *riepto*) by someone who had been excommunicated. *Infante* Enrique considered that the two were trading insults, but Diego López de Haro spoke in favour of Fernán's argument. Some of the assembled knights took Enrique's side, arguing that the church should not be able to intervene in the matter of renunciation, which upset the prelates. Others favoured Diego López, and stated that 'there were two forms of denunciation: one of which was the king's denunciation and that of his *merinos* and those who had lordship'; and another which would be pronounced by the Church when the accused did not answer a summons to an ecclesiastical judge. In the end, the king and the court agreed with this, and the king pardoned both parties.[83] This *fazaña* is extremely revealing. It is a timely reminder that conflicts drew on a variety of moral discourses and jurisdictional frameworks, and that the church was a major part of this. Contrary to the thrust of the historiography, the point of contention here was not the burden

[81] González, *Itinerario y regesta*, 154-56, 258.
[82] 'Et fallo el rey et de los de la corte que esta rason que era derecha'. Suárez, 'La colección de "fazañas"', 585.
[83] 'que auya dos encartamientos: el vno que era encartamiento del rey o de sus merynos, o de los que auyan sennorio'. ibid.

of the royal lordship, but instead the capacity for ecclesiastical judges to claim ownership of certain languages and to regulate their use. Moreover, it demonstrates the importance of the king's court in the transaction of dispute, but also suggests that, during a minority, the dominance of the debate by particular parties could be disruptive. Indeed, it is notable that MS. 431 lacks any judgement provided during the minority of Alfonso XI, though later *fazañas* did seek to redress wrongdoings committed when there was no adult royal justice available.[84] The *fazañas* are thus an embodiment of the changes we have traced in this chapter, where the emphasis on central legal judgement by Alfonso X made the availability of predictable royal decision-making more important than ever, at the precise time that it went missing.

Indeed, the picture of a growing royal network emboldened by new discourses of royal exclusivity that pressurised existing patterns of conflict resolution is upheld in a variety of other sources from the period. Not only were there localised disputes demonstrating the fundamental importance of royal arbitration, but the Cortes records show changes in the concerns expressed about judicial procedure.[85] Justice had certainly been a significant issue prior to our period. In Valladolid in 1258, for example, the representatives of the towns, nobility and the church sought to regulate the number of plaintiffs in the court and the manner in which appeals could be passed from the *alcaldes* to the king.[86] By the reign of Sancho IV, however, there is a notable shift towards restraining royal officials from over-zealous application of their judicial rights. In Palencia in 1286, the king was asked to guarantee that the *adelantados* and *merinos* should only carry out general enquiries into taxes and rights when ordered to by the king, and also to ensure that they did not charge

[84] ibid., 586.
[85] *Las Huelgas* 1284-1306 docs. 109, 175-6, 202, 232.
[86] *Cortes*, 56.

excessive victualling tributes when they arrived.[87] These *pesquiridores* had been given a strong mandate in Alfonso's legal codes, from the *Fuero real* to the *Espéculo* and the *Partidas*, and the right to carry out these enquiries was claimed in the *Leyes de los adelantados.*[88] Complaints about enquiries and officials handling them recurred in the following decades, at Valladolid in 1293 and 1299, Medina del Campo in 1305, Valladolid again in 1312, and so on.[89] In this last case, the king was asked to guarantee that he would 'know' all of the officials and their business personally; though clearly a practical impossibility, the notion of the king's engagement in judicial matters was paramount.[90] This combination of petitions is entirely in line with the trajectory of legal culture in the second half of the thirteenth century. An expanding network of royal officials was flexing its muscles in the locality more than ever before, but their activity was supposed to be inspired and led by the king's will at the apex of the judicial system.

Unsurprisingly, the breakdown of order on a dramatic scale during the civil wars of 1295-1301 created more dissension, at a moment when central direction was most lacking. Fernando IV's minority government regularly ordered enquiries into crimes, for example at the Cortes of Valladolid in 1298, and mobilised the *merino mayor*, Juan Martínez de Rojas, to lead the correction of abuses.[91] The next year there was a concern that ecclesiastical judges were attempting to hear cases relating to inheritance and property, and the government was asked to ensure that these cases came only before lay courts.[92] The situation changed again when Fernando reached his majority. With an adult on the throne and rival claims dropped, attention turned once again to the king's personal arbitration. We saw earlier how the Cortes

[87] ibid., 96-7.
[88] *Fuero Real*, 140-2; *Espéculo*, 240; *Opúsculos legales*, 175. *Partidas*, III.17.i.
[89] *Cortes*, 110, 140-1, 171, 217.
[90] ibid., 209.
[91] ibid., 138-9.
[92] ibid., 141.

of Medina del Campo in 1302 deployed the language of abuse, asking to be excused from any letters that overrode local custom. While this is represented by some, including recently by Monsalvo Antón, as an imposition of limits on royal jurisdiction, this ignores the response made by the young king.[93] Rather than consent to their request, Fernando IV said that he would employ 'good men' to bring such letters to the his attention, and would pay them handsome salaries.[94] At the very beginning of his adult rule, then, Fernando IV proposed to deal with complaint using the familiar mechanisms of his father and grandfather: investment in a professional officialdom, combined with the unquestioned supremacy of his own arbitration.

In 1305, the ill-effects of both over-zealous and non-existent royal justice were addressed again. First, the *procuradores* asked the king not to summon anyone before him in the royal household unless in a criminal case.[95] Later, however, they were also keen to ensure that royal justice could be accessed on a regular and predictable basis: Fernando assented to their request that he should sit to hear complaints one or two days a week.[96] In 1307, the same issue returned, though it should be noted that this time the king was asked for one day, and he decided to set Friday aside.[97] The promise was repeated in 1312, and this time Fernando added that, if he was detained by some pressing business, he would sit on Saturday another time.[98] For López Ortiz, this was the culmination of the imposition of the royal tribunal as a pre-eminent court, fulfilling Alfonso X's ambitions.[99] In addition, Fernando IV also sought to recover a different strand of Alfonso's vision, namely the protection of widows and

[93] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 288-9.
[94] *Cortes*, 162-3.
[95] ibid., 171-2.
[96] ibid., 176.
[97] ibid., 185.
[98] ibid., 198.
[99] López, 'La colección conocida', 54.

orphans.[100] While this falls short of a full restoration of the *Partidas*' claim to reserve all of their cases to his jurisdiction, it would nonetheless be rash to overlook Fernando's resurrection of the issue in 1312. It highlights the sense in which royal jurisdiction, directed by an adult monarch, was being constructed in line with the developments of the second half of the thirteenth century.

Just as with his father, however, Alfonso XI's even longer minority saw fewer statements about royal decision-making and instead provoked *hermandades* and other local solutions to disorder. As before, enquiries were commissioned and over-zealous officials were censured, while the *hermandades* sought to take control of security.[101] They were particularly insistent that suspects should be accused by local officials rather than roving agents without knowledge of local customs: 'if some of this brotherhood have a quarrel with others they shall bring it before the *alcaldes* of the *fuero* of the place where it occurs'.[102] The phrasing leaves it unclear whether their main concern was approaching the right official or being judged by the right law, but since different laws do not appear as an issue elsewhere in the document but itinerant officials do, it seems more likely that the *alcaldes* were the intended target. The minority government was later asked at the Cortes of Burgos in 1315 to ensure that *merinos* and *adelantados* did not overstep their jurisdiction, whether in arresting people unjustly, staying too long or in collecting tributes too assiduously.[103] Therefore, the minority confirms an emerging pattern: the appetite for royal justice that had been affirmed by Alfonso X meant that other means had to be found to provide it following the breakdown of central royal authority as a focal point of decision-making. This

[100] *Cortes*, 203.
[101] ibid., 249-50.
[102] 'ssi algunos delos desta hermandad touieren querella vnos de otros quelo querellen alos alcaldes del ffuero del logar do acaesçiere'. ibid., 255.
[103] ibid., 286-7.

breakdown provoked a raft of complaints about the judicial system at all levels and fierce conflicts over jurisdiction, but also the creation of bottom-up mechanisms for handling justice, which were not simply a reaction against royal power or an appropriation of it, but an attempt to make it work properly.

In the final analysis, however, it would be rash to assume that this constituted the destruction of royal authority or that litigants lost interest in the possibility of justice from the centre.[104] On the contrary, at Medina del Campo in 1318, the tutors, *infantes* Pedro and Juan, underlined the point most emphatically that justice began in the royal household and then emanated outwards: 'they asked us to show favour in ordering justice to be done first in our houses, and from then on in the land with law and righteousness'.[105] As they did so, they encapsulated the fact that justice was now centred more than ever on the king, but also highlighted the uncertainties that arose when the focal point of the royal household was contested between the young king's person and his tutors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this survey of legal culture in its transition from 1250-1325 has revealed some crucial political adjustments. There can be no doubting the significance of Alfonso X's legislative programme, which introduced Romano-canonical understandings of the king's jurisdiction to the peninsula. As we have seen, the landscape of Castilian law had been dominated by local variation and by multiple sources of legislation and arbitration. While

[104] For an English perspective, see C. Carpenter, 'Law, Justice and Landowners in Late Medieval England', *Law History Review*, 1 (1983), 205-13.
[105] 'nos pidieron merced que touyessemos por bien de mandar ffazer justicia primera miente en nuestras casas, e dende en adelnte quelo ffagamos en la tierra conffuero e con derecho'. *Cortes*, 333.

his legislation took aim at both these characteristics, Alfonso X ultimately failed to perform the balancing act of upholding his role as the guarantor of privileges along with the unification of the kingdoms under one code. However much he protested that he did not wish to deprive anyone of their custom, his opponents' accusations of *desafueros* forced him to confirm the multiplicity of local legal codes. As a result, differences in legal frameworks would continue to affect Castilian politics in subsequent decades. Alfonso had much more success, however, when it came to eliminating alternative sources of legal arbitration, and he continued to assert his right to approve of any deviations from the *Fuero real*. The presentation in Alfonso's legal codes of a network of powerful royal officials created opportunities for these officials to assert themselves more forcefully than ever before. This would have implications for the dynamics of office-holding as a factor in central politics, which is where we turn to next.

This combination of effects is of utmost significance when it comes to interpreting the fraught years between 1275 and 1325. Key principles of Alfonso's legal programme, namely the royal monopoly on legislating and interpreting the law and the associated self-confidence of royal officials, certainly continued under his successors. The emboldened royal jurisdiction enforced by assertive officials continued to grow, drawing the king into negotiations over his duty to ensure that their behaviour did not get out of hand (in turn solidifying the importance of the king's court and the Cortes as focal points). However, what has escaped historians' attention is that these did not function in the same way. There was a transition from royal decision-making being asserted 'from above' to being demanded 'from below', as the structural problems exposed by minority and civil war highlighted the need

for effective arbitration.[106] Alongside more localised means of guaranteeing security, political society continued to make increasingly desperate appeals for redress from the centre.[107] When the king was of age, the experience of central vacuum encouraged demands for greater care and attention from the court; no longer was royal jurisdiction a matter for central assertion against the will of a society obsessed with its customary rights. The period 1275-1325 was thus decisive in changing the nature of Castilian political debate. Alfonso XI's assertion of the *Siete partidas* at Alcalá in 1348 was more than the belated fulfilment of the Wise King's ambition; it was another step in a long series of attempts to reconcile the structural problems caused by vacuums at the centre of an increasingly centripetal polity.

[106] This conclusion echoes Milsom on the English common law. See S. F. C. Milsom, *Historical Foundations of the Common Law* (London, 1969); J. Hudson, 'Milsom's Legal Structure: Interpreting Twelfth-Century Law', *LEGA*, 59 (1991), 47-66.
[107] For more detailed discussion of some of these appeals, see below, 302-4, 323-6.

5. Office-Holding and Grant-Making

> 'We cannot excuse ourselves from showing favour to those who have served us, and from now on we shall maintain our affairs in a way that secures our service and the benefit, honour and safeguard of our kingdoms.'[1]

Almost a century after the beginning of our period, the unflappable Enrique II brushed off criticism of his grant-making at the Cortes of Burgos in 1373. As he did so, he revealed a tension in the management of his private resources and his choice of officers: these were discretionary tools for the king to use as he saw fit, but they had implications so wide-ranging that his subjects might have concerns about his choices and feel justified in criticising them. The same tension was evident in 1275-1325 and, consequently, understanding royal grant-making and office-holding policies is critical for a proper grasp of the royal centre's operation and its relationship with the locality. Royal grants would affect relationships at court and change the balance of power in the areas where landed gifts were located, while the way in which monarchs represented their decisions would shape perception of their personal authority. Likewise, office-holding was at the interface between central authority and local influence. We saw in Chapter 3 how holding royal office was one of the most effective routes to regional dominance. We traced how the relationship between local agents and the central organising structure changed materially over the thirteenth century, with adjustments to landed power creating a sharper division between private landed jurisdiction and royal jurisdiction expressed through appointed officers.

With regard to offices, Castilian historiography has a rich tradition constitutional scholarship, with the famous texts produced at Alfonso X's court interrogated in immense

[1] 'non podemos escusar de fazer merced alos que nos seruieron, e de aqui adelante gelo guardaremos asi commo cunple a nuestro servicio e a pro e onrra e guarda de los nuestros rregnos'. *Cortes*, vol. II, 263.

detail for the legal formulae for offices and other institutions in the polity.[2] The environment this historiography constructs, however, is sterilised and almost devoid of any real politics: their authors left power structures, personal relationships and the messy realities of governance to a different kind of historian, whose narrative works follow the twists and turns of high political events.[3] These narratives, however, focused as they are on conflict and vicissitude, can lose sight of the structural trends that conditioned the modes of interaction between king and office-holder. More recently there have been some thorough prosopographical reconstructions of the king's officers, notably by Hernández and Jular, which allow us to see the 'king's men' much more clearly, especially in the fraught decade between 1276 and 1286.[4] Building on this work, there is still scope to investigate wider trends in office-holding, their contribution to the forces of political gravity at play in our period, and their implications for the operation of the royal centre.

When it comes to grants, there are deep-rooted historiographical assumptions at play. Long-standing condemnation of Enrique II's extensive grants from the *realengo* has had a profound effect on the assumptions of Castilian political historiography. The orthodoxy was established in the 1970s, above all by Suárez Fernández and Julio Valdeón Baruque. Suárez Fernandez's conceptualisation of politics in *Nobleza y monarquía* resembles T. F. Tout's interpretation of medieval England: a contest between king and nobles for control of the kingdom through the governmental institutions, with the former desiring absolutism and the

[2] E.g. Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*; J. M. García Marín, *El oficio público en Castilla durante la baja Edad Media* (Seville, 1974); G. Martínez Díez, 'Los oficiales públicos: de las Partidas a los Reyes Católicos', in *Actas del II Symposium de Historia de la Administración* (Madrid, 1971), 121-36.
[3] M. Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Sancho IV de Castilla* (Madrid, 1928); eadem, *María de Molina* (Madrid, 1936); Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*; González, *Fernando IV*.
[4] F. J. Hernández, 'Ascenso y caída de Gómez García, abad de Valladolid y privado de Sancho IV de Castilla', Publicações do Cidehus (2016), 113-28; idem, *Los hombres del rey*; Jular, *Adelantados y merinos mayores.*

latter to 'give the *Res publica* a more decidedly contractual structure'.[5] Valdeón Baruque echoed his conclusion that the nobility were the decisive winners, but recast seigneurialisation in terms of Marxist class conflict.[6] These seminal works have left two important legacies.

First, they suggest that 1369 was a watershed moment dividing Castilian history between its stable high-medieval era and its troubled, noble-dominated twilight. Despite Hilda Grassotti's powerful work tracing the origins of royal donations,[7] the sense that there was something new and different about royal generosity in the second half of the fourteenth century is only just beginning to be questioned, with Estepa and Monsalvo Antón in particular suggesting that the establishment of a nobility tied to royal grace began earlier than has traditionally been thought.[8] Furthermore, the prevailing assumption about the earlier period is that there was something approaching randomness in the handing out of landed territories: Simon Barton, for example, wrote of the twelfth century that 'if a particular noble was fortunate enough to receive a gift of property from a monarch or a lay magnate... the grateful recipient of such properties was hardly going to quibble over their location'.[9] Everything we have so far traced about the dynamics of local power and the strategic calculations of political actors in the centre suggests we ask whether this remained true in the more integrated and territorial world of the late thirteenth century.

[5] 'dar a la Res pública una estructura más decididamente contractual'. L. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía. Puntos de vista sobre la historia castellana del siglo XV* (Valladolid,1975), 10; See also T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England* (Manchester, 1920), I, 8-9, 298-99.
[6] J. Valdeón Baruque, *Los conflictos sociales en el Reino de Castilla en los siglos XIV y XV* (Madrid, 1975), 23.
[7] H. Grassotti, 'Novedad y tradición en las donaciones con mero y mixto imperio en León y Castilla', in *Homenaje al profesor Juan Torres Fontes* (Murcia: 1987); eadem, 'Hacia las concesiones de señorío "con mero y mixto imperio"', in *Estudios en homenaje a Don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz en sus 90 años* (Madrid, 1983).
[8] C. Estepa Díez, 'La Monarquía Castellana en los Siglos XIII-XIV. Algunas consideraciones', *Edad Media. Revista de Historia*, 8 (2007), 79-98; Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real,* 22-7.
[9] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 80.

The second implication of the *mercedes enriqueñas* trope is a pervasive pejorative attitude towards grants, with nobles perceived as greedy and proud and kings as short-sighted and weak. Even in the most up-to-date work this idea retains its power: Arias Guillén's recent book interprets court politics as a competition to control royal resources and rebellion as an expression of dissatisfaction with what nobles received.[10] Indeed, the older view that the drying-up of new grants after conquests destabilised royal-noble relations also rests on this assumption.[11] Underpinning these attitudes is a simplistic explanation of royal grants in late medieval politics: they are considered rewards or even straightforward payment for services, that could be essentially forced upon kings. The temptation for political historians when dealing with this topic has always been to reach for the term 'patronage'. In many instances, this is an entirely appropriate word for describing the relationships between individuals, in which the superior party uses their resources to advance or protect an inferior. However, when over-deployed, the term can obfuscate, especially at the top of the system. As proponents of the 'new constitutional history' have argued, the danger of patronage-based explanations is their tendency towards reductionism, boiling politics down to patronage and patronage to material self-interest.[12] Patronage, when seen as the only kind of meaningful political relationship, threatens to obscure the multiple layers of meaning and justification that historical agents used to rationalise the workings of the system, and to miss the other strategies pursued beyond the purchase of loyalty. Patronage relationships did exist, but they were not all that existed, and those involved in them did not necessarily see them only as upheld by patronage. The term 'grant-making' allows us to begin with the assumption that

[10] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 6.
[11] Ruiz, 'Expansion et changement', 548-9.
[12] E. Powell, 'After "After McFarlane": the Poverty of Patronage and the Case for Constitutional History', in *Trade, Devotion and Governance: Papers in Late Medieval History*, ed. D. Clayton, R. Davies, and P. McNiven (Manchester: 1994), 1-16.

a conscious decision was being made for a purpose, as opposed to the revolution of a zero-sum system leading inevitably to conflict.

Our purpose here is to understand how the changes traced in the previous chapters affected the king's power at the court through the lenses of appointment and endowment. If contested local politics, an expanded royal fiscal system and a robust language of royal jurisdiction made occupying royal office particularly appealing, what impact did this have on competition at the centre? What kinds of strategy informed royal grant-making? Was there an overall 'logic' of grant-making, or at least situations in which certain actions might have been attractive? What does this mean for our interpretation of politics at the Castilian court? This discussion begins with office-holding and its major dynamics at the political centre, before turning to the management of the king's private resources through grants.

Noblemen in Office

This chapter analyses major trends in royal office-holding, focusing especially on the highest offices of the realm. We have already encountered the *adelantados mayores* and *merinos mayores* in Chapter 3; now we must also consider the officers of the court. These had a long history. Beginning with Alfonso II (791-842) in his court at Oviedo, kings consciously revived the practices and vocabularies from Visigothic Toledo. The main officials were the *armiger* or standard-bearer, later known as the *alférez*; the *maiordomus* (*mayordomo*), the head administrator of the household; the chancellor (often a cleric); the notary; the treasurer; and the chamberlains. By Alfonso X's reign, the size and complexity of the royal court

necessitated a proliferation of officers.[13] The *Partidas* discussed these at length, from the king's chaplain and physicians to the chamberlain (*camarero mayor*), butler (*repostero mayor*), steward (*despensero mayor*), doorkeeper (*portero mayor*) and bodyguard (*caballero de la mesnada del rey*).[14] Somewhat distinct from the household, but nonetheless generally present at the court, was the admiral (*almirante mayor*), often a foreigner, whose task it was to assemble and command the royal fleet.[15]

One product of the major opportunities for financial and political gains provided by the royal offices was that even the most powerful noblemen in the kingdom would be drawn to them. This has been noticed previously, most notably by Paulo Correa, but the implications reach much further than his important article suggested.[16] The first clear trend that emerges from perusing the incumbents is the overall transition towards greater involvement of the nobility, and especially the high nobility, in offices, both the traditional courtly offices and the newer territorial administration. To some extent, rank and status were considered in Alfonso X's legal works, with a general maxim that household officials required for daily service should be neither very lowly or of very high rank, while men of high station should be employed in the highest offices.[17] The reality, however, was becoming increasingly fluid. The *mayordomos mayores* and *alféreces reales* of Fernando III and Alfonso X had tended to be eminent noblemen or princes of the blood, with the Haro, for example, monopolising the position of standard-bearer; but the same cannot be said of the territorial administrators.[18] It was not until 1261 that the first significant nobleman occupied the *adelantamiento de la*

[13] J. de Salazar y Acha, *La casa del rey de Castilla y León en la Edad Media* (Madrid, 2000), 180; Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 16-19.
[14] *Partidas*, II.9.i-xxv.
[15] M. A. Ladero Quesada, 'El almirantazgo de Castilla en la baja Edad Media. Siglos XIII a XV', in *La institución del almirantazgo de España* (Madrid, 2003), 57-82.
[16] Paulo, 'La integración de la nobleza', 63-77; see also Álvarez, *Poder y relaciones sociales,* 150.
[17] *Partidas*, II.9.ii.
[18] Baury, 'Los ricoshombres', 66.

frontera, and the majority of the *merinos mayores* of Castile, León and Galicia had tended to be lesser nobility or non-noble royal servants, before lineages like Rojas, Guzmán, and so on began to appear.[19] The exception is Murcia, where the new *adelantamiento* was held by eminent lords and princes from the beginning, owing to the particular defensive needs of that region.[20] The gradual shift in the personnel of the highest offices to noblemen is a loose trend rather than a fixed rule, but there is nonetheless a tangible infiltration of prestigious families to the ranks of royal officers. This stands in stark contrast to the 'decline of the curial sheriff' identified in thirteenth-century England by David Carpenter.[21] Understanding the causes and effects of Castile's trajectory will be fundamental to understanding the politics of office-holding. We shall examine some case studies in detail.

Our first case study traces the office-holding aspirations of the Haro lineage. As they lost their traditional grip on the position of *alférez*, the Haro began to make different claims. They sought both to gather offices to themselves and prevent opponents from doing the same, and this formed part of their long-standing rivalry with the Lara. Diego López de Haro had striven under Alfonso X to counteract the favour bestowed upon his arch-rival, Nuño González de Lara, in 1254, but to no avail. Alfonso reminded Nuño of the Haro's opposition when the Lara lord became the figurehead of the noble rebellion of 1271-2, recalling his own former generosity and Diego López's displeasure:

> 'don Diego [de Haro] asked him [the king] many times not to do it [reward Nuño], since everything he did for you was his undoing, and the king did not hesitate to give favour to you because of this and even better than before, giving a large share of the incomes of the kingdom and many offices to you and all those you wanted, so that

[19] Vázquez, 'Sobre los orígenes', 340-1.
[20] *CODOM II,* docs. 19, 30, 74.
[21] D. A. Carpenter, 'The Decline of the Curial Sheriff in England, 1194-1258', *English Historical Review*, 91 (1976), 1-32.

> don Diego left the kingdom... and because of this the king could never have don Diego for his service.'[22]

This passage is curious, since the generosity behind the dispute of 1254 did not include the high offices of state (coming as it did before the general infiltration of the nobility to these positions). In fact, Nuño's main rewards in 1254 had been tenancies (Écija, Seville and Jerez) and incomes (in Burgos, Rioja and Castilla la Vieja).[23] Nuño's highest office actually came after his rebellion, when he was named *adelantado mayor de la frontera* in 1273-4.[24] The message Alfonso X sent Nuño in 1272 therefore captures the change of priorities and shifting stakes for noblemen across his reign. Struggles in the past over tenancies and incomes were remembered in the later period as having included offices, and now reconciliation would require a willingness on Alfonso's part to offer Nuño an *adelantamiento.* Later, Diego's son, Lope Díaz, similarly sought office to advance his family when predominant at court in 1286. Though the chronicler believed that Sancho gave him both the *mayordomazgo* and the *alferecía*, the documentation shows that his brother, Diego López, had been the *alférez mayor* since the beginning of Sancho IV's reign, and continued in post.[25] However, Lope did use his position to advance his brother's office-holding, securing him successive nominations as *adelantado mayor*, first in Castile and then in Andalucía.[26] The attitudes of two generations of Haro lords demonstrate that office-holding was clearly part of a wider politics of inter-noble rivalry. Moreover, they remind us that

[22] 'don Diego le pidió muchas veces que lo non ficiese, ca todo lo que en vos facia era en desfacimiento dél, é el Rey por esto non dejó de vos facer merced é más bien que ántes, dándovos grand parte de las rentas del reino e muchos oficios á vos é á todos los que vos queríades, en manera que por esto dejó don Diego el reino... E por esto nunca el rey pudo aver a don Diego para el su servicio'. *CAX*, 25.
[23] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 305.
[24] ibid., 48. Sánchez de Mora doubts this, though notes that Nuño returned to grace and witnessed charters at this time: A. Sánchez de Mora, 'Nuño González de Lara: "El más poderoso omne que sennor ouiese e más honrado de Espanna"', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 31 (2004), 641.
[25] *Gaibrois*, I, 132 n. 2.
[26] The chronicler records that he was named *adelantado mayor de la Frontera*, but the documentation shows that he was *adelantado mayor de Castilla* in the first half of 1287, before becoming *adelantado mayor de la Frontera* before 2 June 1287 until 1288. See *CSIV*, 74; *Gaibrois,* I, 32, n. 2.

interests could be defensive as well as aggressive: it was often just as important to prevent a given lordship or office from falling into the control of a rival as it was to secure it for oneself.

Moreover, there were occasions when royal office was more prized than land or titles. The chronicle records an intriguing story from *infante* Sancho's rebellion: in 1283, word apparently reached Sancho that his brother and powerful ally, *infante* Pedro, had left his side and joined their father, because he had been offered Murcia, of which he could call himself king. Sancho told Pedro that if he stayed in his party, he would give him whatever he wished. Pedro's request was to be named the king's chancellor, and to receive the incomes of the chancery, as well as the property of Tordesillas.[27] The reliability of this extraordinary exchange might certainly be questioned, and it may have been embellished by a chronicler disposed to present rebels like Pedro as grasping and Alfonso X as desperate. If the agreement did exist, we cannot know whether Sancho would have honoured it, because Pedro died in October of the same year.[28] Nonetheless, the episode shows one set of calculations as to the value of certain prizes that each side could offer, though we must bear in mind that Sancho had enjoyed Pedro's loyalty for some time, meaning that Alfonso would probably have had to offer substantially more to lure him away. That Pedro would choose a property within easy reach of an important political hub (Tordesillas is roughly 17 miles southwest of Valladolid) over control of a much larger territory in the south in Murcia speaks volumes as to the desirability of lands in different locations; and that Pedro would covet the office of chancellor even when offered the title of king indicates the influence that noblemen expected to follow from royal office-holding.

[27] ibid., 63.
[28] *Anales Toledanos* II, *España Sagrada* XXIII, 417.

It is important to dive deeper into these motivations. We have already seen how office-holding could line the pockets of incumbents and give preferential avenues to royal decision-making. Indeed, the transactional nature of some of these appointments is often laid bare in both the chronicles and the documentation. In 1302, for example, Fernando IV explicitly gave financial compensation to Juan Osórez after he was replaced as *mayordomo mayor* by Juan Núñez de Lara, while the chronicler records how the *infante* Enrique immediately plotted to secure the post for himself, such that Juan Núñez then had to be compensated.[29] Financial remuneration and political influence might well be sufficient explanation for the gravitation of noblemen to the administrative centre, but there is more that can be said. Indeed, the question deserves more careful treatment precisely because historians have been willing to follow the hostile interpretation of the chroniclers, allergic as they were to magnate ambition, that moves like Enrique's were because 'he believed that in this way he would have the king and all of his kingdoms under his power'.[30] The *mayordomazgo* alone would not achieve this, and in any case, it will not do to take the chronicler at his word. Though we are not blessed with many direct insights into noble motivation, there are some threads that can be followed.

The most obvious place to look is the direct testimony of an officer himself. Juan Manuel became *adelantado mayor* of Murcia in 1284; having been born in 1282, however, he was only two years old, and a string of deputies from his network shouldered his responsibilities.[31] Regardless of how much (or how little) work he ever did as *adelantado*,

[29] *Benavides*, doc. 223; *CFIV*, 126.
[30] 'tovo que por esta manera sería él poderoso del Rey é de todos los reinos'. ibid.
[31] Vázquez, 'El adelantamiento murciano', 105-22.

being a major royal officer had always been a part of Juan Manuel's life.[32] He clearly desired further involvement, and approached Fernando IV in 1310 for the post of *mayordomo mayor*, and the king was obliged to compensate the incumbent, *infante* Pedro, after granting the request.[33] Juan Manuel is especially important for our purposes because his large literary production, though mostly produced later in his life, reveals a great deal about his attitude to his role as an officer. When considering this evidence, we must remember that its later production from the mid-1320s onwards makes it sure to be coloured by his growing confrontations with the adult Alfonso XI. With that caveat, we can nonetheless proceed on the basis that many of Juan Manuel's formative experiences in political life occurred during our period.[34]

That Juan Manuel derived status from his royal offices is evident in his writings. He did not hesitate to mention his positions as *adelantado mayor* of the *Frontera* and Murcia in the prologues and omitted them when no longer in post.[35] The content of his work is even more revealing. In his *Libro enfenido*, following a generic discussion of kings and tyrants, Juan Manuel wrote that great men should consider the context, and where kings were good, they should serve them loyally, and 'derive great honour from the momentous things that happen to the king'.[36] The idea of service is connected with presence at the king's court: the great man should follow the court as much as possible and please the kings and the courtiers, ensuring that they desired him to stay. All the while, 'through the good and loyal works that he does in the service of the king in the great events which occur, he will show how much

[32] He is found in the documentation in several other roles, often simultaneously with his dominance of Murcia: chief admiral in August 1310 and *adelantado mayor* in Galicia in 1299, but these are unique cases and could be attributed to scribal error, especially the post in Galicia, which could have been mistaken for Murcia. See *Benavides*, doc. 136.
[33] *CFIV*, 165.
[34] Blecua, *Obras completas*, 11-20.
[35] ibid., 195.
[36] 'tomar muy grant onra en los grandes fechos que al rey acaescieren'. ibid., 159.

he does for the king's service'.[37] We can be left in no doubt as to the discursive power of service in Juan Manuel's writing since he even records a proverb: 'for it is a saying and ancient refrain of Castile that 'he who serves well, is well deserving; and who is well deserving, serves well'.[38]

It might be tempting to dismiss these statements on royal service and presence at the king's court as driven by the demands of the genre and as disingenuous imports from Giles of Rome; surely, historians have insisted, Juan Manuel's actions in rebelling against a succession of Castilian kings speaks louder than these platitudinous words.[39] Alternatively, it might be objected that Juan Manuel's vague references to service were loose enough to refer to general cooperation or perhaps engagement in the king's campaigns. However, we ought to take these passages more seriously than that. In the *Libro de las Armas*, written after 1335, Juan Manuel describes an emotional meeting he had with the ailing Sancho IV. The king described the death of Fernando III, at which Juan's father was given his coat of arms, and explained the meaning of the blazon. These passages are full of highly wrought language and plenty of direct speech, the purpose of which was clearly to capitalise fully on the prestige afforded by close confidence with a dying monarch, and to set out his claims to as much power as he could manage. Whatever the political purposes of writing such a text, however, it is fundamental for our purposes that it was through royal service and proximity to the king's prestige that Juan Manuel tried to achieve them. In a final underscoring of the centrality of service to everything we have discussed, he writes: 'and God demanded of me on pain of my body and of my soul if, through the goods and nurturing that he [Sancho IV]

[37] 'por las obras buenas et leales que fara en seruiçio del rey en los grandes fechos que acaesçieren, mostrara quanto el cunple para seruiçio del rey'. ibid., 160.
[38] 'ca palabra et retrayre antigua es de Castiella que "Quien bien sirue, bien desirue; et qui bien desirue, bien sirue"'. ibid.
[39] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 116.

gave me, I did not serve him, his son Fernando [IV] and his grandson Alfonso [XI] as loyally as I could'.[40] The significance of these passages for office-holding lies in the prestige that Juan Manuel derived from his direct service of the king. The discursive strength of service will be analysed more fully in Chapter 6, but for now it is important to note that his descriptions of the honour of royal service internalised and reproduced arguments from royal discourse about the honour of the king's offices.

The above discussion has examined the phenomenon and causes of the growing interest of high noblemen in exercising royal offices beyond the traditional arrangements. The expanding apparatus of the Castilian royal government, both in the reach of its officers and in the discursive strands which held service as the highest honour, combined to create a powerful gravitational force. This process was bound to have significant consequences. Officers at court were, more than ever, a pawn in the political game, both in attempts to secure influence and as scapegoats for accusations of ineffective kingship. As we shall see in Chapters 7 and 8, confrontations between kings and nobles regularly contested the right to control appointments. That this was symptomatic of a new set of dynamics at the heart of Castilian politics is encapsulated by the reported response of the experienced queen, María de Molina, to one such instance in 1307: 'for the king to throw out his officials at the will of another without them deserving it and without their having been heard, seems a most strange thing'.[41]

[40] 'Et Dios me lo demande al cuerpo et al alma, si por los vienes et la criança que el en mi fizo, si lo non serui lo mas leal mente que pude a el et al rey don Fernando, su fijo, et a este rey don Alfonso, su nieto'. Blecua, *Obras completas*, 135.
[41] 'tirar el Rey los sus oficiales por voluntad de otro sin merescer elos por qué, é sin ser oidos primero, paresce una cosa muy extraña'. *CFIV*, 158.

Length of Tenure

The second shift in patterns of office-holding was a direct consequence of the increasing contest for office by noblemen. In the century from the accession of Fernando III in 1217 to the death of his namesake in 1312, officers tended to hold their posts for a shorter length of time, with kings recycling officials at a faster rate. Looking first at the traditional posts of the court, the *mayordomo mayor* and the *alférez real*, in his 35-year reign Fernando III installed five different men as *mayordomo* and three as standard-bearer. The average stint for a *mayordomo* was 6 years and 11 months, and only Rodrigo González Girón was interrupted in his tenure (he was *mayordomo* in 1238-1246 and 1248-1252). The average stint as *alférez* was longer, lasting 9 years and 3 months. None of these officials held their post for under two years at a time.[42] The picture under Alfonso X is similar. He employed four different *mayordomos mayores* in his 32-year reign lasting an average of 5 years and 5 months, though the long tenure of his brother Fernando (1261-1274) counterbalances the brief stint of Alfonso Fernández after the death of *infante* Manuel in 1283.[43] Before becoming *mayordomo mayor*, Manuel had been the longest serving of the three holders of the *alferecía* under Alfonso X (1259-1274), followed by his nephew Juan (1277-1284). Under Alfonso, there were also lengthy vacancies in the post of *alferez*, but these, as we shall see, became rare under his successors. Office-holding in the first three quarters of the thirteenth century was therefore generally stable and predictable, and vacancies were clearly tolerable for a certain length of time. One might have expected these posts to have become hereditary, as happened with some of the oldest ceremonial posts in England and France,

[42] F. de Asís Veas Arteseros and M. del Carmen Veas Arteseros, 'Alférez y Mayordomo Real en el siglo XIII', *Miscelánea medieval murciana*, 13 (1986), 29-48.
[43] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 1042.

but this did not quite occur in Castile.[44] This difference is not trivial: whereas English monarchs found themselves having to invent new offices more regularly to maintain control, there was a greater degree of flexibility for kings in the Castilian system from the start.

The situation under Sancho IV and Fernando IV was very different. Sancho's 11-year reign witnessed five different *mayordomos mayores*, the most enduring of whom can be documented in post for four years and four months.[45] Stints in office that would previously have been unthinkable, such as *infante* Juan's six months or Lope Díaz de Haro's seven indicate a substantial shift in thinking about office-holding, and nor are there any sizeable vacancies. Brief stints as *mayordomo mayor* were taken to a new extreme under Fernando IV. In seventeen years, Fernando placed eight different men in control of his household, several of whom were not around for much more than a year at a time.[46] As for the *alféreces*, these were slightly more stable. Diego López de Haro and Alfonso de Molina both lasted over three years serving Sancho IV, while Fernando IV saw five different standard-bearers (though when you subtract the relatively long stint of Diego López de Haro in October 1296 – July 1308, the remaining four officers were very short-lived indeed).[47] In the king's household, therefore, there is a clear shift towards shorter periods of office-holding, and officials could expect to lose their place to someone else rather than hold it for life.

Turning to the great officers of the territorial administration, here we see a more mixed picture. Comparison with Fernando III can only apply to the northern territories of Castile, León and Galicia, since the *adelantamientos mayores* of Murcia and Andalucía were created

[44] C. Carpenter and O. Mattéoni, 'Offices and Officers', in *Government and Political Life in England and France, c. 1300-1500*, ed. C. Fletcher, J-P. Genet, and J. Watts (Cambridge, 2015), 84.
[45] *Gaibrois*, docs. 12, 69, 140, 211, 484.
[46] *Benavides*, docs. 8, 73, 156, 215, 224, 392, 518, 520, 546.
[47] *Gaibrois* docs. 12, 158, 225; *Benavides*, docs. 8, 73, 410, 432, 518, 519, 569, 577.

later. In both Galicia and León, Fernando was content to be served by two enduring *merinos mayores* in each post from his accession in 1230 to his death (in León, García Rodríguez Carnota lasted for 19 years while Muño Fernández de Rodero served in Galicia for 14).[48] In the much shorter reigns of Sancho IV and especially Fernando IV, officials could hardly hope for such a comfortable stint: Sancho used six different men in both León and Galicia, while the *adelantamiento mayor* of León and Asturias changed hands an astonishing 13 times under Fernando IV.[49] In Castile, Fernando III went through an unusually (for him) high number of officers, with nine different *merinos mayores*, lasting on average just over four years.[50] This was a different pattern from that of Alfonso X and Sancho IV, who availed themselves of the service of only four and three *merinos* or *adelantados* respectively.[51] Fernando IV's reign was a return to the mutability of his great-grandfather's day: though only four different individuals confirmed documents as *merinos* or *adelantados* of Castile, they swapped in and out rapidly, never lasting longer than two years and eight months at a time.[52]

A pattern is emerging clearly now, in which Sancho IV and especially Fernando IV, whether by choice or force of circumstance, shuffled their highest officers much more regularly than Fernando III or Alfonso X had done. We can wrap up this overview with the southern jurisdictions conquered under Fernando III and brought into the office-holding structure by his son. In Andalucía, Alfonso X used seven different *adelantados* over his reign, with Alfonso García de Villamayor enjoying a particularly long tenure.[53] Sancho IV used six, and

[48] Jular, *Adelantados y merinos mayores*, 547-8.
[49] ibid., 550-53; *Benavides*, docs. 12, 131, 158, 206, 368;
[50] See I. Álvarez Borge, *Monarquía feudal y organización territorial. Alfoces y merindades en Castilla (siglos X-XIV)* (Madrid, 1993), vol. III, 216.
[51] ibid., 216.
[52] *Benavides*, docs. 12, 136, 79, 84, 208, 320, 410, 520, 561.
[53] Vázquez, '"Frontera" y adelantamientos', 513-35.

Fernando enlisted four different individuals.[54] Once again, however, Fernando's reign is striking in its constant rotation of the same names in and out of the office, especially from 1310, when officers would barely last three months. The *adelantamiento* of Murcia is something of an outlier, in that Juan Manuel's consistent tenure of the position from 1284 to 1314 means that the office did not change hands at all under Sancho and his son, compared to three times under Alfonso X.[55] Despite this exception, it is abundantly clear that, as the thirteenth century reached its conclusion, the former stability of office-holding gave way to rapid changes of personnel. This was no doubt a corollary of the uncertain distribution of power in troubled times and the increased involvement of the same individuals most likely to challenge the government and be ostracised (albeit temporarily) for doing so. At the same time, it is an indicator that offices were now a more active part of the considered politics of the kingdom, and this would bring its own change in turn.

Strategies of Appointment to Office

The gravitation of noblemen towards office and the diminishing length of tenure produced an interesting dynamic. Certain figures begin to appear in the documentation switching regularly between posts across the entire administration. Several case studies illuminate the implications of this, beginning with the career of an increasingly prominent royal agent, Sancho Sánchez de Velasco. Sancho Sánchez first crops up as an officer confirming a document as *adelantado mayor* of Castile in January 1305, a post which he held until at least 28 August 1307.[56] His next appearance came in July the following year as chief justiciar of

[54] B. Vázquez Campos, *Los adelantados mayores de la frontera o Andalucía: siglos Xlll-XlV* (Seville, 2006).
[55] Martínez, 'La territorialización del poder', 545-69.
[56] *Benavides*, docs. 320, 392.

the king's household.[57] In May 1310, he changed role once again, becoming *adelantado de la Frontera*, which he vacated at the beginning of the next month, only to switch straight over to being *adelantado mayor* of Castile once again.[58] Finally, he had another brief stint as *adelantado de la Frontera* in March-April 1312.[59] One key to interpreting this patchwork career lies in noticing the men he tended to replace. He was probably brought in initially after the death of Garci Fernández de Villamayor. Having proved himself there and as justiciar, he was the candidate of choice to replace *infante* Juan in Andalucía, which happened on two occasions, and he also replaced Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña in Castile. These names stand out given their long track record of rebellion and disobedience towards Fernando IV: the *infante* had been almost impossible to control ever since he had claimed the crown of León, Seville and Galicia in 1296, and was joined in some, though not all, of these agitations by Fernán Ruiz.[60] The moments when Sancho Sánchez de Velasco was brought in to replace these recalcitrant lords correspond with their rebellious activity: Fernando's most explosive conflict with Juan following the siege of Algeciras in 1309 saw him lose his *adelantamiento* in favour of the Velasco lord, for example. More than this, however, we can see Fernando IV engaging in a meticulous balancing act: when he reinstated *infante* Juan in June 1310, he placed his ally, Sancho Sánchez, in Castile; and when Fernando Ruiz returned in November 1311, it was not long before the Velasco lord again replaced the troublesome *infante*. It seems clear that Fernando was trying to avoid lords with a history of disobedience from dominating the territorial offices too much, though it was evidently desirable or necessary to bring these erstwhile enemies into the royal service in a controlled way.

[57] ibid., doc. 410.
[58] ibid., docs. 518, 520.
[59] ibid., doc. 570.
[60] *CFIV*, 97.

A brief analysis of Sancho Sánchez de Velasco demonstrates why he was the perfect lord to act as a counterweight. As Esther González Crespo has shown, Sancho Sánchez was a relatively minor nobleman at the beginning of the reign, based primarily in the mountains of Burgos.[61] Through a combination of distinguished royal service and support for Juan Alfonso de Haro, lord of los Cameros, he was able to build up his possessions, receiving an important string of grants and government posts from the king.[62] The *LBB* preserves one right granted by Sancho IV to Sancho Sánchez de Velasco, and states explicitly that six possessions were granted to him by Fernando IV.[63] There are a further 15 possessions which record that the rights of the *naturales* of *behetrías* were owed to the grandsons of Sancho Sánchez de Velasco, implying that the rights originated with him, though this is not certain. In addition to this, we also know that Fernando IV also gave Soba, Ruesga and Puebla de Araganzón to Sancho Sánchez in the early fourteenth century, and that this was followed by Albendín, and La Bobadilla in 1312.[64] There are two critical features of this growing collection of landholdings. First, these lands were former sections of the *realengo*, and it is notable that many of the surrounding regions were still royal possessions by the middle of the fourteenth century.[65] Second, by stark contrast with other minor lords, like the Villegas and Valverde, there was no Lara influence to be found in any of the possessions enjoyed by Sancho Sánchez de Velasco. Instead, the proximity of the king and the bordering of these lands with the lordship of the Los Cameros appears much more significant. The upshot of these two factors is that Sancho Sánchez de Velasco was entirely dependent on royal grace for the landed power he possessed, with most of his prospects for future expansion also

[61] E. González Crespo, *Elevación de un linaje nobiliario castellano en la baja Edad Media: los Velasco* (Madrid, 1981), 95; see also C. Jular Pérez-Alfaro, 'Nobility and Patronage: The Velascos, a Case Study', in *Land, Power and Society,* 218-9.
[62] ibid., 26-30.
[63] *LBB* XIV.7, XIV.25, XIV.65, XIV.79, XIV.82; González, *Elevación de un linaje,* 35.
[64] These final two are outliers in that they are situated in Andalucía between Martes and Baena; the rest, however, are clustered in the north of the kingdom. *Salazar*, M-177 ff. 74r-77r; O-20 f. 117r-v.
[65] E.g. *LBB* XIV 287, 289, 299-300.

resting on loyalty to the crown, and that he was shielded from ties in the complex world of shared *behetría* lordship that might have drawn him into the ambit of the difficult-to-control Lara.

This phenomenon, with a loyal placeholder brought in after a rebellion only to be removed once the post was required as an incentive to reconciliation, also occurred at other times. One of the earliest came with the noble rebellion of 1272, when Alfonso García de Villamayor, the long-serving royal servant who was, unusually, simultaneously *adelantado mayor* of the *Frontera* and Murcia, disappeared from royal documents. While we lack direct evidence of his implication in this rebellion, it is certainly reasonable to believe, with Vázquez Campos, that he was party to it.[66] Alfonso turned to trusted men to occupy these posts in his absence: his own son, Fernando, was installed in Murcia, and in Andalucía he recalled Diego Sánchez de Funes, who had held the post in the past. That Diego Sánchez was a staunch supporter of the king in the face of the rebellion is shown by his appearance alongside the *infante* Fernando at Granada, negotiating with the exiled rebels.[67] The choice of Fernando in Murcia was also natural, since Alfonso X himself had held office for his father as *alférez* in his time, and because Fernando was deputised by the king's counsellor, Enrique Pérez de Harana.[68] This therefore represents the beginnings of new strategic thinking in the southern territorial offices, which were temporarily placed in the hands of trustworthy officers, especially princes of the blood, when crisis struck (though he later had to replace Fernando's successor, *infante* Manuel, for the same reasons).

[66] Vázquez, 'El Adelantamiento Murciano', 107.
[67] *CAX*, 30.
[68] ibid., 17.

Two more examples shed further light on this process. Sancho IV had fewer princes of the blood to rely on than his father. Nevertheless, the instinct to turn to royal relatives amid a crisis was evidently still strong. When Lope Díaz de Haro was executed by Sancho IV at Alfaro in 1288, the first to replace him was Juan Fernández 'the Golden Haired' (*Cabellos de Oro*). The choice of Juan Fernández is interesting. He could claim royal ancestry, if tenuously, as the son of a bastard of Alfonso IX, Fernando Alfonso 'el Deán', and Sancho referred to him as 'my half-brother' (*mio cormano*), though he was really his second uncle.[69] He had served as *merino mayor* in Galicia in 1274-1277 and 1284-1286, but now stepped up as *mayordomo mayor*. He remained head of Sancho's household until he was once again needed to plug the gap left by *infante* Juan, who had fled to Aragón, and was made *adelantado mayor de la Frontera* in 1292.[70] Juan Fernández was a reasonably powerful magnate, though he might seem an unusual choice given that the *mayordomos* had traditionally been noblemen of the highest rank, and given that he had taken Alfonso's side during Sancho's rebellion.[71] However, he had proved his loyalty at the very beginning of Sancho's reign, joining the king's allies to frustrate *infante* Juan's plot to proclaim himself king at Seville in 1284.[72] Sancho, therefore, was able to call repeatedly on a proven servant who had the advantage of a loose royal descent.

Fernando IV, on the other hand, had fewer convenient fixes. The final case is that of Alfonso Suárez de Deza, who on two occasions replaced Pedro Ponce de León as *adelantado mayor* in Galicia.[73] Alfonso Suárez could not claim royal blood – his strongest credential came from his service as *mayordomo* and as a servant of *infante* Felipe, Sancho's son. While he

[69] *Gaibrois*, doc. 212; Cawley, 'Castile and León'.
[70] *CSIV*, 87.
[71] *Gaibrois*, I, 221, n. a.
[72] ibid., 11.
[73] *Benavides*, docs. 544, 546, 548.

was a figure of some importance locally in Galicia and had troubled the archbishop of Santiago (for which he earned a scathing attack in the prelate's *Gesta*), he was nowhere near the equal of Pedro Ponce, but appeared the best option once the latter rebelled.[74] Once again, we observe how necessity could force a monarch to turn outside the usual candidates for office and call repeatedly on certain trusted individuals who had proved useful in tight spots in the past, to replace more powerful officers when they left or were pushed out. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this, however, is that kings did not simply stick with these loyalists and reward them with lengthy periods in office. Instead, they often rotated their most dependable servants into different posts when they were required, or merely left them by the wayside when their more illustrious predecessor returned for the second or even third time.

Putting these factors together, a strategy emerges that can only be understood in the context of the dynamics of office-holding as they had developed by the end of the thirteenth century. In a political climate dominated by the magnates' growing desire to hold offices, but which also saw by frequent renunciations of obedience, kings had a fine balance to strike. They had somehow to meet the theoretical obligation to surround themselves with the most virtuous men, to sustain the discursive pressure to reward loyal service, and also to bring those who had crossed them back into the fold with attractive propositions. It would never be possible to incorporate everyone and hence there would always be the potential for future tension, but the appearance of appropriate consideration and balance was critical. Office-holding was a fundamental part of this puzzle, which was particularly valuable because it was so explicit that a recipient ought to serve the king through the office, even if he clearly expected to profit while doing so, and because it was easy to revoke if required. At the same

[74] Aimerico, *Hechos de don Berenguel de Landoria, arzobispo de Santiago. Introducción, edición crítica y traducción* (Santiago de Compostela, 1983), 12-17, 90.

time, the use of these strategies by Castilian kings indicates the necessity of integrating the most powerful men of the kingdom, even those with dreadful track records, into the growing royal framework.

Grant-Making – An Introduction

As we saw in Chapter 1, the basis of landed power in the locality had changed in the centuries prior to 1275. The three changes discussed there, namely increasing territorialisation, patrimonialisation and the development of more elaborate jurisdiction meant that tenancy lost its status as the major form of royal grace.[75] However, conditional gifts remained useful, and evolved in new ways. First, kings still needed to cede stewardship of their fortresses to captains or *alcaides*, which was as much a military decision as an act of generosity.[76] In general, however, tenancy persisted as a fiscal instrument rather than an administrative one. The *Partidas* described two kinds of tenancy: the *tierra*, when incomes from a particular place were given by the king, and the *honores*, which gave incomes usually reserved for the king to honour the recipient.[77] These revenue concessions were part of the stipends (*soldadas*) upon which the most important noblemen depended to meet the costs of their retinues and military obligations. These existed on a large scale: Álvarez Borge has estimated that as much as 90% of the revenues for the Burgos region were granted to noblemen.[78] The development of extraordinary royal taxation was, in part, designed to keep pace with these very large salaries: in 1301, for example, four of the five *servicios* collected

[75] See above, 28-32.
[76] Quintanilla, 'La tenencia de fortalezas', 867.
[77] *Partidas*, IV.26.ii.
[78] Álvarez, 'Sobre nobleza, rentas regias y señoríos', 36.

were reserved to fund the *soldadas*.[79] These stipends have been studied exhaustively by Grassotti and especially Hernández, and hence for reasons of space they will not be considered in detail here.[80] The important feature to note is that these salaries created a hierarchical system of tribute, which linked noblemen to the crown by designating incomes from particular places (*tierras ciertas*) to those who served the king.[81] The stipends underscore the point that the nobility and the crown expanded their reach in dialogue with one another.[82]

Although the nobility continued to hope for tenancies and stipends, the realities of grace were nevertheless shifting. Aside from the exploitation of fiscal rights, the new intensity of lordship naturally meant that noblemen, town councils and ecclesiastical institutions hoped for grants of a more permanent, jurisdictional nature. The most common type of full property donation (*plena propiedad*) involved one or more *villas* (municipalities) and their territory, transferred from the *realengo* or following the forfeiture of another lord. The property was generally conferred *por juro de heredad* (in heredity), meaning that the main estate would be divided among heirs at death. In the case of death without issue, it does appear that some grants would result in reversion to the crown: for example, the *infante* Pedro's will of 1317 confirmed that Santander would return to the king if he had no heir (though the same document stated that Llanes and San Vicente de la Barquera would go to the king because Pedro desired it, not through obligation).[83] Though the terms of the gift can be difficult to ascertain, recipients often enjoyed jurisdictional rights over their new territories: Fernando

[79] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 129.
[80] Hernández, *Las rentas del rey*; Grassotti, *Las instituciones*, 788-844.
[81] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 735-6.
[82] Monsalvo, *La construcción del poder real*, 51-2.
[83] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 107.

IV's grant of Galisteo and Miranda de Castañar to the wife and son of *infante* Pedro, for example, explicitly noted the inclusion of 'all royal lordship and jurisdiction'.[84]

Alternatively, another tradition of grant-making involved providing immunity from entry by *adelantados* and *merinos*, such as that given to the Order of Santiago in 1277 and the convent of the Holy Spirit in Salamanca in 1279.[85] However, in line with what we have already seen regarding the importance of external arbitration and royal interests in reserving jurisdiction, chancery documents much more commonly protected aspects of royal lordship. Fiscal rights such as *moneda forera* and *yantar* were typically excluded from grants of immunity, and prohibitions against alienation to religious orders were common. Moreover, many documents spelt out the king's right to judge in criminal cases and warned of the king's right to intervene if there were a default of justice.[86] When the grant included a fortification, it was common to see additional safeguards, such as the obligation to open their gates to receive the king and to provide military assistance (*fazer guerra y paz*).[87] The parallel developments of noble and royal lordship thus combine in donations of *plena propiedad*: heritable possession of a specific place, with both elaborate rights of jurisdiction and a non-trivial suite of obligations to the king. Indeed, the imperative to seek donations in *plena propiedad* saw other titles and honours recede in importance: kings had previously given the title of *conde* to certain noble lineages, but by the twelfth century this generally had come to be seen as a birthright rather than a sign of royal favour, and drops out of regular usage in the charters.[88] Only one magnate, Lope Díaz de Haro, sought the added distinction

[84] 'todo sennorio real e jurisdiccion'. Benavides, doc. 99.
[85] AHN Uclés, caj. 5, vol I, núm. 8; caj. 308, núm. 16.
[86] ibid., 144.
[87] ibid., 726.
[88] Barton, *The Aristocracy*, 30-3.

of *conde* status in our period; the rest concentrated on the tangible benefits of grants to bolster their influence in the locality.

Contemporary Attitudes to Grant-Making

The most straightforward interpretation of grants, as Enrique II encapsulated in 1373, views them as retrospective: rewards for deserving subjects. Castilian writers treated it as self-evident that a royal gift should be a *galardón* (reward), though some went further to establish grants as part of overall justice, for example when the *Partidas* argued, 'for men to receive good for good and bad for bad, according to his deserts, is perfect justice'. [89] However, it must be recognised that there was also a forward-looking aspect to grant-making. Contemporaries acknowledged that kings were attempting to achieve something in the future through their grant-making. According to the *Partidas*, the king 'should not covet excessive riches for the sake of keeping them, and not doing good with them.'[90] A mid-fourteenth century Castilian gloss to Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* stated it even more emphatically: 'And Seneca says that the gifts which we give should not be in vain'.[91] The purpose for which the grants were to be deployed was clear: giving should lead to loyal service, as indeed Enrique II acknowledged in the quotation with which we began.[92] This all-encompassing benefit could be understood as service in the interests of the king as a lord or for the common good, or both. The *Libro de los doze sabios* encapsulated this with a pithy aphorism: 'Largesse makes one's enemies friends, and one's friends servants'.[93]

[89] 'Bien por bien et mal por mal rescibiendo los homes segund su merescimiento, es justicia complida'. *Partidas,* II.xxvii; *The Institutes of Justinian: With Notes*, ed. and trans. T. Cooper (New York, 1852), 4.
[90] 'Riquezas grandes ademas non debe el rey cobdiciar para tenerlas guardadas et non obrar bien con ellas'. *Partidas*, II.3.iv.
[91] 'E dice Séneca que los dones que diéremos no deven ser en vano'. J. Beneyto Perez (ed.), *Glosa Castellana al 'Regimiento de Príncipes' de Egidio Romano* (Madrid, 1947), I, 156.
[92] See above, 169.
[93] 'Largueza faze los enemigos amigos e los amigos syervos'. *Doze sabios,* 88.

This strict link between grant-making and service was, naturally, important for kings to emphasise. Indeed, they did not expect their arguments to meet any objection. Take, for example, the expectations revealed in the early 1270s, when recipients of major grants rebelled against Alfonso X. Time and again, the chronicler reports Alfonso X's astonishment at their discontent. Some of his incredulity came from his belief that the magnates in question had misjudged or misunderstood the king's grant-making. The chronicler depicts Alfonso, having been informed of Nuño González de Lara's plotting in 1270, musing over Nuño's thinking. If Nuño was trying to scare him, thought Alfonso, this would not work. Perhaps, instead, it had to do with material gain. But this was also mystifying: 'if he did it to have more than he did, he would gain more by serving. And if he did it to please someone in another kingdom, he knew well that he would not receive as much from any other man on earth as the help he had from the king'.[94] Of course, royal outrage and astonishment were well-worn tropes in political texts and especially in royalist chronicles.[95] At the very least, we can say that a recipient of royal grace should expect to face a certain degree of added anger if they later defied the king, whether or not the king was actually surprised.

However, the documents produced in the same string of rebellions against Alfonso X do seem to suggest something more: that Alfonso genuinely believed that there was a shared understanding about the grants he had made to his followers. After the crisis escalated in 1272, Alfonso's messengers communicated to *infante* Felipe his disappointment at what he perceived as an outrage against the basic rules of grant-making: 'in these matters you make

[94] 'si lo fizo por aver mas bien de cuanto avia, que serviéndole podrie ganar más aína. E si lo fizo por facer placer á algund otro del reino, que bien sabía él que de ome del mundo non rescibiría tanto bien nin tanta ayuda commo del Rey'. *CAX*, 16.
[95] For a fuller discussion of anger as an 'emotional narrative', see S. R. Doubleday, 'Anger in the Crónica de Alfonso X', *Al-Masaq*, 27 (2015), 67-73.

a grave misunderstanding of the many graces and good deeds which the king did to you, in raising you, finding you a marriage, endowing you and giving you many incomes'.[96] When this failed, Alfonso chose to address the major rebels personally, on each occasion recounting the gifts he had given them, including possessions, tenancies and incomes. Having listed grants he made to *infante* Felipe and Nuño González, he insisted that he had displayed exceptional generosity: 'they knew well that there had never been a king in this land who had done so much good and grace to them as he had'.[97] Later, the themes of incredulity and miscalculation were extended to a personal insult to the intelligence of Nuño González. Increasingly frustrated that he could not make his opponents accept his narrative about his generosity, he raged: 'if they want us to think they are prudent, consider don Nuño, who is held to be the wisest of them, who did not know how to thank God for the good which he did for him nor to serve me in the estate and honour in which I put him, but he knew how to lose it through this nonsense'.[98]

These exchanges reveal the rhetorical contests that resulted when recipients of the king's gifts did not serve him as they were supposed to. However, this idealised vision of proper grant-making did leave scope for royal grace to be criticised on its own terms. The author of the chronicles, for example, used the appropriate management of the *realengo* as a 'litmus test' for good government.[99] There was, moreover, a forum for regular complaint by wider society: the Cortes. In general, the thrust of their critiques was in line with the chronicler's concerns about the management of the *realengo.* At the Cortes of Palencia in 1286, for

[96] 'en estas cosas les fecistes grand desconocimiento por muchas mercedes e bienes que el Rey fizo en vosotros, en criarvos e en casarvos e en heredarvos e en darvos muchos dineros'. ibid., 24.
[97] 'bien sabian que nunca oviera rey en esta tierra que tanto bien e tanta merced les ficiese commo les el avia fecho'. *CAX*, 21.
[98] 'é si nos facen entender que ellos son sesudos, parad mientes á don Nuño, que es tenido por el más sesudo dellos, que non supo gradescer á Dios el bien que le ficiera nin á mí servir en aquel estado é honra que lo puse, é súpolo perder por esta locura'. ibid., 40.
[99] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 110.

example, Sancho IV was petitioned not to give *realengo* lands away in the future, 'because they made me understand that in this way my justice and incomes are diminished and it results in great damage to the land'.[100] In 1308, Cortes petitioners once again hoped that the king might find cause to revoke grants that had been made, securing the concession that 'if I gave to councils or anyone else properties of others which I could not rightfully give... they shall be returned'.[101] At Valladolid in 1307, the petitioners had an even more specific complaint, namely that the possessions the king was giving out as he pleased were wrongly appropriated from conciliar lordship, and should be returned.[102] This is a reminder of the phenomenon we observed in Chapter 2 about the self-confidence with which town councils considered landholding rights derived from the *realengo* to belong to them, even contrary to the will of the monarch.[103]

When faced with the prospect of a second minority, security against illicit grant-making was a top priority for the Cortes. In 1313, *infante* Juan promised to maintain the *realengo* as it was at Fernando's death, 'and that I cannot take them for myself nor give, exchange or alienate them to any person, man or woman, and that those that are given, alienated or sold... I shall do whatever I can to secure them and return them to the kingdom for the king'.[104] The same promise was given again at Burgos in 1315 and Valladolid in 1322.[105] In the interim, at Medina del Campo in 1318, the focus changed slightly, with more emphasis on any royal lands that had passed to ecclesiastical lordship through illicit donation.[106] At the

[100] 'por que me ffezieron entender que minguaua por esta rrazzon la mi justicia e las mis rrentas, e se tornaua en gran danno dela tierra'. *Cortes*, 95.
[101] 'si yo di a los conceios o a otros algunos heredamientos de los agenos que non pudiesse dar con derecho a los ellos tomaron como non deuian, que sean tornados'. O'Callaghan, 'Las Cortes de Fernando IV', 325.
[102] *Cortes*, 190-1.
[103] See above, 73-82.
[104] 'que yo quelas non pueda tomar para mi nin dar nin canbiar nin enagenar a ninguna perssona baron nin muger et delas que sson dadas o enagenadas o vendidas... que yo que pune en quanto podier delas conbrar e delas tornar al rregno paral Rey'. *Cortes*, 223.
[105] ibid., 274, 338.
[106] ibid., 330.

very end of our period, as Alfonso XI reached his majority, he was petitioned to think carefully about the men chosen to be his tenants and, even more strikingly, not to make any grants out of the *realengo*. He consented, excepting the properties that he had already bestowed on Queen Costanza.[107] There was thus something conventional and predictable in Cortes complaints about the shrinking of the *realengo*. These complaints would have been familiar across Europe, with subjects influenced by Roman Law understandings of public and private property often causing anxiety about dwindling royal estates. The idea of undue profligacy was at the forefront of the crisis faced by Henry III of England in 1258, for example, while Edward I attempted to learn the lesson and limit the grants he made from the demesne, neatly reflecting Alfonso XI's commitment of 1325.[108]

However, there are also glimpses in the documentation that more nuanced and even strategic realities of the king's grant-making were understood and accepted by political society. For example, when Juan Manuel made his promises in return for the support of Talavera de la Reina in 1320, his commitments demonstrated the priorities of the *concejos* for any new regime. Predictably, they were interested in protecting the *realengo*, and Juan Manuel duly promised 'to undo all the purchases which those of the *abadengo* [ecclesiastical lands] made from the *realengo* as is contained in the *cuadernos* [of the Cortes]'. However, they also knew that generosity served an important purpose. They had Juan Manuel promise them that, as regent, he would 'give the king a house and estate for his maintenance, so that he possesses what everyone agrees is right, and monies and land for his vassals and officials to have his retinue as kings before him had'. The councillors thus knew, and demanded, that for the proper functioning of the teenage king's court he had to have sufficient resources to

[107] ibid., 376.
[108] A. M. Spencer, 'Royal Patronage and the Earls in the Reign of Edward I', *History,* 93 (2008), 33-4.

endow his supporters.[109] A final promise takes this even further. The councillors' concern throughout the document was that Juan Manuel should cooperate with the other tutors, especially María de Molina. Their argument was most revealing: 'because our lady the queen, grandmother and tutor of the king, gave many grants and did good deeds to all the said kingdoms and to us, and ended many discords'. [110] Grants were thus a fundamental aspect of good governance and a welcome means of building consensus, sitting alongside other mechanisms needed to end disputes. Here, then, we observe the nuances of royal grant-making as seen from below: it could be a source of suspicion if it meant the careless diminution of the royal demesne, but, naturally, grants were most welcome when they involved giving things to towns. Even more than this, they were necessary for the honour of the king's household and a critical aspect of establishing good governance in turbulent times.

Grant-Making in Practice

On one level, the emphasis on reward for service was borne out by the behaviour of our monarchs, not least in the documents bestowing grants. In justifying a gift, the stock phrase was 'for much service which he did and does for us', but often monarchs spelled out at greater length what service they were choosing to recognise.[111] These varied widely, from

[109] For a discussion of the cultural value attached to a magnificent court during the reign of Alfonso X, see K. Kennedy, *Alfonso X of Castile-León: Royal Patronage, Self-Promotion and Manuscripts in Thirteenth-Century Spain* (Amsterdam, 2019), 126-9, 147, 215.
[110] 'desfaser todas las compras que son fechas que fisieron los del abbadengo de lo Realengo asi como se contiene en los quadernos'; 'que den al Rey casa e facienda para su mantenimiento seugnd que a el pertenesce aquello que acordaren todos con ellos que sea razon e quel [?] dineros e tierra cierta para sus vasallos e sus oficiales para haver su mesnada como la ovieron de los reyes onde el viene'; 'porque nuestra señora la Reyna ahuela e tutora de nuestro señor el Rey fizo muchas mercedes e muchos bienes en todos los dichos regnos e en nos e partio muchas discordias'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 354.
[111] 'por mucho servicio que nos él fizo e face'. *Benavides*, doc. 80.

prayers offered by clerics of a church to specific military feats or acts of loyalty.[112] One vivid example comes from the defence of Tarifa in 1294, when astounding tales of sacrifice had begun to spread. As the chronicler later recorded it, the exhausted Marinid force was at the point of abandoning their efforts, but the rebellious *infante* Juan, who had joined them, proposed to threaten Tarifa's commander, Alonso Pérez de Guzmán. Informing Alonso that he had captured his son, *infante* Juan demanded that he open the gates to save his heir's life. Alonso Pérez refused and, in a spine-chilling illustration of his determination, even threw a dagger from the ramparts for the execution.[113] Hearing the rumours, Sancho IV declared his gratitude in January 1295 that Alonso Pérez had made the sacrifice 'to give your blood and offer your firstborn son for my service and for God's before that, and for your honour', and compared his fidelity to that of Abraham. For this, said Sancho, 'you deserve to be called 'the Good', and thus I call you, and thus you will be called from now on'. Hoping that these deeds would serve as an example, Sancho concluded by affirming his desire 'to give graces to you which will be commensurate with your services'.[114] He followed up on this commitment with the grant of Sanlúcar de Barrameda on the Atlantic coast.[115] Fernando IV continued rewarding this famous servant, providing him with fishing rights in Cádiz and nearby Chiclana.[116] Guzmán continued to be a source of support and financial aid, for which he received due reward, receiving Véjer in 1307 following his provision of 55,000 *doblas de oro* to the king to maintain Tarifa.[117] Rewarding service that struck the king as beyond the usual obligations was thus important for kings and political society alike.

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[112] Examples from Alfonso X's reign include: tax exemptions for the bishop of Cuenca in 1255 in return for prayers for his parents, ACC, I, caja 4, núm. 13; tax income to the order of Calatrava for their aid in the conquest of Murcia, May 1254, *Salazar*, I-40 f80v-1; Montemolín's incorporation to the *realengo* following their show of loyalty in July 1282, MHE, II, doc. 212.
[113] *CSIV*, 89.
[114] 'dar la vuestra sangre y ofrecer el vuestro primo genito hijo por el mio seruicio e de dios delante y por la vuestra honrra'; 'por lo qual mereceis ser llamado el bueno. Y yo assi vos lo llamo, e assi vos lo llameredes de aqui adelante'; 'fazer en uos mercedes que sean semejantes al vuestros servicios'. *Salazar*, E-6 f195.
[115] *Benavides*, doc. 102.
[116] González, *Itinerario y regesta*, 132; *Benavides*, doc. 233.
[117] ibid., doc. 392.

The most significant point, however, is that we can also observe the forward-looking element of grant-making in the calculations they made in practice, and this underscores the importance of viewing grants as a strategic decision as well as an inevitable patronage mechanism. For example, kings occasionally gave grants that were not only outside their control but were not held by Castilians at all. In 1266, for example, Alfonso X promised the order of Santiago that he would give them the castles of Antequera and Archidona once he had conquered them from the Muslims.[118] His grant to the *concejo* of Lorca in 1271 was even more interesting: he conceded a sales tax exemption on fish, but tantalisingly added the promise that they could keep any lordships that they managed to conquer themselves.[119] Grant-making, then, had the effect of incentivising others to deploy their military resources in strategic areas. Indeed, knowledge about this kind of arrangement could provide incentive to others, such as the *concejo* of Burgos' seizure of Villafranca from Juan Núñez de Lara in 1298. With that said, actions without prior agreement were more unstable and liable to challenge when political expediencies had changed, as Burgos found when Fernando IV reversed the grant in 1301. The spectrum of political computations at play in the practice of royal *largesse* meant that resources and expectations had to be managed creatively, with kings using other forces to achieve their strategic objectives in certain regions.

Indeed, there were occasions when grant-making evolved into something approaching an endowment policy. For one thing, the royal practice of transferring territories out of the *realengo* or tenancy into the governance of *concejos* can be interpreted as a form of endowment, whereby kings traded resources for political support from towns. Indeed, we

[118] AHN, Uclés, caj. 313, núm. 13.
[119] *CODOM I*, doc. 113.

get a direct picture of how contemporaries understood endowments in certain documents. For example, we can consider the grant of Osuna and Cazalla made by Sancho IV to the Order of Calatrava in 1285. The military orders had been instrumental in supporting Sancho's rebellion prior to his accession to the throne, and the document begins in conventional terms of rewarding service. However, it goes on: 'and so that the order can be richer and more prosperous and can have more with which to serve us, we give them...'.[120] Sancho's understanding was that a more powerful ally would benefit him, especially if it meant they were stronger near Seville, the major bastion of support for Alfonso X throughout the troubles of 1282-4. Sancho again invoked endowment when making his most generous grant to an individual, namely Diego López de Haro. When honouring his favourite in 1286 with the towns of Cerezo and Grañón, he mentioned 'the desire we have to elevate his estate'.[121] We have already seen with the Velasco how this could dovetail with office-holding, whereby a loyal officer was drafted in at critical moments in part because his landholding base was dependant on the king, and when this was effective it no doubt encouraged further grants to consolidate Sancho Sánchez de Velasco's usefulness as a supporter in the locality.

This notion of allowing a favoured servant to build up his estate chimes strongly with the entrenching territorial lordships discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. It reflects the shifting priorities of recipients, but in turn highlights the vital connections between central priorities and local realities. When making grants at the centre, kings often made a careful geopolitical weighting of power bases. In a world where servants received grants as endowments, there would be an inevitable focus on geographical positioning (contrary to Barton's picture of

[120] 'por muchos servicios e buenos que nos ficieron e fazen e por que la orden sea mas rica e mas auondada e ellos ayan mas algo con que nos seruir damos les los castillos…'. *Salazar*, O-20, f111-2.
[121] 'sabor que habemos de lebar la su facienda'. *Salazar*, N-8 f18v-20.

randomness in earlier royal grants). The *Partidas*, for example, argued that service might mean different things in different parts of the kingdom. They state that the king should exercise authority over castles and fortresses, 'especially over such that are on the border with the barbarians and other kingdoms where the emperor has no authority'.[122] This argument that extra care should be taken with regions which were most strategic for collective security underscores the importance of geopolitics. Similarly, awareness of the impact certain grants on the entire polity was displayed at the Cortes of Valladolid in 1312, when petitioners urged Fernando IV to revoke the grant of Navarrete to Juan Alfonso de Haro 'because it is on the border of Navarre'.[123] It is clear, then, that there was an acute understanding of uneven significance of grants, with some requiring particular attention.

Geopolitical considerations had a major impact on the strategic use of royal resources in 1275-1325. For example, after an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Algeciras in 1277, the Castilian grip on the southern territories of Andalucía once again seemed tenuous.[124] Throughout 1279, the king made a string of strategic grants: he gave properties to the new Order of Santa María de España, including the town and castle of Medina Sidonia, sitting only 35 miles from the target zone of Algeciras; in the vulnerable area south of Córdoba he gave the castle of Cabra to his son Pedro and properties in Écija to Juan Alfonso de Arenillas, his doorkeeper; and he bolstered the order of Calatrava with the properties of Tiñosa and Cazalla, near Córdoba and Seville respectively.[125] This string of grants, coming at such a critical moment in the struggle for the south, reinforced the forward-looking characteristics of royal grant-making. Alfonso X's grants had the effect of involving loyal servants, family

[122] 'mayormente de aquellos que estan en frontera de los bárbaros et de los otros regnos sobre que el emperador non ha señorio'. *Partidas*, II.1.iii.
[123] 'porque esta en frontera de Navarra'. *Benavides*, doc. 569.
[124] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 395.
[125] *Salazar*, D-1 f148v; I-40 f240-1; I-40 f239-40; M-6 f167-v; AHN Calatrava Vol IV núm, 103; Uclés caja 222, núm. 4.

members and military orders in the defence of territories that otherwise would have required royal resources to protect. As such, grants were not necessarily a sign of a dominant nobility but rather were a part of the management of political capital. We shall see in later chapters how vital these concerns could be in the politics of 1275-1325.

Of course, grants established a two-way relationship, and hence we must consider the requests and expectations of potential recipients. The surviving documentation reveals that petitioning played a significant part in the process of issuing favour, and hence it was not always expected to be the king's spontaneous act of grace. Commonly, *privilegios* laid down three considerations for kings when they exercised grace, which included considering what they had been asked for alongside the costs and benefits of the grant could give and where the gift was located.[126] Though it is relatively rare, the name of a petitioner was sometimes recorded, as when the bishop of Palencia and Sancho IV's uncle, Juan Alfonso, secured Arañuelo for his servant in 1285.[127] Moreover, it is notable that cities received most of their confirmations either during Cortes meetings or when the king was staying within their walls; that is, at the exact times when he could most easily be accessed for petitions. That said, there were undoubted advantages to be gained from prolonged, direct access to the king, as revealed by a colourful document sent to the cathedral of Cuenca in 1287. One of Sancho IV's chaplains, Pedro Martínez, informed the chapter that he had secured them an exemption from *yantar* with a playful blackmailing of the monarch. He had suggested to the king that he would refuse to say mass until the privilege was granted, and the king responded with mirth, granting the exemption and double-checking that the chaplain would now say the mass (though he did also check the books of privileges held in the chancery).[128] The joke

[126] E.g. *Salazar*, M-45, f12v-14.
[127] *Gaibrois*, doc. 48.
[128] 'Estonce el Rey dixo que non tenie por bien que diessedes la yantar e que, dixome estonce riyendo, que si diria la missa, e yo dixele que sí'. ACC, I, caja 11, núm. 14. See Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 525.

shared between Sancho and his chaplain illustrates vividly the powerful incentive to get as close to the king as possible.

Thinking about grant-making from the perspective of the recipients of grants inevitably leads to a focus on competition and conflicting interests. This often has a pejorative association: Arias wrote that 'the nobles competed to benefit from royal patronage which led to factionalism and turmoil'.[129] There are some grounds for this interpretation. In 1298, for example, María de Molina appears to have counted on cynicism. When word reached her that Pedro Ponce de León had joined *infante* Juan's rebellion, she used her control of royal grant-making policy to respond. She offered to give him Cangas and Tineo, both in Asturias. Her calculation was that 'she believed that through his coveting those towns he would leave the path trodden by don Juan'.[130] This ploy worked and *infante* Juan was prevented from gaining a powerful ally, though the chronicler does not hesitate to remind us that Pedro Ponce joined the queen through his greed. To take a different example, faced with significant opposition in 1296, María de Molina sent for Juan Alfonso de Haro to help, but he said that he could not, since he had been disinherited from los Cameros which ought to be his. The queen was reluctant to give this lordship to him, because Sancho IV had given it to their son Pedro, who was 4 years old. However, she accepted the request and gave los Cameros to Juan Alfonso, so that he would aid them with all his men in Valladolid.[131] Just like offices, therefore, grants were indispensable tools to avert crises or mitigate moments of weakness for the crown.

[129] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 6.
[130] 'touo que por cobdicia de aquellas villas lo tiraria de carrera de don Juan'. *CFIV*, 114.
[131] ibid., 104.

Moreover, political society appears to have been privately willing to acknowledge a *quid pro quo* in grant-making at certain moments. In 1309, a knight named Pay Arías gave an account of *infante* Juan's discontent to the sacristan of Tarazona, still Jaime II's agent at the Castilian court. According to Pay Arías: 'don Juan had demanded Ponferrada from the king, which is between the kingdoms of León and Galicia; and because he did not give it to him the *infante* don Juan had departed from the king'.[132] Here, we appear to have clear evidence that early fourteenth-century politicians had an acknowledged element of cynicism: agents like *infante* Juan pulled manoeuvres to secure the best possible control over patronage, and these actions were recognised for what they were by others. However, while remaining clear-eyed about the motivations behind some political moves, Jaime II was not prepared to accept them straightforwardly: 'And when we heard it we were very surprised and we marvelled at it... and therefore we command you... to tell him [Juan] that we have understood that he is in dispute with the king because of this, and it would please us if he did not seek to make such a demand or any other that could cause disturbance.'[133] Even while acknowledging a kind of patronage-based politics, therefore, there was a moral logic at play in grant-making that meant that the more cynical forms of factionalism could be criticised and rejected. Politics could be mercenary and self-interested, but this should not lead us to discount the power of discourses of morality which gave kings an entrenched advantage in determining right and wrong.

The moral logic of grant-making also had practical relevance when it came to another pattern of giving: reconciliation. Following the multiple rebellions of Juan Núñez de Lara, for

[132] 'don Johan avia demandado al Rey quel diese Puent ferrada que es entre el Regno de leon e de Galicia e porque nol le auia dada quel infant don Johan se era partido del Rey'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 193.
[133] E nos quando lo oyemos desplogonos muyto e nos ende maravellamos. Porque uos desimos... quel digades en como nos hauemos entendido que por esta demanda anda despagado del Rey e que nos plazera que a este tiempo non deue el catar de faser tal demanda ni otra que turbamiento alguno dar pueda'. ibid.

example, grants such as Moya and Cañete in 1289 and various tenancies were given shortly afterwards.[134] Fernando IV also used both grants and lucrative offices as means to secure the reconciliation of key opponents. The true master of reconciliation, however, was to be Alfonso XI. The chronicles demonstrate how Alfonso's grants were a key element of his restoration of power by bringing rebellious noblemen back to grace. The strongest challenge of his reign came from Juan Manuel and Juan Nuñez (III) de Lara, and in 1331 he attempted to reconcile them: 'the king pardoned them for all their transgressions and assured them that it was his will to maintain them for his service, and he said that he would show them great favour'.[135] Though this accord broke down, in 1334 Alfonso again came to terms with Juan Núñez, and 'to safeguard these things' he gave him a number of possessions: Castroverde de Campos, Aguilar de Campos, and the castle of Aguilar de Monteagudo.[136] Alfonso then expected to rely on his service in the following year to repel an Aragonese invasion.[137] Precisely the same behaviour is recorded with Alfonso de la Cerda, Juan Manuel, and Pedro Fernández de Castro, all of whom were brought to the king's grace with small grants of land, and the latter two were subsequently used to great effect against Granada and Portugal.[138] The key point is that we miss something in understanding politics if we see these grants merely as a product of greed, competition or factionalism. Grants functioned both symbolically and practically: the king was demonstrating his willingness to enter (or re-enter) a relationship founded on trust and service, while, at the same time, the incomes and power contained within the transfer of jurisdiction would, theoretically, help the lord to uphold his end of the arrangement. Therefore, a monarch's ability to absorb pressure from

[134] *CSIV*, 82.
[135] 'Et el Rey dixo que les perdonaba todos los enojos que le avian fecho fasta allí, et que fuesen ciertos él et Don Joan Nuñez, que era su voluntat del Rey de los querer para su servicio, et que les faria merced granadamiente'. *CAXI*, 240.
[136] 'por guardar estas cosas'. ibid., 263-4.
[137] 'asosegado en la merçed del Rey'. ibid., 264, 267.
[138] ibid., 228, 273, 280, 287-8; *Salazar*, M-40 f90v-92v.

opponents, force them to come to terms, and then establish a new basis for their service with a grant was a vital part of maintaining authority.

The more nuanced vision of grant-making proposed by this chapter is encapsulated in one final example. In 1305, *infante* Juan thanked Jaime II for agreeing to adjust the settlement of Torrellas by transferring Cartagena to Juan Manuel. The effects of this wisdom, he assured Jaime, would be dramatic: 'be certain that through this especially don Juan Manuel remains pacified for ever in the service of the king of Castile and in yours, and will forever be my friend and helper'.[139] This is a standout document for the history of grant-making. Here we have, in the words of the arch-villain of so many royalist narratives, a direct statement of the value of prudent royal grace. At their core, grants sought to establish service relationships for the future, expressing mutual understanding for all those involved in the decision. There was a shared understanding of the aims and logic of grant-making, though that logic set a high standard and was prone to challenge. This helps us understand the politics of the centre with more nuance than 'factionalism and turmoil'. Everyone knew that kings were supposed to achieve something with their grants, and when those grants were conveyed there were supposed to be obligations of service on the recipient extending into the future. The limits of that service were open to debate, and clearly a king who pushed his subjects too far could not rely on his former generosity, as Alfonso X found. Similarly, where trust was dramatically eroded, for example in the aftermath of minority or repeated rebellion, establishing mutual understanding through *largesse* would be much more difficult. Not everyone's desires could be met at once, and hence a perception of balance and correct intent had to be maintained.

[139] 'Et sed cierto que por esto sennaladamiente finca asosegado don Johan Manuel para ser siempre a seruiçio del Rey de Castilla e uuestro e de seer siempre otrosi mio amigo e en la mi ayuda'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 123.

Conclusion

Historians have long interpreted the political history of this period as a clash between the king and the nobility, in which the latter was gaining the upper hand. While it is easy to understand why this has been the prevailing emphasis, the conflict-based model does not capture the full nuance of Castilian political culture. Certainly, there was enmity, sometimes catastrophically so, between certain kings and certain nobles, and to pretend otherwise would be futile. But these conflicts, which so animated the pens of the chroniclers, obscure other structural trends. The gravitational force of the Castilian polity was pulling all these agents to the centre, to compete for participation in an expanded framework of central government. This same phenomenon was conceived in different ways by different participants: kings wanted a cooperative nobility within their administrations to assist income collection and to marshal maximum support for their campaigns, as well as for the prestige that accompanied a bustling court; noblemen coveted lucrative slices of these incomes, both for themselves and to withhold them from their rivals or, worse, Jews and other non-noble officers, and evidently esteemed royal office highly; and towns and ecclesiastical institutions strove to protect their privileges and properties through recourse to the same centre, catastrophising all the while about the threats they faced. But no matter how it was seen by its different participants, there was a lasting change in the stakes and modes of competition in Castilian politics. The new politics of office-holding was shown in 1302, when the *infante* Enrique was recorded scheming by the unsympathetic chronicler. This time, he decided that the most harm he could do to the king's cause was to renounce the *mayordomazgo*, depriving Fernando of service by one of the most powerful magnates.

María de Molina, often the most astute figure in the narrative, understood instantly: 'she knew that don Enrique did this to do the most damage he could, and so as not to hold any charge or office from the king'.[140] Integration had become so fundamental to Castilian politics that it spawned new tactics for agents on all sides.

Offices and grants were essential parts of political strategy, heavily conditioned by changes in the locality. Kings incentivised expansion by alienating territories not yet conquered, endowed their allies in particular places to make them more stable bastions of support or elevated them to territorial offices, and found themselves being urged to reconsider where regions were vulnerable to foreign incursion. Ultimately, the combination of the Castilian king's offices and his grants was a serious force for political integration. As *concejos* took over more pockets of *realengo* they took more of an interest in defending the king's possessions from incursion by others. Meanwhile, noblemen, whose situation in the locality was increasingly contentious and territorial, could not afford to ignore the king's court, no matter how weak his personal authority appeared. They were drawn to the centre for grants; they were drawn into offices for a better chance of receiving grants and for the judicial powers they could exercise; and even after a falling out with the monarch grants were a symbolic and practical foundation for a new relationship of service. The power of this last idea as an ethic and as a structure is the subject of the next chapter.

[140] 'entendió que lo facia don Enrique por facer lo peor é por non tener del Rey cargo ni oficio ninguno'. *CFIV*, 127.

6. The Royal *Servicio*

Though almost three decades have passed since Rosemary Horrox's resounding declaration that 'service has some claim to be considered the dominant ethic of the middle ages', one might wonder whether accounts of medieval politics have taken enough notice.[1] In Britain, the post-McFarlane focus on patronage and managing affinities has seemingly been left behind, and the 'New Constitutional History', for all its clear progress in understanding systems of political thought, leaves service somewhat absent, perhaps wary of the accusation of reducing politics to patronage.[2] Likewise, Castilian historiography's answer to the 'constitutional turn' has emphasised consensus, pacts and contracts as a way to escape from the narratives of conflict and seemingly incommensurable royal and noble politics.[3] Working from another perspective, various historians have discussed the discursive and ceremonial aspects of authority, building on a long-standing debate over the sacred or 'unsacred' nature of Castilian kingship.[4] Surprisingly, however, service does not feature heavily in these discussions, with writers like François Foronda preferring a wider notion of *privanza* ('favour') to describe forms of political association.[5] As discussed at various points in this thesis, however, some of the major structures that articulated the relationships between layers of hierarchy and between centre and locality were conceptualised in terms of *servicio* - service. An expanding network of royal officers drew the nobility in more

[1] R. Horrox, 'Service', in *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England.*, ed. eadem (Cambridge, 1994), 61. For a sustained examination of service, inspired directly by Horrox, see A. E. Curry and E. Matthew (eds.), *The Fifteenth Century, I: Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2000). See also G. Dodd, 'Henry V's establishment: service, loyalty and reward in 1413', in *Henry V: New Interpretations*, ed. idem (York, 2013).
[2] See Powell, 'After "After McFarlane"', 1-16.
[3] See e.g. J. M. Nieto Soria and Ó. Villarroel González, *Pacto y consenso en la cultura política peninsular (siglos XI al XV)* (Madrid, 2013).
[4] T. Ruiz, 'Unsacred Monarchy: The Kings of Castile in the Late Middle Ages' in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Wilentz (Philadelphia, 1985), 109-44; J. M. Nieto Soria, 'Origen divino, espíritu laico y poder real en la Castilla del siglo XIII', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 27 (1997), 43-101; Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 24-7.
[5] Foronda, 'La privanza', 73-132.

consistently while referring constantly to service; grants of land and privileges to *concejos* and noblemen were justified by specific or general services; or these grants were confiscated for falling into a state called 'disservice' (*deservicio*). The centrality of this concept to the smooth functioning of relationships at court and in the locality invites a closer look at service as an ideology. This chapter asks how the conceptual structuring of political interactions through ideas and words could affect their dynamics and observes distinctive features of the Castilian rhetorical landscape that contributed to its trajectory as at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It begins with an overview of the various meanings of service in Castilian society and especially the multiple ways of imagining service to the king, before looking more closely at how political actors deployed these words and ideas.

The Meanings of Service

Service was fundamentally a personal relationship between two individuals and was open-ended in that the servant could legitimately be asked obey the lord (provided that the task was commensurate with the servant's own station).[6] This was so deeply entrenched in medieval life and thought that it was hardly felt to require spelling out. In his *Castigos*, Sancho IV encapsulated a simple truth that 'it is a natural thing and one proved by reason... that vassals should by right serve, obey, safeguard and honour their king'.[7] We have already seen in Chapter 5 how royal officers and recipients of grants operated comfortably within this framework of understanding, in which serving the king was at once duty, a sure path to reward, and in a sense a reward in itself through the influence it afforded.[8]

[6] Horrox, 'Service', 63.
[7] 'Cosa natural es e de razón prouada... que los vasallos deuen por derecho seruir e obedescer e guardar e honrrar al su rey'. H. O. Bizzarri (ed.), *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV* (Madrid, 2001), 130.
[8] See above, 201-3.

In addition to service through vassalage or formal office, perhaps the most basic understanding of service was the obligation to fight for a lord in person. Military service in Castile operated on two levels: individual and collective. Both individual knights and town communities understood themselves to have formal and informal contracts to provide military service. These could come from various places: the *Fuero viejo*, for example, set out the principle that a knight who received a *soldada*, a horse or a breastplate from his lord ought to render three months' service in his host.[9] Likewise, those who received tenancies from the king were obliged 'to make war and peace at his command'.[10] The *Fuero real* underlined the king's expectations, condemning 'the magnates, noblemen or anyone else who hold land or moneys from the king, and have a duty to attend the host with knights, but do not bring as many as they should'.[11] The nobles' duty to serve by bringing a certain number of knights was thus partly an interpersonal agreement with the king and partly a collective obligation. Additionally, there was a much more extensive, yet ill-defined, obligation incumbent on all the natural inhabitants of Castile to provide service, albeit under extreme circumstances. The second *Partida*, for example, interprets the community's obligation to defend the king extremely broadly. It describes how, to avoid the disgrace of neglecting to protect the king, the people should rise up in arms under three circumstances: when anyone rebels in the dominions of the king, when enemies invade, or when the king invades the land of his enemies.[12] In doing so, the Roman-law-inspired text fused the idea of interpersonal service with the broader sense of collective duty as a citizen. Alfonso X's jurists insisted that although some, such as the king's vassals, were obliged to protect him

[9] *Fuero viejo*, I, 3, 1.
[10] F. García Fitz, 'La organización militar en Castilla y León (siglos XI-XIII)', *Revista de Historia Militar*, 45 (2001), 67; Grassotti, *Las instituciones feudo-vasalláticas*, 542.
[11] 'Los richos omnes, o infançones, o otros qualesquier que touieren tierra o morabedís del rey, et le ouieren de fazer hueste con caualleros, et non leuaren tantos como deuíen'. *Fuero Real*, IV, 19, 4.
[12] *Partidas*, II.19.

more routinely, this did not exempt everyone else from doing what they could according to their station. Indeed, they decreed that everyone upon hearing of rebellion in the king's lands should mobilise even without the king's summons, ignoring other usual exemptions:

> 'All persons should come to the host when they hear of it without waiting for the king's mandate... no one should be excused through the honour of their lineage, nor through the king's favour, nor through privilege nor being part of the religious orders, unless he were a man enclosed in the cloister or charged with ministering the services'.[13]

As we have noted on several occasions, then, the *Partidas* took every possible step to expand the king's power and to interpret the obligations of his subjects as strictly as possible.

This demand was clearly impractical and nothing of the kind appears to have happened during the multiple challenges to the king's authority during this period. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence that these obligations were understood. In 1289, when the knights of Cuenca gathered together to form an association, they revealed that they considered 'service' in a highly military sense: 'and we do all of this so that we might be better prepared to go into the service of our lord king Sancho in this war'.[14] Moreover, the breadth of this obligation was taken sufficiently seriously over the previous centuries for careful exemptions to be recorded in municipal *fueros*. In the mid-twelfth century those living in the jurisdiction of the monastery of Arlanza were exempted from military service, as were the inhabitants of the Real de la Jara by Alfonso X and the jurors of Seville by Sancho IV. Other *fueros* took care to circumscribe the service they owed: the denizens of Sepúlveda and the knights of Seville were only obliged to attend the host for a maximum of three months;

[13] 'deben todos venir luego que sopieren a tal hueste como esta nin atendiendo mandado del rey... ninguno non se podiese escusar por honra de linage, nin por privanza que hobiese con el rey, nin por previllejo nin por seer de orden, si non fuese home encerrado en claustra o los que fincasen para decir las horas'. ibid., II, 19, iii.

[14] 'E todo esto fazemos porque estemos mejor guisados para yr en servicio de nuestro sennor el rey don Sancho para en esta guerra'. Chacón, *Colección diplomática*, doc. 29.

those of Carmona and Córdoba could only be summoned once a year; and the towns awarded the *fuero* of Cuenca would only have to serve if the king led his armies personally.[15] At the same time as they sought to limit their own participation, city representatives in the Cortes tried to ensure that knights and noblemen fulfilled their obligations, seeking assurances in 1293 that royal *merinos* would press private lords into service.[16]

Military service was therefore deeply embedded in the most basic terms of the relationship between lords and vassals and, more importantly, between king and his subjects. Unsurprisingly, military service could be replaced by cash payment from an early date: bishoprics in León were recorded paying *fonsadera* in the mid-twelfth century, and from the thirteenth century this kind of payment in lieu of attending the king's *fonsado* (host) became much more common.[17] Interestingly, in exactly the same way as has been observed in Anglo-Norman Britain and Ireland, service in person endured far longer in border regions: just as Cheshire did not see scutage until 1277, in Murcia and Andalucía it was less common for *fonsadera* to be levied in lieu of active service in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries than in the northern kingdoms.[18] Throughout Europe, frontier zones saw the endurance of structures for troop mobilisation, with the consequence that meanings of service remained more active in those regions. Whether or not it had been commuted to cash, therefore, military service was an obligation that continued to shape the relationship between monarchs and their subjects.

[15] García, 'La organización militar', 66.
[16] *Cortes*, 112.
[17] García, 'La organización militar', 74.
[18] J. C. Holt, 'The introduction of knight-service in England', in *Colonial England, 1066-1215*, ed. idem (London, 1997), 99-100; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Royal service in Ireland', in *Government, War and Society in Medieval Ireland*, ed. P. Crooks (Dublin, 2008), 169; J. Romero Pérez, 'Estructuras militares y logísticas en la corona de Castilla durante el siglo XIV', *Espacio, tiempo y forma*, 32 (2019), 345.

In Castile, however, the idea of service found itself represented in the fiscal system in another, unique way. As we saw in Chapter 3, the extraordinary tax on livestock, which gradually came to require the consent of the Cortes to be raised, was called the *servicio*. How it gained its name is not clear, and hence it would be imprudent to read too much into what it means for the overall understanding of service in Castile. The term is conceptually related to the idea of 'aid', a common name for tax in medieval Europe, but there were undoubtedly more direct words in Castilian available to express 'aid' alone.[19] What we can say is that there was some connection between the payment of taxes designed to assist the king with his ongoing costs and the idea of service, and that this, being the most important business of many of the meetings of the Cortes, could not fail to contribute to the conception of service as a central tenet of the relationship between king and political society.

Service in Royal Discourse

Since the various meanings of service that we have discussed are all beneficial to the king's interests in one way or another, it is unsurprising that kings would seek to amplify them. In the first place, kings wrote and thought of service in terms of their servants and officers. The *Partidas* certainly demonstrate this in terms of the thought-world of Alfonso X's court, with long discussions on daily service in the household and exceptional service in battle, but we can also point to passages in other normative texts like the *Cien Capítulos*, written at Sancho's court in the mid-1280s, which argue that 'the people are the king's weapons and aids for his service'.[20] What is particularly important for our purposes is to investigate how

[19] G. L. Harriss, *King, Parliament, and public finance in medieval England to 1369* (Oxford, 1975), 36; Watts, *Making of Polities*, 75.
[20] 'El pueblo son armas del rey e ayuda para su servicio'. M. Haro Cortés, *Libro de los cien capítulos* (Madrid, 1998), 94.

widely held assumptions about service could be mobilised politically. As various historians have demonstrated, service was ubiquitous, largely unquantifiable and generally uncontroversial in the middle ages.[21] Despite this, or perhaps especially because of these characteristics, the occasions when political actors drew attention to service provide revealing insights into the functioning of politics at the centre.

The rhetorical power of describing services rendered was on display at the Cortes of Valladolid in 1293. We cannot know what words were spoken (and nor does the chronicle give us any mention of it), but the preamble to the *cuaderno* sent to Aguilar de Campoo contains elaborate descriptions of the beneficial services rendered to Sancho IV. The king declared that he was

> 'Thinking on the many good services which the kings from whom we descend received from the knights and the other good men of our towns of Castile. And reflecting on the good services which we took at the time when we were *infante* and afterwards when we reigned here, especially in Monteagudo. And when Abenyucuf and Abenyacob his son besieged Jerez twice and we went there personally and broke the siege. And thinking of the service they did for us in the siege of Tarifa, which we fought and took by force of arms. And how well they strove and how loyally they followed us and safeguarded our lordship against the evil and false movements which the *infante* don Juan made against us, and many other services they did for us whenever we had need of them. We, desiring to give them reward for this, agreed to hold our Cortes in Valladolid...'[22]

As we can see from this unusually prolix preamble, invoking service was of mutual benefit for the king and the subjects he addressed. The preamble inscribes the king as the just

[21] R. Horrox, *Richard III. A Study of Service* (Cambridge, 1989), 1-6; Curry and Matthew, *Fifteenth Century I*, xviii.

[22] 'catando los muchos bonos seruiçios que rreçibieron los rreyes onde nos venimos delos caualleros e delos otros omes bonos delas nuestras villas de Castiella. Otrossi parando mientes alos bonos seruiçios que nos dellos tomamos al tienpo que eramos inffante e despues que rreygnamos aaca, sennalada miente enla de Monteagudo. Otrossi quando Abeyuçeff e Abeyacob su fijo çercaron a Xeres por dos uezes et nos fuemos y por nuestro cuerpo e la desçercamos. Otrossi catando el seruiçio que nos ffizieron en la çerca de Tarifa que nos conbatiemos e tomamos por fuerça de armas. Otrossi quan bien estranaron e quan leal miente se touieron con nusco e guardaron nuestro sennorio contra los mouimientos malos e falsos que ell Inffante don Juan fizo contra nos, et otros muchos servicios que nos fizieron cada que mester los ouimos dellos. Nos auiendo uoluntad deles dar ende gualardon acordamos de fazer nuestras cortes en Valladolid'. *Cortes*, 106-7.

recipient of his subjects' services and shows what he could achieve through them, but it also celebrates the actions of specific subjects and thus elevates them. However, Sancho was careful to balance the services of his subjects with his own achievements in defending the kingdom, such that the effect of the passage is less to demonstrate the king's indebtedness to the kingdom than to highlight his voluntary grace in calling the assembly as a reward. Service, then, was a convenient rhetorical tool: it bolstered and recorded prestigious actions on the part of king and subject, but also established a strict hierarchy and drew attention to the monarch's will.

The standout feature of service in the royal discourse, however, is its ability to transcend the straightforward performing of concrete actions in the hope of patronage. To take one example, in 1305 Fernando IV responded to the *concejo* of Murcia's petitions about the city gates. He ordered them 'to consider my service there' and, having allocated 15,000 *maravedís* from the *moneda forera* of the region, he exhorted the council to spend it 'in the way which is most my service'.[23] The language can sound oblique, but it is evident that its meaning was understood by contemporaries. In this instance, the royal service takes both a very narrow and a very broad interpretation. On one level, the king's service could encompass such minute details as repairing city fortifications, therefore potentially justifying close royal oversight of *realengo* lordships, even where a *concejo* was used to self-regulation. On the other, Fernando's insistence that his subjects 'consider my service' suggests a wider ethic of royal service, in which the king's interests in any number of circumstances ought to be contemplated. This breadth gave a wider meaning to service, elevating it to a general moral standard. This is seen in the common use of the phrase 'it is my service', or the opposite 'it is my disservice', to pass swift judgement on actions good

[23] 'catastes y mio seruicio'; 'en aquella guisa que sea mas mio seruicio'. *CODOM V*, doc. 30.

or bad. At the Cortes in 1301, for example, Fernando IV described how his weighing-up of concessions was informed by the twin virtues of justice and service: 'I, understanding that what they ask for is just and that it is a great service for me, and because they always served the kings from whom I descend well and loyally, and especially they have served and continue to serve me... confirm and give...'.[24] Later, at the beginning of his adult rule, Alfonso XI did not find it necessary to spell out his reasons for disbanding the *hermandades* beyond the simple statement, 'it is my disservice' (*es mio desservicio*).[25] The key point, then, is that the language of service was sufficiently capacious to be used as a general label for good or bad behaviour.

The notion of royal service as a general good spawned various phrases to exploit its power. In 1306, following the agreements of Torrellas two years earlier, Fernando IV ordered the Murcian *concejo* of Gibraleón to accept Alfonso de la Cerda as their lord. In trying to resist, the council sent a representative who, said Fernando, 'wanted to talk about things which were great service for me'. Their claim rested on their privileges and on showing him 'how much it was my service for you [the council] to be mine before any other lord'. This argument was well received: 'I thank you very much for this and I hold you in service'.[26] Their claim was ultimately unsuccessful, as the king stated the necessity of upholding the negotiated settlement. What is interesting for our purposes, however, is that this high-stakes exchange reveals the perceived rhetorical power of the language of service: while the exact words used by the *concejo* are unknown, there is every possibility that they would have understood the resonance of this term when appealing to the king's grace. We can say with

[24] 'yo entiendo queme pedian derecho e que es gran mio sseruicio, et por que siempre sseruieron bien e ffielmientre alos rreys onde yo vengo, et sennaladamientre sseruieron e ssiruen ami... confirmoles e otorgoles...'. *Cortes*, 146.
[25] Á. Barrios García, *Documentos de la Catedral de Ávila (Siglos XII-XIII)* (Ávila, 2004), doc. 103.
[26] 'que queria fablar con ellos cosas que eran muy grand mio servicio'; 'quanto era mio servicio de seer vos mios ant que de otro señor'; 'esto vos gradesco ya mucho y tengovoslo en servicio'. *Benavides*, doc. 374.

even more certainty that whoever drew up the document clearly thought that referring to the king's service would placate the aggrieved townspeople. The phrase *tengo vos en servicio* is rare, but it appears that the sensitivity of this moment called for a novel expression.[27] In 1314, similar rhetoric was used to resolve outstanding disputes from the reincorporation of Murcia from Aragón. A document in the king's name sought restitution for loyalists: 'those men were thrown from the town because of their support for the king and his service'.[28] When he had reached adulthood, Alfonso XI was particularly keen to remind his subjects of the esteem he placed on his service as a general benefit. To take just one flashpoint, in 1328 he thanked Pedro López de Ayala for capturing some vassals of the rebellious Juan Manuel who had tried to treat with the king of Granada 'against my service' (*contra mio seruicio*), and concluded, 'I thank you and hold you in service for it'.[29] We can therefore see the language of service being deliberately elevated to a general good in royal documents and exchanges in the Cortes.

Royal Service and the Common Good

The wide interpretation we have seen, in which service is neither waiting on the king in his household, nor doing his bidding in war or in office, nor paying his taxes, but instead making a broader contribution to his general wellbeing, suggests that Castilian kings were tempted to imply that their service was something that every subject should desire. This brings the

[27] There are some scattered examples: Alfonso XI in 1328, *CODOM VI*, doc. 115; Pedro I to Murcia in 1361 *CODOM VII*, doc. 89. The phrase was more common under the Catholic Monarchs, e.g. in 1476 Isabella wrote 'tengo vos en mucho e señalado servicio', A. Pretel Marín, 'En torno a la sublevación de Chinchilla y el cerco de su castillo en 1476', in *Homenaje al profesor Juan Torres Fontes* (Murcia, 1987), 1356.
[28] 'estos omnes fueron echados de la villa por la voz del rey et por su seruiçio'. *CODOM VI*, doc. 6.
[29] 'uos lo gradesco mucho et uos lo tengo en seruicio.' ibid., doc. 99.

discussion of service into line with a much broader set of discursive changes in European politics, generally gathered under the heading of 'the common good'.

The emergence of this cluster of concepts into the political arena has been well studied, both in Peninsular and European contexts. There are three 'traditions' that contributed to the idea of a common benefit and the argument that this should be the goal of political organisations. The first was the Roman law concept of the *utilitas publica* or *utilitas populi*, which also provided a clear statement of the primacy of this good over private gain.[30] Isidore of Seville encapsulated this in his *Etymologies*: law should be promulgated 'not for private benefit but for the common utility of the citizens'.[31] The second major tradition was from non-legal Roman thinkers, especially Cicero and Seneca, whose notion of common utility was taken up by a few writers before the thirteenth century like John of Salisbury and Peter Abelard.[32] The third ingredient came from Greek philosophy, with the concept of *koinonia* (community) imported from Aristotle in the thirteenth century. The good of that community was rendered in the Latin phrase *bonum commune*, though there was a host of other related terms and translations. Though related in their implications for how political theorists conceived of the earthly polity, *bonum commune* and *communis utilitas* were distinct in scholastic thought: the first expressed a kind of moral virtue, and the latter the substantive benefits engendered from this virtue.[33]

When these concepts were rendered into the vernaculars of different European polities, they took on different associations and often blurred these boundaries. In Flanders and the Low

[30] M. S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford, 1999), 14.
[31] A. I. Carrasco Manchado, 'El bien común en la sociedad medieval: entre el tópico, la utopía y el pragmatismo' in *Los agentes del Estado: poderes públicos y dominación social en Aragón (siglos XIV-XVI)*, ed. M. Lafuente Gómez and C. Villanueva Morte (Madrid, 2019), 49.
[32] Kempshall, *Common Good*, 15.
[33] ibid., 24-5.

Countries, for example, the concept of *bonum commune* gained little vernacular traction, whereas *utilitas* was more important, rendered *gemein oirbaer* or *proffijte*.[34] By contrast, French translations often remained close to the Latin roots (*bien commun*, *bien public* and *utilité publique*).[35] Alternatively, they used phrases like *comun preu* or *proufit commun*, bearing closer resemblance to the Anglo-Norman *commune profyt.*[36] Related to these was the legal concept of necessity, though it took on greater significance in some places than others: the concept of *Notdurft* (necessity) was especially powerful in German cities, for example, where the *Notdurft der Stadt* could justify actions like confiscating hereditary real estate for defence in Neustadt.[37] As this example suggests, there was an increasing willingness on the part of governors to deploy these terms. *Commune profit* was first used in English legislation in the Statute of Winchester I of 1275, while Burgundian, Habsburg and Capetian monarchs increasingly adopted these terms in their ordinances in the early fourteenth century.[38]

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Castilian political discourse saw its own versions. *Bien común*, a rendering of *bonum commune*, did appear in thirteenth-century sources, but much more common in legislation was the translation of *utilitas communis* as *pro común* or *pro comunal*.[39] The *Partidas* are a clear example of this: having interpreted the Roman Law concept of the *Lex Regia* as the handing over of sovereignty to the Emperor 'to maintain and

[34] R. Stein, A. Boele, and W. Blockmans, 'Whose community? The origin and development of the concept of "bonum commune" in Flanders, Brabant and Holland (Twelfth-Fifteenth Century)' in *"De Bono Communi": The Discourse and Practice of the Common Good in the European City (13th-16th c.)*, ed. E. Lecuppre-Desjardin and A-L. Van Bruaene (Turnhout, 2010), 160-62.
[35] C. Dounot, 'Le bien commun dans la législation royal (XIIIe-XVIIIe siècle)', *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 472 (2017), 103.
[36] W. M. Ormrod, '"Common Profit" and "The Profit of the King and Kingdom": Parliament and the Development ff Political Language in England, 1250-1450', *Viator*, 46 (2015), 224.
[37] E. Isenmann, 'The Notion of the Common Good, the Concept of Politics, and Practical Policies in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Cities', in *De Bono Communi*, 111.
[38] Dounot, 'Le bien commun', 103.
[39] Carrasco, 'El bien común', 62.

defend lawfully the common good of all', the text argues that the king should be able to justify his actions in terms of the common benefit and pursue the common interest before his own (the *lex digna vox*).[40] It must be said, however, that by the end of the thirteenth century the common good had far from achieved the dominance in political discourse that it was to enjoy later in the middle ages. Indeed, as Burns put it, the common good was one among several constraints that kings were bound by God to respect, along with Natural Law, divine law, reason and the other duties of kingship.[41] When approaching political discourse in the decades around 1300, then, it is necessary to consider the common good in its relationship with other pressures and concepts. The key issue here is the connection between this nascent sense of common good and the king's service, because, despite its centrality to royal argumentation at the time, this rhetorical strategy remains under-acknowledged by historians of the period. While service has on occasion been included in lists of other terms often bound up with 'utility', there has been little thorough investigation of its distinctive quality or implications for the development of the Castilian political system.[42]

An eye-catching feature of Castilian politics is the increasingly frequent appearance of the following phrase in Cortes preambles: kings promised to legislate on 'things which were God's service and mine, and the profit and safeguard of all my land'.[43] This phrase emerged quite suddenly, but became habitual at the same time as calling the assembly to secure taxation became routine. Whereas Alfonso X's Cortes documents made little reference to service, as we saw earlier Sancho IV began the 1293 ordinance of the Cortes of Valladolid

[40] 'para mantener et defender derechamente el pro comunal de todos'. *Partidas,* II.1. See B. Tierney, '"The Prince is Not Bound by the Laws." Accursius and the Origins of the Modern State', *Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist.*, 5 (1963), 391-3.
[41] Burns and Scott, *Siete Partidas,* II.10.
[42] Carrasco, 'El bien común', 65-6.
[43] 'cosas que fueren seruicio de Dios y mio y pro y guarda de toda la mi tierra'. O'Callaghan, 'Las Cortes de Fernando IV', 320.

by reflecting on the services he had received from the 'good men' of Castile. Then, in the main body of the petitions, he acknowledged that enquiries (*pesquisas*) made to assess tax were damaging: 'it is not our service or the good of the land'.[44] Just after Sancho's death, this language referring in one breath to the royal service and the common good found its way into the preamble of a Cortes ordinance for the first time. At Valladolid in 1295, Fernando (or his tutors in his name) declared that he granted the *cuaderno* 'because we know that it is God's service and ours, and the very great benefit of our kingdoms and the betterment of the state of all our land'.[45] Though absent in 1297, this language soon returned and became a constant feature of Cortes documents throughout the rest of his reign and the minority of Alfonso XI, appearing in 1298, 1299, 1300, 1301, 1302, 1305, 1307, 1308, 1313, 1315, 1317, 1318 and 1322.[46] There was some occasional variation in the phasing (in 1301, for example, the king noted the services of his subjects and eschewed the usual reference to divine service), but it is nonetheless abundantly clear that the royal service and the common good were regularly invoked together as the justification for the king's actions and to condemn or encourage others' behaviour.

Similar phrases crop up frequently in the documentation. In 1268, to take one early example, Alfonso X wrote to Murcia that he intended to uphold their customs 'in the way that is to our service and to the benefit of the city'.[47] The most typical formulation, seen on multiple occasions in the royal documents, was the promise 'to order many things which are a great service for me and the benefit of all my land'.[48] Where it would be more appropriate, such

[44] 'non es nuestro seruicio nin pro dela tierra'. *Cortes*, 110.
[45] 'por que sabemos que es seruicio de Dios e nuestro e muy grand pro de todos los de nuestros rregnos, e meioramiento del estado de toda nuestra tierra'. *Cortes*, 131.
[46] ibid., 135-369.
[47] 'en manera que sea a nuestro seruicio et a pro de la cibdat'. *CODOM I*, doc. 38.
[48] 'Para ordenar con ellos muchas cosas que son mio grand seruicio e pro de toda la mi tierra…'. *Pereda*, doc. 420.

as after a rebellion, the opposite could also be deployed, linking the royal disservice with harm to all: 'it was greatly to our disservice and the damage of our land'.[49] The chronicles echo the idea that calculations were supposed to be made on the basis of both the king's service and the good of the kingdom. María de Molina is frequently depicted seeing the most virtuous path: 'she understood that it was the service of the king and the good of the land'.[50] We have direct evidence that these are the exact terms in which she thought and spoke: in December 1312 she wrote to Jaime II of Aragón, recounting how *infante* Juan and Juan Núñez de Lara 'spoke with me about many things which were the service of God and of the king my grandson and the great benefit and tranquillity of all kingdoms'.[51] Jaime was himself acquainted with the centrality of these phrases to Castilian political culture. Only the month before, he had written to Juan Manuel: 'we understand that it will be the service of the king don Alfonso and the good of Castile and your honour and profit'. By contrast, Juan Núñez accumulating power 'would not be the service of the king of Castile nor the good of the kingdoms nor our service'.[52] Multiple stock phrases therefore emerged in royal discourse and beyond in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, intended to convey an argument that serving the king was tantamount to fulfilling the common good. The *servicio de Dios e del rey* appeared frequently alongside the *pro de la tierra* in providing justification for a variety of great and small political acts, from assembling the Cortes to seeking peace with rebels or foreign kingdoms.

There are interesting parallels with expressions being used around the same time in the English parliament. While notions of common profit were typical everywhere, in England it

[49] 'era muy grand nuestro desservicio e dano dela nuestra tierra'. AMB HI – 129.
[50] 'entendia que era servicio del Rey é pro de la tierra'. *CFIV*, 149.
[51] 'fablaron conmigo muchas cosas que eran a servicio de Dios et del Rey mio nieto et a muy grant pro et asesego de todos los regnos'. *Juan Manuel,* doc. 255.
[52] 'Ca entendemos que sera servicio del rey don Alfonso e bien de Castiella e honra e provecho vuestro'; 'que no seria seruicio del rey de Castiella ni pro de los regnos ni servicio nuestro'. ibid., doc. 253.

was not unusual to find reference to 'the state of the king and the kingdom' (*status regis et regni*), which, by the reign of Edward II, was elided to 'the profit of the king and kingdom'. This transformation, argued Ormrod, was 'the consequence of the implied sense of mutual interest and betterment to be had from equating the *status regis* with the *status regni*'.[53] What is revealing about this parallel is that, although 'the profit of the king and kingdom' was a uniquely English formulation, the same implied mutual interest underpinned the way in which Castilian kings described service. Their decision to justify actions by stating their simultaneous contribution to the king's service and the general benefit in effect argued that there should be no meaningful distinction between the king's good and the kingdom's. The Castilian formulation was nevertheless different, reserving 'service' for the king and 'benefit/good' for the realm. This had several important effects. On the one hand, it must be said that the connection is not quite as explicit as in the English case, perhaps diluting its impact. At the same time, however, the Castilian formulation gave kings access to a notably sacral register, with a link between divine and royal service: 'for the service of God and the king'. Perhaps most importantly, refraining from referring to 'the profit of the king and the kingdom', instead invoking 'the service of the king and the profit of the kingdom', reserved greater discretion to the king because it was only for him to decide what contributed to his service. In any representative institution there was bound to be a contest over who defined the common good, but it appears that Castilian kings held an advantage by insisting that their own service be included in any calculation.

Comparison with England therefore suggests we ask: did retaining the language of service for the king's benefit over 'profit' or 'good' make it more difficult for others to appropriate? And what impact did this have on the resultant structures of political interaction in Castile?

[53] Ormrod, '"Common profit"', 225.

Establishing how far various actors in Castilian political society understood, accepted and deployed language about serving the king is a difficult task. The paucity of documentary survivals from noble archives, for example, makes any substantial overview of their choice of words impossible. Other seemingly straightforward sources are deceptive. The Cortes *cuadernos* are opaque, perhaps even more so than the English Parliament Rolls, because they record not the actual words or petitions of the procurators, but rather compile the king's responses. This leaves ample opportunity for whitewashing of the language used by the cities, or at least channelling it into royalist discourses by clerks steeped in chancery phraseology. Similarly, many documents of royal issue are naturally subject to the same distortion, and we are forced to work hard to uncover any trace of the language deployed by municipalities or ecclesiastical institutions when petitioning.

Nevertheless, there are clear signs that this language bore some relation to the way in which political society understood the decisions reached in the Cortes. The vernacular chronicler, for example, recorded in his entry about the Cortes of Burgos in 1300 that five *servicios* were granted 'because they understood that it was the great service of the king and the profit of all the land'.[54] Granted, the chronicler was no neutral observer: writing with a distinct motive to legitimise Alfonso XI's rule, he is perhaps to be expected to parrot royal terminology more readily than others. Nevertheless, there are indications that the chronicler used language that bore at least some relation to that of actual political agents. His account of 1287 describes how knights approached the king to complain; since he would not hear them, they wrote down their grievances, which the chronicle purports to reproduce verbatim. Most of their complaint focused on the king's excessive patronage of Lope Díaz de Haro (see Chapter 7). They lamented the damage done by Lope Díaz 'which was to the great

[54] 'porque entendian que era muy grand servicio del Rey é pro de toda la tierra'. *CFIV*, 117.

diminishing of his [the king's] lordship and was much his disservice'.[55] Fascinatingly, the grievances echo the Castilian saying recorded by Juan Manuel: they described themselves as victims 'who served and deserved very well'.[56]

Other documents demonstrate that various elements of political society considered the king's service as a kind of general good. For example, a 1289 enquiry into the taxes owed in the bishopric of Zamora, composed by a local tax collector, Miguel Lorenzo de Salamanca, described how he had spoken to 'good men who desire the service of the king'.[57] Later, in 1292, this was reinforced when the *concejo* of Palencia argued that the taxes resulted in disservice for the king and damage for them: 'the king and our lord the bishop [of Palencia] were not served as they ought to be and the village is extorted and our inhabitants receive damages'.[58] In 1290, a *cuaderno* of local customs was compiled in Seville, which put the royal service alongside the good of their city in the process of election to the council: 'understanding that it is the service of God, and our lord the king, and the infante don Fernando, his first son and heir, and the good and safeguard of the said city and its territory... they shall install twelve knights and twelve good men of the city'. The same ends were to underpin all their actions: 'these shall observe and guard above all the service of God and our lord the king, and all his rights entirely. And furthermore that they shall observe and guard the benefit and safety of the council of Seville and all its territory'.[59] Clearly, then, it was possible to adjust the second half of the king's stock phrases, replacing

[55] 'que era muy grand menguamiento de su señorío, é que era muy grand su deservicio'. *CSIV*, 76.
[56] 'que sirvieran e merescieran muy bien'. ibid. See above, 179-80.
[57] 'Omnes bonos que querien seruicio del Rey'. *Gaibrois*, doc. 258.
[58] 'nuestro sennor el Rey e nuestro sennor el Obispo non eran seruidos assí commo devíen e la villa es peyndrada e nuestros vezinos recíben muchos dannos'. ibid., doc. 435.
[59] 'entendiendo que es seruiçio de Dios, e de nuestro sennor el rey, e del infante don Ferrando, su primero fiio e eredero, e pro, e guarda, e onrra de la cibdat sobredicha e de su termino… que pusiesen doze caualleros e doze omnes buenos de la cibdat'; 'viesen e que guardasen primeramente el seruiçio de Dios e de nuestro sennor el rey, e todos sus derechos conplidamente. E otrosi, que viesen e que guardasen pro e guarda del conçeio de Seuilla e de todo su termino'. J. D. González Arce, 'Ordenanzas, usos y costumbres de Sevilla en tiempos de Sancho IV', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 22 (1995), 274.

the 'benefit of the land' with the interest of whichever locality was most appropriate; the first half, however, always remained the same, suggesting it was difficult or ill-advised to neglect the king's service when trying to justify an action in the general interest.

Another concrete demonstration of the power of the language of service came with the *hermandades*. The founding documents of the *hermandad* of the councils of Old Castile in 1295, that of Jaén, Baeza and Úbeda in the same year, various Andalucían towns including Seville, Córdoba and Jaén in 1313, and the *hermandad* of 1315 all invoked the idea of 'the service of God and of the king'.[60] The 1282 *hermandad* in support of *infante* Sancho is a notable outlier, preferring to refer to the service of God, Mary and the celestial court, but only the 'honour and safeguard' of the king and *infante* Sancho (*honra e guarda del rey e del inffante don Sancho*).[61] Indeed, this reinforces the point that it was difficult for anyone else to invoke the king's service unless plausibly serving the king. Occasionally the *hermandades* developed this language in novel ways, suggesting that these discourses were part of their own lexicon, such as when the council of Cuenca created its brotherhood during the minority of Fernando IV, declaring themselves 'all aligned of one heart and a sound will to the service of God and Holy Mary, and of our lord, the king don Fernando, and our lady, the queen doña María, his mother, whom God defends from evil and maintains their service for the good, safeguard and honour the council of the said city'.[62] The brotherhoods' decision to justify their actions in terms of the mutual interests of the king's service and their specific good was clearly a tactical move to legitimise their associations, but it nonetheless demonstrates the reach of these ideas beyond the confines of the royal chancery.

[60] *Benavides*, doc. 3; Suárez, 'Evolución histórica', Appendix 4; Sanz, 'Cartas de hermandad', 419-24.
[61] AHN Uclés carp. 260, núm. 10.
[62] 'todos abenidos de un coraçon et de una sana voluntad, a servicio de Dios et de sancta Maria, et de nuestro sennor, el rey don Ferrando, et de nuestra sennora, la reyna donna María, su madre, los que guarde Dios de mal et mantenga al su servicio para pro et guarda et onrra del concejo de la cibdat sobredicha'. Chacón, doc. 36.

Indeed, the royal service was on the tongue of other crucial actors. Letters sent from Castile to Aragón are especially fruitful because incorporation into the archives of the Corona de Aragón preserved them in greater numbers. For example, we find the bishop-elect of Ávila, Sancho Sánchez, promising Jaime II in 1312 that he would do what 'is the service of God and the king Alfonso your nephew and the profit, safeguard and expansion of his lordship'.[63] In 1303, *infante* Juan rebuked Jaime for holding audiences with Fernando IV's enemies because 'it was not for your benefit nor honour, nor your service or that of the king don Fernando'.[64] In fact, the same ideas were being used on all sides: that same year, two of the same enemies denounced by Juan, Diego López de Haro and Juan Núñez de Lara, showed no hesitation in deploying the language of royal service. The former's address to Jaime ran, 'I commend myself to your grace as a lord whom I would serve well', while Juan Núñez declared that a meeting 'is the great service of God and you and the good of all the land and the tranquillity of your estate and that of the king don Fernando my lord'.[65] In 1320, when Juan Manuel gave his assurances to Talavera la Reina to be named *tutor*, the council recorded what they had asked of him: 'because we promised in our brotherhood to maintain his [the king's] service, we asked the tutors to protect his service and honour as it always has been'. Juan Manuel agreed.[66]

All these examples provide ample evidence that the language of service was relevant to the concerns of non-royals and available for their use in certain circumstances. It ought to be

[63] 'es servicio de Dios e del Rey don Alfonso uuestro sobrino e pro e guarda e acrecentamiento de su sennorio'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 250.
[64] 'non era vuestra pro ni vuestr onrra ni vuestro servicio ni del Rey don Ferrando'. ibid., doc. 47.
[65] 'me acomiendo en vuestra gracia como a sennor a quien de buena mente seruiria'; 'es gran servicio de Dios e vuestra e pro de toda la tierra e asosiego de vuestra fazienda e del Rey don Fernando mio sennor'. ibid., docs. 65, 67.
[66] 'por quel prometimos en la nuestra hermandat que guardaremos su servicio pedimos a los tutores que sea guardado el su servicio e toda su honra asi como siempre la ovo'. ibid., doc. 354.

acknowledged, however, that, overall, the number of occasions when the king's subjects took it on themselves to proclaim the king's service was very low. This chimes with Ormrod's observations regarding the king's profit in England: although some petitioners did occasionally connect their grievance to the general good, it was highly unusual.[67] For Ormrod, this is explained in the case of parliamentary petitions by the restraints of the supplicatory form, which allowed petitioners to present a grievance but not to suggest its solution, and more generally by the overall structure of deference which meant that it was not for a subordinate to invoke the higher good. As a result, before the 1320s, invoking the common profit against the crown was an action of outright dissent, and could be interpreted as close to treason. Those wishing to make more modest challenges would have to find other forms.[68]

The value of this comparison is the light it sheds on the way *servicio* operated in political discourse: if it was difficult for English political society to describe 'the state of the king and the kingdom', then how much more restricted were these avenues for Castilian subjects, whose political language tied their specific good not only to the king's good, but to his *service*, with all its connotations of hierarchy and obedience. Certainly, we ought to remember that lords themselves employed servants and had a concurrent notion of their own service, but it was rare that they could use this as a justification for major political actions. Though Juan Manuel in his *Libro de las Armas* recalled that, at the deathbed of Sancho IV, he spoke with the king about affairs touching 'his service and mine' (*su servicio et mio*), in practice when it came to speaking to kings he employed a careful separation: a letter to Jaime II advocated a course of action since 'it would be to you, service, and to me, great benefit

[67] Ormrod, '"Common profit"', 228.
[68] ibid., 229-31.

and honour'.[69] Service, then, remained closed off in political discourse: it was above all for the king to decide what would contribute to his service and how that would relate to the benefit of the wider community. Indeed, whereas the English parliament was gradually to build self-confidence in defining the common good, this would not be possible to the same extent for any Castilian representative body apart from the crown. Even long into the fifteenth century, when the common good had become a much more routine feature of European politics, Castilians were still found mediating their claims through the concept of royal service.[70] On one level, then, the development of Castile as a polity can be read through its lexicon: the overwhelming emphasis on service formed part of a politics focused on kings, however weak, and their relationships with the favourites who served them, while the entry of towns into the political arena occurred without the discursive power afforded to the parliamentary commons in England to define the common good.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the prevalence of service in Castilian discourse gives it every right to be considered the dominant ethic of royal politics in this period. Service was a ubiquitous and flexible concept, applicable to the habitual behaviour of servants, the justification for handsome rewards, military service, paying tax or any kind of unspecified action that the king judged to support his interests. This generality, combined with the rhetorical habits of

[69] Blecua, *Obras completas*, 136; 'seria a vos servicio et a mi grand pro e grand honrra'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 257.
[70] T. Somoza, 'La noción de "servicio al rey" en los conflictos de los pecheros abulenses del siglo XV', in *Actas de las XV Jornadas Internacionales de Estudios Medievales*, ed. S. Barreiro and D. Castro (Buenos Aires, 2017), 219-25; J. A. Jara Fuente, 'Con mucha afecçión e buena voluntad por seruir a la bien público'. La noción 'bien común' en perspectiva urbana. Cuenca en el siglo XV', *Studia historica, historia medieval*, 28 (2010), 55-82.

monarchs, established the royal service as something to be considered almost indistinguishable from the common good. The latter phrase, in the infancy of a long and famous life in late medieval politics, was also flexible and contested, referring just as easily to councils, regions, institutions, loose fraternities and kingdoms. Nevertheless, interest groups who wished to invoke a general benefit often could not avoid remarking on its natural connection with the royal service, itself linked with service to God, and hence reinforced the king's position as the focal point for political capital.

Far from being accidental, it was fundamental to the operation and development of the Castilian political structure that localities of different sizes interpreted their interests through the perspective of the royal service. When we survey the role of service within the politics of Castile at the beginning of the fourteenth century, it becomes evident that it was part of a royal discourse that tended towards integration. The strength of this discourse, which justified some of the king's most controversial decisions and allowed the equivalence of the king's interests with the overall good of the kingdom, connects the various strands studied so far in this thesis. Though noble and urban power structures alike grew in complexity and especially in territorial influence, both in competition and dialogue with the crown, the connections between their localities and the centre were debated through the overall conceptual framework of service. The fact that this language was both open to political society, in that they used it when petitioning or justifying their actions, and closed, in that ultimately it was the king's decision what did or did not fulfil his service, was to be a fundamental tension throughout the narrative of Castilian politics in 1275-1325, not least when the focal point of all of this machinery of service was suddenly, and often catastrophically, absent.

Part Three: Centre and Locality, 1275-1325

Introduction

The forces of political gravity discussed in the previous two sections, which drew centre and locality together with greater intensity than ever before, have profound implications for the practice of politics between 1275-1325. Conversely, the structural foundations of politics were themselves warped by the intense heat of the events from the last years of Alfonso X to the adult rule of his great-grandson. This interplay is the subject of the final section.

We have observed the deepening intensity of all kinds of lordship and the entangled networks of noblemen, towns and royal officers, which produced territorially rooted noble lineages and town councils able to represent themselves at a regnal or regional level through the Cortes and the *hermandades*. We have seen how all parties nevertheless sought the grants, offices and supervisory authority of an effective king, since only a very few could rely on large fiefdoms, and even they sought more central support to protect and advance themselves. Attention was drawn to the centre not only because of the lucrative posts adopted by kings to administer their domains and the vastly expanding fiscal system, but because of the expansive interpretation of the royal jurisdiction and the ongoing contest over custom and the king's role in upholding it. Meanwhile, the structural integration of the polity was aided by the rooting of the king's office-holding and grant-making within a discursive framework of royal service, which elevated service to the level of a common good and ensured the centrality of his arbitration in Castilian political calculations.

We have therefore to ask what happened to this unevenly integrated polity when it was exposed to the shocks of royal absence, minority, war and the other vicissitudes that fill the pages of the chronicles. The task is not to rehearse the narrative in its entirety, nor to use the documentation to verify and critique the accounts provided by the chronicles; work of this

kind has already been done for each of the reigns under consideration. As argued in the introduction, this approach risks swallowing the interpretive framework of the chronicles and ignoring the situation away from the centre. The result tends to be a picture of 1275-1325 in which an over-reaching Alfonso X saw his reign end in deposition and failure, before Sancho IV, for all the promises made during his rebellion, continued to weaken royal authority through over-generous grants and ill-advised favouritism. Under Fernando IV, the chronicler's verdict has also held sway: minority and distracted, insufficient kingship led to his being buffeted by towns and noblemen, with the latter securing a profound predominance, to last until Alfonso XI managed to secure his own triumph after his 'accursed' predecessors' failings.

If we approach this period from the perspective of the first two sections of this thesis, the resulting picture is quite different from the historiographical consensus. To reach that picture, we must investigate how these 'high political' events connect with the pressures and structures identified in the previous sections. These final two chapters offer a series of thematic treatments, arranged chronologically, to understand the main dynamics of each reign. The presentation of the chronicles is discussed with relevant information from documentation of the royal chancery, Juan Manuel's ample documentary output, Cortes records and our local case studies. The aim is to explain the various conflicts and their outcomes in terms of their structural dimensions. Since the institutional and discursive features of the kingdom influenced the options available to agents and the ideological frameworks by which to understand and describe them, we must therefore ask, what is revealed about these structures by the responses of the political players to events as they happened? What was the nature of authority in Castile in 1275-1325, and what were the major political interactions between centre and locality?

A brief summary of events here might be helpful, because the politics of 1275-1325 are extremely tangled, and it is perhaps not surprising that it has been difficult for historians to make sense of them in other terms than conflict and strife. The following summary and the subsequent chapters do not trace the twists and turns of every conflict or reconciliation. Rather, this section focuses on the most revealing aspects of the period to isolate the structural dimensions of Castilian politics. Therefore the reader should not assume that, where years are passed over for the sake of clarity, those years were necessarily stable.

Alfonso X's reign began in 1252 with a series of conquests in which the king captured the Algarve from Portugal and Jerez from the Muslims by 1261. He secured election as 'King of the Romans' in 1257, on the basis that his mother, Beatriz, was heiress to the Duchy of Swabia.[1] Alfonso also faced serious opposition at home, facing down a fierce rebuke over the expense of his Imperial project and aspects of his judicial administration from the nobles in 1271-1273. By the end of 1274, Alfonso was ready to make a last-ditch journey to Beaucaire to negotiate with Gregory X, but 1275 brought the disappointment not only of a final rejection but the death of his son and heir, Fernando. Fernando's death triggered a succession crisis, contested between Fernando's son and Alfonso's eldest living son, Sancho. After a short period of cooperation between the king and Sancho, which included the shocking deaths of *infante* Fadrique and Simón Ruiz de los Cameros at the king's orders, relations between the king and his son broke down. Sancho rebelled against Alfonso in 1282 and, marshalling the support of *infante* Juan and the emerging *hermandades*, declared his

[1] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 133; C. Estepa Díez, 'La política imperial de Alfonso X: esbozo de una posible ideología política alfonsina', in *Homenaje a Marcelo Vigil Pascual* (Salamanca, 1989), 205-16.

father's deposition and assumed governmental control, while Alfonso ruled a small number of still-loyal subjects from Seville.

When Alfonso X died in 1284, Sancho took the throne and moved to establish his legitimacy with a coronation at Toledo and subsequent pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. He established Gómez García de Toledo, abbot of Valladolid, as his chief counsellor, who assisted him in responding to a Marinid invasion in Jerez and around Seville. In 1287, following the death of Gómez García, Sancho elevated Lope Díaz de Haro to the rank of *conde* and gave him extensive powers over the government. At this time, the regime put pressure on *realengo* rights, hoping to recover lost incomes, in part through a Jewish tax farmer named Abraham 'el Barchilón'. Relations soon soured between the king and Lope Díaz, now supported by *infante* Juan, and at Alfaro in 1288 the king violently murdered Lope Díaz and imprisoned Juan. Sancho embarked on a campaign to subdue Vizcaya, the heartland of the Haro, and in 1289 Juan Núñez I de Lara returned from exile in France and was reconciled with Sancho IV. Sancho's later years were dominated by tensions with Juan Núñez, who allied himself with Alfonso III of Aragón, and by efforts to capture and defend Tarifa from the Muslims. The very end of Sancho's reign was destabilised by the return to court of another uncle, *infante* Enrique, who had been abroad since 1255, and by a significant rebellion of *infante* Juan.

When Sancho died in 1295, the patterns of rule established by Alfonso X and Sancho IV were shattered by the prospect of a long royal minority. Strategies were adopted at various levels of the hierarchy to secure interests, advance claims and replicate a version of central authority: a regency government (*tutoría*) was constructed at court by Fernando IV's mother, María de Molina, with the support of *infante* Enrique; *infante* Juan fought to disrupt this

entirely, giving his allegiance to Alfonso de la Cerda, Alfonso X's grandson, and plotting to divide the kingdoms; Diego López de Haro returned to Castile from Aragón with the aim of recovering the lordship of Vizcaya; and the *hermandades* re-formed, aiming to secure law and order in the name of the young king. Meanwhile, Jaime II capitalised on the disintegration of the Castilian centre, supporting *infante* Juan's challenge and invading Murcia in August 1296.

In 1301, after years of civil war in which the regency government struggled against rebels and raised taxes at Cortes meetings that sought to impose councils of urban representatives, Fernando IV came of age. Relations at court were strained over competition for influence and arguments about the Aragonese conflict. The balance shifted continually, particularly after the death of *infante* Enrique in 1303. In the following years, a major issue was *infante* Juan's demand for Vizcaya, claimed through his wife. Even when this was resolved, relations between Fernando IV and the nobility remained difficult, with various slights against his authority met with anger and violent threats. From 1307 the resistance of Juan Núñez II de Lara became more forceful, and after failed efforts to uproot him Fernando became vindictive against those who had aided him. A group of noblemen expressed fears that the king wished them harm at Grijota in 1308, demanding an overhaul of the royal household. Later, in 1309, Fernando and Jaime II attempted to lead a campaign against the Nasrids, but though the campaign began promisingly with an Aragonese victory at Almería and the Castilian capture of Gibraltar, it ended with the ignominious desertion of the siege of Algeciras by high-profile noblemen including *infante* Juan, Juan Manuel and Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña. In 1310, the king had to respond to a revolt in Córdoba and attempt reconciliation with the deserters, though in the following year he fell gravely ill. He

recovered and used the Cortes in 1312 to gather funds for a new campaign, but died amid the preparations.

Alfonso XI was one year and 26 days old when he became king. The early minority saw both the resurrection of the *hermandades* and bids by rivals to establish a regency: *infante* Juan and Juan Núñez II sought to outpace *infante* Pedro and Constanza, Alfonso's mother, but María de Molina secured the young king in the custody of the bishop-elect of Ávila. In 1313, the rival regencies held parallel Cortes meetings in Palencia, followed by a faltering consensus after the death of Constanza in 1314. In 1315, the regency struggled with a rebellion from Juan Manuel, provoked by a private feud that escalated to the court. In 1318-1319, *infante* Pedro struggled to maintain his role as guardian (*tutor*) of the king, but did lead new campaigns in the Vega de Granada. In 1319, both he and his uncle, *infante* Juan, died in the fighting, signalling new contests over the regency. Juan Manuel, *infante* Felipe and Juan 'el Tuerto' (the son of the deceased *infante* Juan) all pushed assertively for a role in the centre, aided by the death of María de Molina in 1321. In August 1325, Alfonso XI turned 14. He immediately informed his councillors in Valladolid that he wished to leave the city, take control of his lordships and travel through his kingdoms.

7. Alfonso X and Sancho IV

Alfonso X's Last Years - The Journey to Beaucaire

Alfonso X's departure to Beaucaire posed a major question for the Castilian polity. As we saw in the first two sections, systematic changes in the locality and at the centre had produced an integrated court culture revolving around the king's will and his service. Access to the personal arbitration of the monarch was important in many contexts, owing both to the expansive claims of the Alfonsine crown and the necessity of protecting local interests. When Alfonso X travelled abroad, the system was asked how it would replicate its usual patterns. In 1274-5, Castile appears to have functioned reasonably well. Alfonso made careful arrangements: he left his eldest son, Fernando, in charge with a brief to honour all his vassals and establish *merinos* where required to do justice. He even left Fernando a case of seals to install the new officials.[1] According to the chronicler, when Fernando did so 'everyone in the kingdom was well pleased with him'.[2] The documentation sheds further light on this crucial moment. Political society appears to have been comfortable using Fernando as a temporary replacement for the usual royal justice. From January to June 1275, he responded to petitions from across the kingdom, including the town councils of Logroño, Zamora, Calahorra, Córdoba and Ávila, the cathedrals of Toledo, Zamora and León and numerous monasteries. They approached him with all the typical complaints, including tax privileges and the abuses of royal officials in the locality.[3] A particularly revealing document was issued to the bishop of Ávila, attesting to a set of meetings he held at Peñafiel with Nuño González de Lara, *infante* Fadrique and various prelates and conciliar representatives,

[1] *CAX*, 48.
[2] 'todos los del reino eran dél muy pagados'. ibid, 48.
[3] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 736-38.

at which he heard a litany of complaints about incursions on ecclesiastical property and other typical issues.[4]

Under certain circumstances, then, the usual pattern of relations between centre and locality could continue reasonably unabated in the absence of the system's lynchpin. At the same time, there are also revealing signs that Fernando was not invested with all the authority of a king. Concerned about the outcome of their dispute with their bishop, the council of Ávila chose the expense of sending Blasco Jiménez to Beaucaire rather than trust in the regent, highlighting the sudden emergence of multiple centres of appeal for royal arbitration. Indeed, Fernando himself acknowledged to the cathedral of Cuenca that landed disputes could not be resolved until his father returned.[5] At the beginning of our story, then, two features of Castile's political system as it had developed across the thirteenth century are revealed: there was increasingly entrenched emphasis on the part of all members of political society to seek justice and arbitration from the centre and especially the king, but if a clear consensus could be established as to who represented the focal point of this decision-making then a measure of tranquillity was possible.

The Succession Dispute and Shared Rule, 1275-77

Consensus was soon disrupted by events in 1275, which provoked a revealing and consequential new phase of power-sharing. The first crisis was an invasion by the Marinid emir Aben Yuzuf, striking towards Seville.[6] In the scrambled response, the *adelantado*

[4] T. Sobrino, *Documentos de la Catedral de Ávila* (Ávila, 2009), doc. 112.
[5] ACC, I, caja 8, núm. 20.
[6] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 360-1.

mayor and pre-eminent nobleman, Nuño González de Lara, was killed at Écija, followed by Sancho, archbishop of Toledo.[7] In a final, devastating blow, the Castilian heir perished while mustering troops. Suddenly, a major faultline opened which was not fully to close for decades. The next available commander was *infante* Sancho, now the eldest surviving son of Alfonso X, supported by the lord of Vizcaya, Lope Díaz de Haro. Having marshalled the Castilian defences around Córdoba, Sancho soon revealed that he considered himself the new heir to the throne.[8] Whereas the vernacular chronicler made a great deal of the role of Lope Díaz de Haro's ambitious encouragement of Sancho, and subsequent historiography has taken a similar line, this is impossible to verify and seems more likely a device to defend Sancho's later disenchantment with the lord of Vizcaya.[9] Instead, there is no real reason to doubt that Sancho believed he was the natural heir, given that his succession would follow the expected custom and following his proactivity in defending the kingdom.[10] The problem, however, was that Alfonso's jurists had repeatedly muddied the water, establishing in the *Espéculo* and *Partidas* that the children of the heir would have precedence.[11] *Infante* Fernando naturally hoped to secure this newly defined birthright for his own children, Alfonso and Fernando de la Cerda. When Juan Núñez I de Lara (known as *el Gordo*) promised the dying Fernando that he would defend the succession rights of his children, two powerful factions coalesced with incompatible aims.[12] Conflict was bound to ensue. Alfonso was wary of giving too hasty an answer, but following a defence of Sancho's argument by *infante* Manuel, Alfonso agreed to accept Sancho as heir at a Cortes in Burgos in June 1276.[13]

[7] *CAX*, 50.
[8] ibid., 52.
[9] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 767; Martínez, *Alfonso X,* 366.
[10] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 362.
[11] J. Craddock, 'Dynasty in Dispute: Alfonso X el Sabio and the Succession to the Throne of Castile and Leon in History and Legend', *Viator*, 17 (1986), 401-3.
[12] Loaysa, *Crónica,* 90.
[13] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 789-93.

Alfonso X's cautious wait for consensus was most revealing. The chronicler labours the point: after Manuel's speech, he writes, 'in the records which remain from that time they do not say that there were more words said at that council'.[14] Of course, the chronicler had reason to exaggerate the unanimity of the Castilian court, given that Alfonso XI traced his claim from these decisions. However, everything we have seen demonstrates the importance of clarity over the succession and, above all, on the legitimate sites of governmental decision-making. Just as it had been vital to make clear to whom litigants, officials and armies should turn for leadership when Alfonso left for Beaucaire, there now had to be universal agreement as to the new *infante heredero*. The collective preference at court for Sancho, notwithstanding Juan Núñez I de Lara's oath, is not only attributable to customary practice, but also to preference for adult male leadership, with Sancho's 17 years more appealing than Alfonso de la Cerda's five. When the king attended to the frontier in 1279, he left much of the daily running of the kingdom in Sancho's hands.[15] Sancho, according to the chronicler, travelled around the kingdom doing justice, and it appears he was kept particularly busy with affairs in Burgos.[16] Meanwhile, Pedro III of Aragón acknowledged Sancho's vital role in the kingdom's politics when he wrote in October 1279 asking him to support *infante* Enrique, Sancho's uncle.[17] Later, in 1280-1, Sancho assisted Alfonso in campaigns, gathering troops and carrying out vital raids that forced a truce on the Muslims.[18] This became especially important during Alfonso's repeated bouts of debilitating illness.

[14] 'en el escripto que se falla desde aquel tiempo, non dicen que en el consejo fuesen dichas mas palabras destas'. *CAX*, 53.
[15] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 150-2, 162-78; see also Juan Gil de Zamora, *De Preconiis Hispaniae: estudio preliminar y edición crítica*, ed. M. de Castro y Castro (Madrid, 1955), 143.
[16] See e.g. *Pereda*, doc. 165.
[17] *MHE*, II, doc. 160.
[18] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 33-4.

Even more than during Fernando's period in charge, from the perspective of the localities it was not straightforward for domestic affairs to be delegated to the new heir. A divided centre created uncertainty when it came to issues like tax collection and judicial decisions, as the documentation of one of our case studies reveals. In October 1279, Sancho issued several instructions to the city council of Burgos. He ordered the city to pay the *servicio* they owed, and, if they had a reason not to, to send two men to justify this before the king.[19] At the same time, he ordered tax collectors to press on with their work, despite royal letters calling them to render their accounts before the king.[20] In the following months, Sancho and Alfonso both concerned themselves with the collection of these incomes, with Sancho close by in Valladolid, and Alfonso further off in Seville.[21] Then, in November, Sancho promised to intercede with his father, to ensure that the extraordinary taxation the council of Burgos had provided would not continue in the future without their consent.[22] Sancho's promise was made on the same day as another demand for payment from Alfonso, neatly showing the confusion caused when there were two focal points for appeal. Indeed, the sense of dissonance was heightened when Sancho attempted to resolve these issues with an assembly. He first called representatives from the aggrieved *concejo* of Burgos to Valladolid, but they refused to give a response without the other councils. He agreed to gather them all, setting the meeting for 1 December at Salamanca.[23] However, this meeting was interrupted by an intervention from Alfonso X: 'because the king my father wrote to order me to Badajoz, I could not resolve the matter in Salamanca... and I ordered them to go with me to Badajoz, because I hold that since the king will be there this matter will be resolved better and more

[19] AMB HI - 2506.
[20] AMB HI - 2918.
[21] AMB HI - 2920, 2507, 2767.
[22] AMB HI - 2687.
[23] AMB HI - 162.

fully.'[24] These documents reveal the complication caused by the division of royal authority, though in the end a sensible solution was found for the councillors of Burgos. The sense of frustration, especially in the context of an increasing fiscal burden, contributed to mounting tension in Castilian politics, which could easily be inflamed.

Indeed, as we saw in Chapters 5 and 6, royal government involved a set of expectations and discourses that emphasised service and loyalty. As the benefits handed out at court contributed to a more entrenched form of territorial power, there was always the possibility that the consequences of malfunctioning relationships at the centre could become more extreme. Sure enough, while Alfonso and Sancho operated their pragmatic division of labour, in April or early May 1277 the king ordered the capture and execution of two of the foremost noblemen in the kingdom, one of whom was a blood relative. He sent Sancho to capture Simón Ruiz de los Cameros, lord of a compact region between Castile and Aragón near La Rioja. Sancho apprehended Simón Ruiz at Logroño, and, having been transported to Treviño, he was burned at the stake, though an alternative contemporary version avers that he was enclosed in a chest of iron spikes.[25] Simón had been a consistent witness to Alfonso's charters, and had received the lordships of Tolmantos and Bilforado, usefully located in his power base in La Rioja, from the king in 1256.[26] At the same time, Diego López de Salcedo, the long-time servant of Alfonso X and his *adelantado* in Aláva and Guipuzcoa, captured *infante* Fadrique, and the king's brother was strangled at the monarch's orders.[27]

[24] 'por que el Rey mio padre me enbio mandar que fuesse a Badaioz a uer me con el non lo pud librar en Salamanca... E mandelos que fuessedes conmigo a Badaioz por que tengo que pues el rey y fuere que se librara este fech meiro e mas conplidamiente'. AMB HI - 2576.
[25] *CAX*, 53; M. Gonzalez Jiménez, 'Unos anales del reinado de Alfonso X', *Boletín de la Real Academía de la Historia*, 192 (1995), 477.
[26] Uclés carp. 94, núm. 27.
[27] *CAX*, 53.

There has been no shortage of debate among historians about these ruthless actions.[28] The chronicle itself offers little by way of explanation beyond the fact that 'the king knew some matters (*cosas*) about his brother the *infante* Fadrique and don Simon Ruiz'.[29] There are various propositions about what these *cosas* might have been. The sixteenth-century historian Jerónimo de Zurita believed that Alfonso X was responding to an astrological prediction that warned of betrayal by a member of his own family, and modern historians have agreed that a plot to overthrow the king best explains both Alfonso's vengeance and Sancho's cooperation.[30] Indeed, both Alfonso's brother, Fadrique, and Fadrique's son-in-law, Simón Ruiz de los Cameros, had failed Alfonso before, when they were defeated in Navarre during the civil war of May-June 1276.[31] Rumours that the defeat was treasonous rather than simply incompetent may well have contributed to their elimination in the following year. However, the unusual punishment meted out to Simón Ruiz suggests other elements to the scandal. Kinkade has drawn attention to *Cantiga* 235, in which Alfonso X narrated events between 1269 and 1278. In that poem, Alfonso wrote, 'the Son of God / granted him great vengeance on those who were His / enemies and hence the king's also. Just as a long candle burns, // so did the flesh burn of those who did not love women'.[32] Kinkade reads this as a thinly veiled accusation of sodomy against Simón given the growing use of burning at the stake to repress homosexuality in southern Europe at this time. When combined with the detail that Alfonso had Fadrique's remains buried in a 'filthy place' it does seem that something more than political intrigue provoked such a vicious response.[33]

[28] See Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 127-9.
[29] 'el rey sopo algunas cosas del infante don Fadrique, su hermano, e don Simon Ruiz'. *CAX*, 53.
[30] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 820; Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 386; Doubleday, *The Wise King*, 206.
[31] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 378-9.
[32] 'o Fillo de Deus / que fillasse gran vigança daqueles que eran seus / eemigos e pois dele. E ben com' ard estadal // Ardeu a carne daqueles que non querian moller'. Trans. R. P. Kinkade, 'Alfonso X, Cantiga 235 and the events of 1269-1278', *Speculum*, 67 (1992), 314-17.
[33] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 29.

Ultimately it will never be possible to untangle the true motivations behind the killings, barring the discovery of new evidence. What is clear, however, is that Alfonso X and Sancho were together shaping a mode of royal authority in the final years of the 1270s: one based on loyalty, the importance of kingly justice and underpinned, if necessary, by violence. Indeed, the *Anales Toledanos*' description of the execution as 'according to justice' demonstrates not only their author's support for the decision but also their interpretation of the king's actions as part of his judicial authority.[34] However, this shocking show of force had profound consequences: Sancho lost the support of his major ally, Lope Díaz de Haro, who rendered homage to Philip III of France along with Fernán Pérez Ponce.[35] Despite the outrage caused in 1277, the themes of justice and violence became embedded in the praxis of monarchy for decades, as both a symptom and a driver of new political dynamics between centre and locality. In the shorter term, the phase of power-sharing between an ageing king and an unstable heir tested the stability of the central government. There were moments of cooperation in risky ventures, but the principles of shared rule were unclear and Sancho had to act more assertively to legitimise himself than his departed brother, all of which lay the foundations for the breach to come.

Sancho's Rebellion

The late 1270s and early 1280s therefore saw rising tension between the king and his subjects, both in terms of friction with towns over tax and in the brutal handling of certain

[34] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 393.
[35] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 822.

noblemen. These tensions were soon to boil over with the humiliating challenge to the monarch's authority by his son. In this context the multiple centres of appeal posed fraught questions for political society, but they also provided possibilities under the right circumstances. To understand the nature of Sancho's challenge, we have not only to explain why and how the rebellion came about, but also to ask what kind of authority each side of the struggle was able to exercise, and what that tells us about the structures of Castilian politics.

The beginnings of hostility between Alfonso X and Sancho lay in the summer and autumn of 1280, even as the young prince distinguished himself on the frontier. Earlier, when Sancho was acclaimed as heir in 1278, Alfonso X suffered the humiliation of his wife, Violante, fleeing to Aragón with her grandsons.[36] The *infantes* de la Cerda were promptly separated from Violante and detained in the castle of Játiva, whereupon the queen decided to return to Castile.[37] Her return was facilitated by her son, Sancho, leveraging his strong position in the government. Alfonso, however, was aggrieved that Sancho had appropriated funds meant for the siege of Algeciras to help Violante travel, and in response the king targeted Sancho's main tax collector, the Jew Zag de Melea.[38] In another show of the king's violent grip on the court, he had Zag executed at Seville, though the punishment of a Jewish servant was probably understood differently by contemporaries from his treatment of Christian nobles.[39] The emerging tension with Sancho thus occurred in the context of pressure on Alfonso's finances. In 1279 Alfonso had bristled when the papal legate, Pietro de Rieti, arrived in Castile his brief to target illegal use of ecclesiastical revenues by the

[36] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 403-4; Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 179.
[37] Loaysa, *Crónica*, 109.
[38] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 138.
[39] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 419.

king.[40] Later, in 1281, the Cortes of Seville condemned the tax burden, which Alfonso blamed on the war and the debasement of the coinage. The representatives of the towns reluctantly accepted further taxes 'more through fear than love'.[41] When Alfonso subsequently ordered the townsmen to approve a new coinage, they decided to appeal to *infante* Sancho.[42] They complained to him that if they returned to their districts with such a mandate, they would be poorly received, and lambasted the 'murders, *desafueros* and thefts' perpetrated by the king.[43] The predicament of the townsmen is highly revealing for the structural issues that were shortly to tear Castile apart. Negotiating royal taxation meant balancing grievances in the locality with the pressures of the centre, both between king and Cortes and between Cortes procurators and reluctant taxpayers at home. This was a perennial feature of all representative politics. However, in this instance there was an appealing alternative site for redress: Sancho's operation as a legitimate and helpful figure in the preceding years was now causing significant problems for Alfonso.[44]

The most important bone of contention, however, was always bound to be the succession. Alfonso X had long been under pressure from the king of France not to dispossess the de la Cerda line, since Philip III was the sibling of their mother, Blanca. Recognising Sancho had led to conflict with France, and Philip made it a condition for any peace for Alfonso not to leave his grandchildren dispossessed. The solution devised by Alfonso's diplomats at Bayonne in 1280 was to divide his kingdoms to accommodate a kingly title for Alfonso de la Cerda, giving him the kingdom of Jaén and suggesting that he render homage to Sancho, king of Castile. Sancho was appalled, considering the kingdoms as his indivisible birthright.

[40] Linehan, *The Spanish Church*, 218.
[41] 'más con temor que con amor'. *CAX*, 60.
[42] Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 239.
[43] *CAX*, 419.
[44] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 212.

He urged his father to woo Pedro III of Aragón, up to now supportive of Philip, hoping that he would liberate Alfonso from concerns about the king of France.[45] In the presence of *infantes* Sancho and Manuel, agreement was reached at Campillo in March 1281. Alfonso X promised to give the valley of Ayora (between Valencia and Murcia) to Pedro III, while the Aragonese monarch recognised Castilian rights over Albarracín on the border north-east of Cuenca.[46] The day after these agreements, however, Sancho met personally with Pedro III to declare a separate friendship, and at this moment the concessions were revised, with Sancho now promising to give Albarracín to Pedro when he became king, illustrating Sancho's confidence in his succession plans.[47]

However, with the election of pope Martin IV, a delegation to Rome once again proposed the Jaén resolution. When Alfonso threatened in 1281 that, if Sancho did not accept, he would disinherit him regardless of the previous oaths, Sancho responded with an enraged outburst and began manoeuvres to rebel.[48] He met with his brothers, Pedro and Juan, and they took the momentous decision to depose their father in February 1282. Sancho, soon bolstered by his uncle Manuel, began by writing to the nobles, prelates and town councils of the kingdom informing them of his intention to appeal on their behalf to the king and inviting them to a gathering at Valladolid, much like a Cortes, to take place in April 1282. He received widespread support, including Fernando Pérez Ponce, Ramiro Díaz, Pedro Páez de Asturias and Fernando Rodríguez de Cabrera, and was reinforced by the return of Lope Díaz de Haro from France. [49] We also know that a substantial majority of the prelacy answered Sancho's appeal, which rested on the language of *desafuero* analysed in Chapter

[45] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 431-2.
[46] ibid., 434.
[47] *MHE*, II, doc. 181.
[48] *CAX*, 60.
[49] ibid., 61.

3. Almost all the bishops gathered to rebuke Alfonso, excepting the archbishops of Toledo and Seville and the bishops of Segovia, Oviedo, Ávila and Cádiz. The masters of the military orders of Calatrava, Santiago and the Hospitallers also joined, as did and many town councils including the southern *concejos* of Andújar, Jaén and Úbeda.[50] Prior to the meeting, Sancho took care to distance himself from the executions of 1277 by exhuming the remains of *infante* Fadrique from their dishonourable resting-place and transferring them to the monastery of the Trinity in Burgos.[51]

There are conflicting accounts of the tone of events at Sancho's assembly in Valladolid.[52] According to the fiercely pro-Sancho chronicle, all the attendees agreed to give Sancho 'the power of the land' and have him call himself king.[53] Sancho responded that he did not want to be called king while his father was alive, and indeed Sancho's supporters in July 1282 did not refer to him as a king or speak about his *servicio*, but they did agree to render to him all the rights due to kings, including justice and the customary taxes.[54] A more contemporary eyewitness version of the event exists, written by the bishops of Palencia and Burgos, which adds some revealing details. This document records that church officials and town representatives were coercively summoned to hear an announcement at Sancho's residence in Valladolid.[55] *Infante* Manuel emerged from a closed meeting between Sancho and his allies and announced the deposition of Alfonso X on the basis of his unlawful killings, abuses and excessive taxes.[56] The documentary evidence does not make it clear whether Sancho IV was reluctant or aggressive in claiming the title of king. There are, in fact, some

[50] Martínez, *Alfonso X*, 448.
[51] *CAX*, 61.
[52] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 337-41.
[53] *CAX*, 61.
[54] Álvarez, *Las Hermandades*, Appendix 1.
[55] *MHE*, II, doc. 198.
[56] Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 244.

isolated examples of Sancho being styled as king in documents in 1282-4, but the most common form was 'eldest son and heir of the very noble king Alfonso' (*fijo mayor et heredero del muy noble rey don Alfonso*).[57] On balance, whatever Sancho's personal intentions, it is clear that his actions could be interpreted in different ways depending on perspective: either as a restrained and legitimate bid to correct the abuses of an errant king or as an open rebellion against his father's authority. Either way, he had asserted a pretext to adopt some of the powers of royal government.

Indeed, these multiple viewpoints are revealed further by the development of the *hermandades* in the summer of 1282.[58] The first group to gather was a collection of Benedictine monasteries, 42 of which pledged to defend their interests with Sancho on 2 May 1282.[59] Another religious agreement followed, when the prelates of Astorga, Zamora, Mondoñedo, Coria, Ciudad Rodrigo and Tuy assembled. The critical moment came in May 1282, when the *hermandad* of Castile formed, cementing the alliance of 65 *concejos* at Burgos.[60] Then, in July, at Sancho's stronghold of Valladolid, there was an agreement between the nobles, prelates and townsmen of León, Galicia and Castile to support Sancho and return to old customs threatened under Alfonso X. On 10 July, Segovia joined the *hermandad*, with the agreement of Pedro Núñez, master of Santiago, a sign of the order's useful support for Sancho.[61] On 15 July the master also made a brotherhood with Pedro Pérez de Asturias and another with *infante* Juan, Roy Gil de Villalobos and Fernán Pérez

[57] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 39, n. 7.
[58] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 369-78.
[59] Suarez, 'Evolución histórica', 14.
[60] González, 'Movimiento hermandino', 31.
[61] AHN, Uclés, caj. 260, núm. 11.

Ponce.[62] Later, on 11 December, Seville and Murcia agreed an *hermandad*, though theirs was set up explicitly against Sancho and in favour of Alfonso X.[63]

The *hermandades* are worthy of particular attention in understanding the various perspectives at play during the rebellion. The drafters of the *carta* of 8 July 1282 certainly did not hold back in vitriolic criticism of Alfonso X's kingship: they gathered 'because of the many outrages (*desafueros*), damages, rapes, deaths, imprisonments and extortions without hearings, and dishonours and many other things you, king Alfonso, did, without explanation, against God, against justice and against *fuero*, and the great damage of all the kingdoms'. For this reason, they declared that Sancho and the kings after him would return lands unduly seized from them, and would guard their *fueros*, privileges and customs. They also rejected the '*diezmos de los puertos'*, an indirect tax, stating that they would only give the tributes agreed under previous monarchs. Finally, they tried to keep noblemen and knights out of the posts of *merino* and *adelantado*, because of the transgressions that these figures were perceived to have caused under Alfonso X and Fernando III.[64] Moreover, Hernández has brilliantly shown how Sancho's rebellion was defended by the Franciscan thinker Juan Gil de Zamora, who depicted Sancho as a natural lord who would defend the local rights of Leonese towns against the tyrannical behaviour of Alfonso X, and how the *hermandades* used similar terminology of 'natural lordship'.[65]

It is these arguments that have led historians to interpret the *hermandades* of 1282 as a rejection of Alfonso's interventionist policies, and argue that the cities placed their trust in

[62] AHN, Uclés, caj. 16, núm. 12.
[63] *CODOM II,* doc. 78.
[64] 'por muchos desafueros e muchos daños e forcias e muertes e prisiones e despechamientos sin ser oidos, e deshonras e otras muchas cosas sin guisa que eran contra Dios, e contra Justicia e contra fuero, e gran daño de todos los Regnos que vos el Rey D. Alfonso facia'. Álvarez, *Las Hermandades,* Appendix 1.
[65] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 285-6, 397.

Sancho as the defender of their privileges. However, close reading of the agreements demonstrates that, more than this, the *hermandades* were a result of the structural developments underway in this period. As discussed in Chapter 2, the most fundamental role of the associations was to produce a format for self-defence and self-regulation in the context of serious uncertainty, and indeed they planned mutual aid if any of their number were attacked or called before a judge. The specifics are most revealing: if the king, Sancho or anyone else breached their privileges, they would all appeal to the king, or Sancho, or subsequent kings for redress, and if it was not forthcoming they would gather together to defend their rights.[66] The diplomatic conventions make it difficult to ascertain whether their meaning is that their first site of appeal would be to the king and his son second, or whether they would appeal to whichever figure had not wronged them in the first instance. Later in the document the municipal representatives once again acknowledged that both the king and Sancho were potential sites of judicial appeal, though they pushed for a customary interpretation of their rights: they decreed that 'all of those who desire to appeal to the judgement of the king, or that of don Sancho, or the other kings who come after them, can appeal and have their appeal heard by the *Libro Juzgo* in León'.[67] By contrast, the *hermandad* of Seville and Murcia, viewing Sancho's actions as threatening and outrageous, did not need to envisage any other form of appeal other than to Alfonso, who had retreated within the former city.

The *hermandades* are thus a vivid illustration of the disarray produced in the locality by the fragmentation of royal authority. While some clearly supported Sancho in so far as he could address perceived *desafueros* by Alfonso X, they were clearly conscious of the problems

[66] Álvarez, *Las Hermandades,* Appendix 1.
[67] 'todos aquellos que quisieren apellar al juicio del Rey, o de D. Sancho, o de los otros reys que fueren despues dellos, que puedan apellar e que hayan la alzada para el Libro Juzgo en Leon'. ibid.

that could arise from the competing sites of arbitration thrown up by the rebellion, and were also careful not to step too far away from the patterns of central guarantee that the *concejos* relied upon. Meanwhile, those of Seville and Murcia also focused on security and hoped to reinforce a monarch who had favoured them over the previous decades, and who was close at hand for the time being. As each side did so, they drew on the most resonant discourses of Castilian politics that we have analysed in previous chapters. Those critical of Alfonso X used the language of *desafuero* as the most stinging critique of his kingship, which had caused perceived breaches of custom through its high-minded, sometimes arbitrary, justice, and his uncustomary fiscal exactions. Meanwhile, for Seville and Murcia the abuses were committed by Sancho, and they used the label of the royal *servicio* as a common good to lambast the rebellion and present their own association as legitimate.[68] The *hermandades* of 1282, then, were a product of the evolving relationship between centre and locality in Castile. Royal behaviour could be critiqued or defended, and it was particularly possible to do so when there was an alternative site of royal-style arbitration, as there was during Sancho's rebellion. At the same time, though, they did not seek simply to reject all intervention in local affairs, but rather to make the centre work for them.

The divided perspective from the locality helps explain the nature of each side's authority. Alfonso still governed bitterly in Seville, relying on the southern *concejos* and a more restricted band of court supporters,[69] though two of Sancho's brothers, Juan and Jaime, returned to Alfonso X in late 1282 and 1283 respectively.[70] Sancho also faced inevitable trade-offs in his efforts to mobilise a base of support. The *hermandades* provided a base of

[68] 'nos siempre trabaiamos en seruir et en ayudar de buen coraçon a nuestro sennor el rey en todas las cosas que nuestro seruicio ouo mester'. *CODOM II*, 79.
[69] Arias analyses the witness lists from 1283, showing that only 2 of the 23 confirmers had previously witnessed documents. This illustrates the extent to which Alfonso X had been abandoned. See Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 175; see also Hernández, *Los hombres del rey,* 428.
[70] *CAX*, 63.

potential military force, but also ensured that he would have to negotiate to raise funds. Faced with the pressure of high-profile desertion, papal criticism and the opposition of several large southern cities, Sancho relied on three related strategies: his use of grants, offices and projecting a particular version of justice. The first set of actions was the management of relationships with allies using grants. Even before his open rebellion, he had made grandiose promises to the order of Santiago, committing to give them the Valle de Ricote and Alhama with various dependent territories.[71] He later issued a judgment in favour of the Order in their dispute with the *concejo* of Badajoz; in response, Badajoz joined Seville and Murcia as the major bastions of Alfonsine support.[72] In May 1282, a month after the master of Calatrava joined his supporters at Valladolid, Sancho gave Calatrava the towns of Alarcos and Villa Real near the order's centre of gravity south of Toledo. The significance of this grant would not have been lost on any observers: Villa Real had been founded by Alfonso X himself in 1255, and hence was laden with symbolism. Sancho's purpose in bolstering the Order in the heart of their zone of influence was made clear: 'so that you may serve God and me more fully'.[73] Throughout 1283, he continued his strategy to endow his main allies while also distancing himself from his father's actions. He gave incomes to his vassal, Garcí Fernández de Toledo, and gave the town and castle of Peñafiel, close to his main base at Valladolid, to his uncle *infante* Manuel.[74] Then, in September, he made a major gift to his new wife, María de Molina, whom he had married in June 1282, despite the objections of the pope over their consanguinity.[75] In 1283, he gave her the town of Toro with a particularly broad set of jurisdictional rights, affording María the means to act as his

[71] AHN Uclés, caj. 293 núm 1.
[72] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 962; Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 406-7.
[73] 'por que mas complidamente podades servir a dios e a mi'. *Salazar*, I-40 f254-5.
[74] *Salazar*, O-6 f77v; Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 1128.
[75] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 43-4.

most steadfast supporter.[76] Lastly, he gave the castle of Clavijo to the *concejo* of Logroño.[77] This grant is an outlier, being the only grant to a town council during the rebellion. Logroño was notably the site of his arrest of Simón Ruiz de los Cameros, so perhaps Sancho wished to atone for the ignominy of that action. Alternatively, it could have been an attempt to increase his influence there over the king of Aragón, who was making an uncomfortable habit of staying in Logroño and criticising his actions, for example his expulsion of Alfonso's daughter, Berenguela, from Burgos.[78]

As the controversy over Berenguela suggests, Sancho was struggling to maintain support in the vital city of Burgos.[79] He had already lost the bishop, and now he needed to ensure the obedience of the council. The second pillar of his strategy can be seen as an effort to address this: the management of officers. He worked hard to uphold his officers' authority: in February 1282 he commanded the *concejo* to obey Guillén Provincial;[80] in March he ordered them to obey Pedro Bonifaz and Velasco Gómez;[81] in May he did the same for Diego López de Salcedo;[82] and in September he endorsed his *mayordomo*, Pedro Alvarez.[83] He continued this practice in the following years, demanding support for Rodrigo Rodríguez Manrique and Garcí Fernández de Toledo.[84] Meanwhile, Sancho also used the promise of high office in his creaking regime to keep *infante* Pedro onside, countering Alfonso X's extreme offer of the kingdom of Murcia with the office of chancellor and the lordship of Tordesillas.[85] Sancho's demands for obedience to an increasingly senior string of allies, as opposed to

[76] *MHE*, II, doc. 225.
[77] Ballesteros, *Alfonso X*, 1129.
[78] *Las Huelgas*, 1263-1283, doc. 606.
[79] A. Ballesteros Beretta, 'Burgos y la rebelión del infante don Sancho', *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, CXIX (1946), 180.
[80] AMB HI - 2926.
[81] AMB HI - 2927.
[82] AMB HI - 2929.
[83] AMB HI - 2930.
[84] AMB HI - 2932.
[85] *CAX*, 63.

those favoured by the king, underscores the difficulties caused in local politics by the lack of clarity at the centre. Competing claims for jurisdiction by the rebel and the monarch clearly destabilised the ability of central authority to assert itself.[86] Indeed, in June 1282 Sancho had repeatedly to insist that the council not impede the minting of new coins that would help his cause, as had been approved at Valladolid when the rebellion began.[87] In the end he recovered his authority over Burgos, successfully raising provisions in 1283 for a stay at Santo Domingo de Silos and securing further taxation explicitly earmarked for countering his problems in Badajoz and Seville.[88]

The final strand to Sancho's actions during his rebellion was a brutal brand of justice.[89] An example from 1283 is vividly described by the chronicle. Word reached Sancho of a notorious thug named Romero, who was agitating in Olmedo in favour of Alfonso X. Romero escaped to the castle of Trujillo, but this did not stay Sancho's hand: he went back to the offending neighbourhood and executed any accomplices he found, killing as many as 400 people.[90] He later carried out the same kind of repression in Toro.[91] Of course, the actions described here were undoubtedly military efforts to eliminate troublesome opposition. However, the keenness of the chronicler to emphasise that these executions were *por justicia* (out of justice) suggests that Sancho realised the importance of his assuming the role of the highest judge in the land. The threefold approach taken by Sancho during his rebellion encapsulates the type of kingship that had developed over the previous half century: kings had to manage their resources to bolster their supporters in key regions, install and direct appropriate officers, and exercise justice at the apex of the system.

[86] Ballesteros, 'Burgos y la rebelión', 164-65.
[87] AMB HI - 2475, 2477.
[88] AMB HI – 2548, 2964.
[89] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 517.
[90] *CAX*, 64.
[91] ibid., 65.

In all, Sancho's rebellion was undoubtedly a bitter dispute with chaotic consequences at court and in the locality. But the key to understanding the behaviour of each side lies not in the temperament of the antagonists but in the structural features of Castile. The catalyst was undoubtedly the succession dispute, but the fact that Sancho had previously operated some royal functions for his father made his opposition more practicable, and allowed him to present himself as a remedy for grievances about Alfonso's uncustomary judicial and fiscal activities. Alfonso X responded with rage and disbelief at times, but had the political awareness to remain in his stronghold of Seville and to target Sancho at the core of his claim to authority as heir. Sancho's playbook was built on the same principles of integration as Alfonso's kingship, using offices, grants and justice to project an image of royal authority. Meanwhile, the *hermandades* used the formulae of associative politics and the languages of *desafuero* and *servicio* to protect their privileges and interests at a time when the normal structures of monarchical guarantee were lacking or threatening.

Sancho IV's Early Reign

Sancho IV's early rule cannot be understood without an appreciation of the legacy of the previous years, both in terms of his path to rule by challenging Alfonso X, and in terms of the new pressures emerging from the localities. The first challenge of Sancho IV's reign was to establish his legitimacy, especially since it is doubtful that he really reconciled with his dying father, as the later chronicles insist.[92] He had to fight for acceptance on two fronts: against lingering doubts about his right to succeed Alfonso X and against the unlicensed

[92] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 539.

status of his marriage. Sancho's answer to the first conundrum was to secure a quick proclamation in Ávila immediately after his father's death, before travelling to Toledo where he staged a coronation with four bishops, the first ecclesiastical ceremony of its kind since 1135.[93] Knowing that his father's strength had long lain in the south, he went to Córdoba and then to Seville in June 1284, and was crowned again in the Wise King's favourite city.[94] Sancho was also unusual in making a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 1286, the first such trip since 1232, highlighting his sensitivity to ceremony.[95] Rather less pious was his treatment of his second legitimacy quandary, over his marriage. Having petitioned successive popes unsuccessfully, Sancho lost patience and arranged for an elaborate forgery of a bull legitimising the match. Boniface VIII discovered and denounced the forgery in 1297, two years after Sancho's death – to everyone who mattered domestically, therefore, Sancho managed to sidestep the issue of marrying his father's cousin, and indeed the chronicles pass no comment on the matter.[96]

The next aspect of establishing his authority was, as we have come to expect, to organise his officers and make judicious use of grants. First, he incorporated major figures from the nobility into his court.[97] He established his uncle, *infante* Juan as his *mayordomo mayor* and filled the vacancy he left in the *alferecía* with Diego de Haro, and while he replaced all the *merinos* and *adelantados mayores* he did make space for former servants of Alfonso X, such as the appointment of Juan Fernández as *merino mayor* of Galicia.[98] Of course, an important part of any king's establishment of his authority would be the early signs about their

[93] Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 447.
[94] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 51.
[95] Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 508.
[96] ibid., 539-40; S. Domínguez Sánchez, 'Falsificaciones medievales: una "bula" de Nicolás IV falsificada por el rey Sancho IV de Castilla', *Estudios humanísticos. Historia*, 2 (2003), 13-26.
[97] For a detailed discussion, see Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 568-71; 589-92; 609-10.
[98] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 59.

management of resources. In addition to establishing a new set of officers, the chronicle records how Sancho IV went about making grants to support his most immediate objectives. The first beneficiary was a Genoese admiral named Benito Zacarías, who received 6,000 *doblas* a month and the lordship of Santa María del Puerto (near Jerez), with the proviso that he always bring an armed galley to defend the port. Later, arriving at Arévalo, Sancho received Lope Díaz de Haro, lord of Vizcaya and one the key figures at the beginning of his struggles with Alfonso X. He asked Sancho for the village of Santa Olalla (Toledo), which Sancho had given to Lope's sister, and the king assented.[99]

Indeed, there were reasons for Sancho to be prudent with his *largesse.* As we saw in Chapter 5, certain elements of political society were likely to object to any profligacy with royal possessions.[100] In 1284, having arrived in Seville, Sancho hosted an audience with his court (not a full Cortes meeting).[101] At the assembly, he discussed the privileges and letters which he had given out as rewards (*por premia*) before he became king. The attenders 'advised him to revoke them, and he revoked them all'.[102] Nieto Soria has argued that this was due to a recognition on Sancho's part that his excessive privileges were contributing to problems of disorder.[103] It is not clear exactly how grants created unrest, or what evidence there is for it; on the contrary, having annulled promises made as *infante* Sancho proceeded to give new privileges (especially to the church of Seville) and to confirm others from his father's reign and earlier.[104] Nieto Soria's comments seem to align with that current of the historiography which treats royal grants with suspicion and sees them as leading inevitably to noble-sponsored lawlessness. Perhaps a more measured interpretation would be to suggest that

[99] *CSIV*, 70.
[100] See above, 196-8.
[101] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 655.
[102] 'consejáronle que los revocase, é él revocólos todos'. *CSIV*, 70.
[103] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 63.
[104] *Gaibrois,* I, 14-15.

Seville in 1284 was a natural moment for Sancho to use predictable petitions about the integrity of the royal demesne to acknowledge the complaints that contributed to the challenge against Alfonso X, while also signalling a clean break with his rebellion. More importantly, he could now establish his rule with new grants that were no longer rewards for loyalty against his father, but instead symbols of new relationships of service going forwards.

This more strategic deployment of grants turned out to be required much sooner than Sancho would have hoped. His generosity to Benito Zacarías paid off almost immediately, when Aben Yuzuf attacked Jerez in 1285, because it was largely naval superiority that allowed the Castilians to resist.[105] The new invasion convinced Sancho that he needed to follow his father's policy of endowing those better placed in the south to resist hostile forces. Until this point, Sancho's grants had largely been given in central regions of the kingdom owing to the context of the rebellion, keen as he was to reinforce his allies around Valladolid, pacify towns near Burgos and keep the king of Aragón on side. However, 1285 saw a dramatic shift: he now issued a string of grants, predominantly castles, forming a defensive arc from Seville, the ultimate target of many Moroccan invasions, stretching east to Murcia. He bolstered the order of Calatrava around Seville, giving them the castles of Morón, Cazalla and Osuna (though this last had already been promised by Alfonso X); [106] he also gave them the castle of Collán near Jaén, always vulnerable to raids issuing from Granada.[107] He also gave Valle de Ricote (Murcia) to the Order of Santiago.[108] This latter grant only partly fulfilled his promises of 1281, for he subtly dropped mention of Alhama, and in 1289 he confirmed the Order of the Hospital's possession of Calasparra, ending any hope that he

[105] *CSIV*, 71.
[106] *Salazar*, O-20 f107-8, 111-2.
[107] Madrid, AHN, Órdenes militares, Calatrava, L. 1344,.47v, núm. 73.
[108] *CODOM V*, docs. 54-55.

would keep that particular promise to Santiago.[109] Sancho's new position, therefore, allowed him to moderate his grant-making decisions and shift towards his newer priorities in the west, while also hedging against any threat from Granada. Contrary to any suggestion that Sancho's grants were ill-considered or a source of discord in the early stage of his reign, therefore, we see a new king jolted by events into a change of strategy, but nonetheless falling back on established policy in the defence of his kingdom.

With the invasion successfully resisted, Sancho's attention turned to a meeting of the Cortes, held at Palencia in 1286. Many of the king's concessions were predictable, restraining over-zealous officers and regulating the victualling taxes they could raise, while also addressing his financial problems by raising *moneda forera*.[110] With this done, Sancho turned to the main business of the meeting. He aimed to establish a firmer hold over the royal demesne, and to recover as much of it as possible. The first petition recorded by the ordinance asks: 'that I do everything I can to return to me those things which I gave from my land which belong to the kingdom, to orders and noblemen and any other men, when I was *infante* and afterwards in my reign up to now, and that I do not give them out from now on'.[111] The particularly eye-catching phrase here is the sense that the royal demesne belonged to the kingdom (*regno*), which is what legitimised the petitioners in their attempt to control its use. On one level, this reflects the transition encouraged by Alfonso X towards a more public understanding of kingship based on a kind of imperial authority and a more rigid distinction between public and private, but it also reflects the ambiguity of Sancho's grants while he was the heir presumptive. The grants he had made were less out of his own pocket than

[109] ibid., doc. 88.
[110] *Cortes*, 98.
[111] 'Primeramientre que aquellas cosas que yo dy dela mi tierra que perteneçen al rregno, tan bien a Ordenes como a ffijos dalgos e a otros onbres quales quier, seysndo yo inffante, e despues que regné ffasta agora que punne quanto yo podier delas tornar a mi, e quelas non dé daqui adelantre'. Ibid., 95.

anticipation of his right to give the royal demesne, which was the king's property but also clearly something that concerned, even in some sense belonged to, the kingdom.

The reason given by the Cortes delegates was that these grants 'diminished my [Sancho's] justice and my incomes, and led to great damage for the land'.[112] The next petition sought to prevent private lords from purchasing from the royal demesne, again in an effort to shore up royal finance. At the end of the ordinance, Sancho referred to an enquiry he had commissioned 'about the *realengo*, the *abadengo* and the *behetrías*', giving assurance that no one would be allowed to act upon it until he had confirmed its findings.[113] Sancho, it seems, was assiduous when it came to collecting and consulting information about his properties and his grants, as we know from eyewitness testimony of his looking up a gift in the relevant *libros* in 1287.[114] The pronouncements at Palencia in 1286 reveal several aspects to Sancho IV's early kingship. In the context of financial difficulty, establishing a firmer hold over the rights of the *realengo* was an attractive proposition, especially as some of the grants he had made, such as to the military orders, were no longer necessary. Indeed, later that year, Sancho upheld one of his main promises of the rebellion, namely that he would address the deteriorating coinage, by ordering the minting of a new currency, the *coronado*.[115] However, Sancho's policies did not amount to a disavowal of his rights of *largesse* or an undermining of the royal will. Instead, he clearly had a confident sense of his entitlement to royal incomes and planned to use scrupulous data collection about his rights to return what he was owed to the royal demesne.[116]

[112] 'minguaua por esta rrazzon la mi justicia e las mis rrentas, e se tornaua en gran danno dela tierra'. ibid., 95.
[113] ibid., 98.
[114] ACC, I, caja 11, núm. 14.
[115] *CSIV*, 73.
[116] Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 666.

Sancho's concession could also be understood as the culmination of the campaign of the *hermandades* that had underpinned his rising against Alfonso X. Though the *hermandades* of 1282 did not use the term *realengo* explicitly, their pressure for order, custom and self-defence was consonant with the recovery of royal rights, especially if it avoided higher taxes. However, now that Sancho was king, the role of the *hermandades* was substantially different. Sancho was keen to exploit them at first, reminding the council of Burgos in 1284 of their obligations to send troops to the frontier, as had been agreed by the *hermandad* of Palencia.[117] Later that year, on 1 September, the *hermandades* of Castile, León, Toledo, Galicia, Extremadura and Andalucía held their meeting in Medina del Campo, setting out to defend the *fueros* and agreeing to cooperate with the Cortes. The chronicle accounts, however, tell a different story, suggesting that the king wasted no time in winding up the *hermandades*. Jofré de Loaysa's account states that Sancho went around his new kingdoms and ordered 'the confederations or brotherhoods which the councils of Castile and León had made in the aforesaid times of war to be totally abolished'.[118] Indeed, the privileges he showed to his court and was advised to revoke also included those to *hermandades*. Sancho had therefore built up a courtly consensus against the brotherhoods, and at the Cortes of Palencia in 1286 he cemented the abolition: ruling that only judges imposed by him or the town councils could have jurisdiction.[119] At the same time, he gave concessions that strengthened the independent operation of the *concejos*, limiting noble acquisitions of the *realengo* and removing some royal *alcaldes*.[120] The fading of the *hermandades* once Sancho had ascended to the throne has been depicted by some commentators either as a sign of their immaturity or the breaking of promises by Sancho IV, who now feared that they threatened

[117] AMB, HI – 2612.
[118] 'confederaciones seu hermandatas quas concilia Castelle et Legionis fecerant tempore guerre predicte totaliter aboleri'. Loaysa, *Crónica*, 126.
[119] *Cortes*, 96; Álvarez, *Las Hermandades*, 43.
[120] *Cortes,* 95-6.

his authority.[121] In fact, the use of brotherhood as a way to overcome local difference and inter-conciliar conflict did not disappear: the *hermandades* made by Salvatierra with other *concejos* in Álava in January and April 1293 are an example.[122] The key difference here is that these arrangements were local responses to local pressures, as opposed to the more general scope of the 1282 brotherhoods. It was no longer necessary (or possible) to form local or regional bodies that could mitigate the effects of uncertainty at the centre, since an experienced adult monarch now occupied the throne, who expected to be accessed through the conventional channels of petition and advice, and who otherwise ruled as expected through officers and strategic grants.

The Rise and Fall of Lope Díaz de Haro

Our interpretation of Sancho IV's early priorities helps explain one of the most infamous episodes of his reign. The king's interest in financial security and effective management of his properties set the scene for the prodigious rise of Lope Díaz de Haro in his confidence. The entire episode of the Haro lord's rise and fall highlights some vital elements in the structures of Castilian politics. The historiographical judgement on Sancho IV has been swift and unanimous: the king was 'blind' to Lope Diaz's 'vanity' or 'ambition', and the utter weakness of royal authority was exposed by the way he had to use underhand barbarity to prise himself from the grasp of an overmighty subject.[123] It is certainly evident that there was a very serious rupture in the functioning of royal government in 1287-88, but there are more elements to the story than the chronicler's appealing moral tale of clashing

[121] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV,*; González, 'Movimiento hermandino'; Hernández, *Los hombres del rey*, 655.
[122] ibid., 35.
[123] See e.g. *Gaibrois*, I, 146; Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV,* 76; Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 143.

personalities or the historiography's seigneurialisation narrative. Instead, it is important to marshal the insights of previous chapters to understand how the politics of the centre and the locality conditioned these events.

The first aspect to consider is the breach of the usual pattern of office-holding caused by Sancho's elevation of Lope. As we have seen, Sancho was under pressure to ameliorate the realm's financial problems. As the Cortes of Palencia signalled, this involved not only refreshing the coinage but addressing the loss of royal incomes that was felt to be occurring through alienation and usurpation of the royal demesne. While it is perhaps not immediately obvious why the Haro lord would be the answer to Sancho's financial question, it is significant that Lope had recently impressed Sancho on the issue. The previous dominant figure at court had been Gómez García de Toledo, a member of an urban lineage from Toledo who had been made abbot of Santa María in Valladolid.[124] Gómez had incurred the enmity of the queen and the archbishop of Toledo during his time leading the royal administration, and they began to plot against him with Lope Díaz. Their most effective strike came in 1286, when they publicly demanded that Gómez render account of the incomes he collected on the king's behalf.[125] Seeds of doubt were now planted about Gómez's management, and indeed, according to the chronicler, 'in the account were many things against his name that he received and disbursed without the king's mandate counted, including a large amount of goods earmarked for court of Rome for the dispensation'.[126] Lope's allegations of misconduct on issues so close to the king's heart severely damaged the king's confidence in his servant. When Gómez died in disgrace in July 1286, and the *mayordomo mayor*, Pedro Álvarez, followed him later that year, the moment was ripe for a

[124] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 75; Hernández, *Los hombres del rey,* 721-4.
[125] *CSIV,* 73.
[126] 'en la cuenta fallaban contra él muchas cosas que tomára e diera sin mandado del Rey, é otrosi una grant cuantía de aver que recabdára para dar en la córte de Roma para la dispensación'. ibid.

new favourite to step in on a contrasting agenda. Meanwhile, Sancho's lack of other support is important to consider, given that the Lara had taken up the cause of the de la Cerda heirs.

Lope Díaz made a threefold proposition to Sancho IV: he would organise the king's forces, ensure that his kingdom lived in peace, and increase the king's riches each year. In return, he asked for both the offices of *mayordomo* and *alférez*, and to be elevated to the rank of *conde*.[127] Empty words, perhaps, but Lope's promises were attractive given the financial corruption he had just helped to expose. The instability of relations across the Pyrenees may provide an extra rationale for Sancho's elevation of the lord of Vizcaya, since Lope's regional power base could provide a buttress against the aggressive French, who had dominated Navarre since Philip IV's marriage to Jeanne of Navarre in 1284.[128] Sancho handed over a key to the chancery and the royal seals, and also soon made Lope's brother, Diego, *adelantado mayor de la Frontera.* According to the chronicler, Lope and Sancho agreed mutual guarantees: Sancho would never take away these offices or the land he or his son held, and if he did, then the castles which he gave as security would become Lope's in tail. In return, Lope would always serve Sancho and his new-born son, Fernando, and if he did not, then Sancho could kill him and take away Vizcaya and his other possessions.[129] As Nieto Soria points out, there is no external evidence to verify whether these understandings were vocalised or whether this is an invention by the chronicler to justify Sancho's actions when the arrangement soon unravelled.[130] However, Nieto Soria does not discuss one interesting detail: apparently, the letters codifying their agreements, sealed by the king, Lope and his son, were 'published in front of all on the houses of the king' in Valladolid.[131] The

[127] *CSIV*, 74.
[128] O'Callaghan, *Medieval Spain*, 408.
[129] *CSIV*, 74.
[130] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 78.
[131] 'publicáronse ante todos en las casas del Rey'. *CSIV*, 74.

chronicle itself was written in Valladolid, and hence one might surmise that the chronicler was referring to a practice of bill-posting in that city with which he and his readers would have been familiar.[132] Of course, even if true, we cannot know how much of the nitty-gritty would have been included in this announcement. Nonetheless, given what we already know of Sancho's interest in the written record and accountability for his servants, it would make sense for a mutual understanding to be proclaimed, and indeed we have seen at multiple points the centrality of reciprocal service. Moreover, Foronda and others have analysed the 'contractual culture' of later medieval Castile, which may have encouraged this kind of agreement.[133]

It is therefore plausible that Sancho made some effort to formalise the nature of his new relationship with Lope. This unusual step may have been intended to address the break from custom in entrusting the two major court offices to one man, reassuring others who were excluded that Lope's position was contingent to some degree. Even with this potential mitigation, Lope's meteoric promotion clearly disrupted the usual patterns of office-holding and established a predominant favourite. Court calculations immediately began to revolve around Lope. His brother, Diego López, received the grant of Cerezo and Grañón, in their family's heartland in Vizcaya.[134] *Infante* Juan also moved closer to the Haro, marrying Lope's daughter, María de Haro, in 1287, the same year as Lope's elevation to *conde.*[135] Secure in his position, Lope Díaz de Haro set about his most important promise to the king: to ease his financial struggles. In May 1287, he brokered a deal for the Catalan Jew,

[132] An earlier, more contracted version of the chronicle, the *Historia dialogada*, written in 1288-1295, does not mention this agreement beyond stating that the king gave Lope everything he wanted. See F. Ramírez de Arellano, *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España*, 109 (Madrid, 1893), 43. See also P. E. Saracino, 'La historia hasta 1288 dialogada y su relación con la Crónica de tres reyes', *e-Spania*, 18 (2014).
[133] Foronda, 'La privanza', 80-3; F. Foronda and A. I. Carrasco Manchado (eds.), *El contrato político en la Corona de Castilla. Cultura y sociedad políticas entre los siglos X al XVI* (Madrid, 2008).
[134] *Salazar*, N-8 f18v-20.
[135] *CSIV*, 75.

Abraham el Barchilón, to farm all the king's incomes for two years.[136] In several letters of 1287, Sancho noted specifically that Lope had advised him in the leasing of these incomes to Abraham, though of course this might be a shrewd move by Sancho to pass the blame for a potentially unpopular policy.[137] Abraham was instructed to target lands that had passed from the *realengo* to other hands, especially the church.[138] Here again the royal government revealed that their priority was not cancelling or limiting grants made by the royal will, but instead aggressively pursuing customary incomes that had fallen into disuse and reclaiming lands appropriated from the royal demesne.[139]

Unsurprisingly, this was the source of very significant tensions in the localities, and it was not long before these was expressed at the centre. The situation was exacerbated by the traditional rivals of the Haro, the Lara, whom Sancho had signally failed to integrate since the beginning of his reign. Alvar Núñez de Lara had joined with the king of Portugal to harass castles along the border with León. On his way to León, Sancho was confronted by *infante* Juan and a group of nobles from León and Galicia, with grievances they wished to present to the king. Struggling to gain an audience with the king, the frustrated petitioners wrote down their complaints, which the chronicler purports to transcribe in full. Their grievances amounted to a strong rejection of the monopoly of royal favour and the reduction of their incomes at the hands of the *conde*, whom they blamed for Sancho's aggressive approach towards lost royal rights. As we have come to expect, their criticism was couched in the language of service, contrasting the 'diminishing of his [Sancho's] lordship, which

[136] *Gaibrois*, I, 143. Gaibrois considers that Abraham was a friend of Lope Díaz de Haro, on the basis that they fell together. The vernacular chronicle, however, refers to Abraham as the king's man during a dispute with another tax farmer, Simuel de Bilforado, whom he refers to as 'the *conde*'s Jew'. Gaibrois considered this a case of mistaken identity. See *CSIV*, 76; *Gaibrois*, I, 164.
[137] ibid., doc. 170. Hernández notes that Abraham had already been involved in royal finance since 1285: *Los hombres del rey*, 685.
[138] *Gaibrois*, I, 143.
[139] See e.g. *Pereda*, doc. 226; Barrios, *Documentos de la Catedral*, doc. 149.

was much his disservice', with the strife of those 'who had served very well'.[140] Their fundamental request was a return to the expected patterns of royal office-holding: 'that from now on neither the *conde* nor anyone else should meddle with any aspect of his estate, apart from his officials and closest servants'.[141] Centre and locality, then, were so entwined that the king could expect criticism from all quarters if there was a perceived mismanagement, but this passage shows that there was nonetheless faith in the normal structure of royal officialdom to manage the king's affairs properly.

The final revealing aspect of the affair is the king's behaviour after the relationship soured and reached its bloody conclusion, which shows the relevance of noble and royal networks for Castilian politics. Relations deteriorated terminally between Sancho and Lope Díaz between late 1287 and spring 1288, owing to a combination of the grating activities of Abraham el Barchilón, Sancho's decision to award the properties of the deceased Alvar Núñez de Lara to Juan Núñez I de Lara, his brother, and a dispute over foreign policy.[142] The diplomatic situation had evolved rapidly: since 1287, Edward I of England had been called upon to negotiate a peace between France and Aragón following the war of the Sicilian Vespers.[143] This demanded careful consideration in Castile.[144] In February 1288, Lope and *infante* Juan favoured an alliance with Aragón, while the queen and the archbishop of Toledo preferred to side with France.[145] When the king inclined towards France, keen to end the lingering threat of French intervention on behalf of the *infantes* de la Cerda, Lope and *infante* Juan conspired to mobilise their networks, ordering Diego López de Campos,

[140] 'menguamiento de su señorío, é que era muy grand su deservicio'. *CSIV*, 76.
[141] 'que dende adelante que el conde ni otro ninguno non les librase ninguna cosa de sus faciendas, si non los sus oficiales é los omes de criazon'. ibid.
[142] ibid., 77.
[143] S. Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers. A History of the Mediterranean World in the Later Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1958), 264-7.
[144] O'Callaghan, *Medieval Spain*, 395-6.
[145] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 83.

Lope's cousin, to bring troops north from Ciudad Rodrigo.[146] It is no coincidence that, just before the bloodshed at Alfaro in April 1288, the king's final demand of Diego López de Campos was to explain why he had mobilised troops against him.[147]

After the murder at Alfaro, the king's favourite lay dead and *infante* Juan in chains, but Sancho knew too much about the connection between court events and local power structures to rest. He immediately moved to Nájera and thence to Haro, the ancestral seat of Lope Díaz's lineage, which he captured. He then had an awkward explanation to make to Juana, the *conde*'s widow and sister of Queen María. He emphasised that he had not ordered the execution but that it had happened when her husband refused to give up the royal castles. As a show of good faith he offered to give these same castles to her son, Diego, but Juana mobilised the Haro supporters.[148] Sancho then subdued castles in Vizcaya with the help of Diego López de Salcedo, including Orduña, Balmaseda, Villamonte, Ocio and Portilla.[149] When he entered Portilla, people were heard chanting the name of Alfonso de la Cerda, which enraged the king, but his position was secured to an extent by the premature death of Diego de Haro, Lope's son. Sancho was now relieved of his promise to bestow royal castles on the Haro heir, but the lineage still had a strong figurehead in the form of Lope's brother, Diego López de Haro. Amid military suppression of the locality of Vizcaya, Sancho had also to restore a sense of order to his court. Symbolically, Sancho held a Cortes meeting at Haro, fully asserting his central authority in the troublesome region. At the Cortes, he cancelled the two most controversial aspects of Lope Díaz's period in charge of the royal government, namely the farming of royal incomes by Abraham el Barchilón and the attempt

[146] *CSIV*, 77.
[147] ibid., 79.
[148] ibid.
[149] ibid. See also A. Dacosta and J. R. Díaz de Durana, 'Los espacios del príncipe en la Vizcaya del siglo XIV: interacción y sujetos políticos', in *Los espacios del rey*, 360.

to recover lands that had been transferred from the *realengo* to other hands. He went on to promise not to use Jews at any stage in the collection of taxes. In return, Sancho secured an annual *servicio* for 10 years.[150] In the following months, the royal chancery issued numerous exemptions to churches and town councils, liberating them from claims made against them by Abraham.[151] Sancho's actions in the aftermath of Alfaro thus demonstrate the interplay between centre and locality: the magnate's regional network was a serious problem for Sancho, which he had to address through a combination of public proclamation and enforcement on the ground.

To sum up, it does not make sense to see the conflict over Lope Díaz de Haro as the straightforward result of favouritism or greed: it was the product of an interlocking set of changes that heralded a new form of royal power, grounded in balanced interest groups competing at court with one eye on local power bases. As we saw in Chapter 5, offices had become some of the most important tools for political control.[152] Sancho's mistake, as everyone sees, was his decision to concentrate too much favour in one magnate's hands, but this is not due just to 'ambition' but to the resentment incited by obvious departure from the developing norm. Sancho clearly anticipated this to an extent, hence his attempt to provide a veneer of legitimacy by publishing their contract in writing. Sancho, a monarch known to value detailed records about the state of his royal demesne, took Lope Díaz at his word when he promised to address corruption and to put pressure on unlicensed usurpation of his estates.

Indeed, we can only understand the affair if we recognise that, by pushing so hard on royal rights, Lope Díaz became a conduit for grievance between the locality and the centre. The

[150] *Cortes*, 101.
[151] Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 86.
[152] See above, 208-10.

crux of this 'factional' court dispute, which culminated in murder in a royal palace, was therefore not only central, but also local. The parallel processes discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, which saw local actors stepping up the intensity of their lordship meant that attempts to solidify and exploit the royal demesne were bound to provoke greater challenge than ever before. Though historians have passed over it almost in silence, it is most revealing that the first challenge to Lope Díaz came not from a disaffected court faction, unhappy at being left out of patronage streams, but from a petition from minor landlords. Politics between the centre and locality were fundamentally interwoven by now, and one product of the gravitational pull to the king's court was the search for central scapegoats. Conversely, following the *conde*'s fall, Sancho had to re-establish his authority both at court and on the ground, since the territorial power of the lords of Vizcaya and the networks of support they could rely on posed a serious threat.

Sancho IV's Later Years: 1288-1295

In the aftermath of the breakdown of his experiment with Lope Díaz de Haro, the king needed to re-establish an effective mode of government. The urgency of the situation was heightened by the rapid deterioration of relations with Aragón. Threatened by the emerging Franco-Castilian alliance and keen to punish the outrage at Alfaro that had rid Sancho's court of Aragón's major advocate, Alfonso III moved swiftly and aggressively. In September 1288, he facilitated the proclamation of Alfonso de la Cerda as king of Castile in the presence of Diego López de Haro.[153] This was a critical moment to make a stabilising choice as *mayordomo mayor*, and Sancho turned to a loose relative and proven servant, Juan

[153] *Gaibrois,* III, doc. 224.

Fernández *Cabellos de Oro*.[154] He similarly opted for a family connection as *alférez*, promoting Alfonso de Molina, grandson of Alfonso IX and Sancho's first cousin, once removed.[155] In this context, it was also imperative for Sancho to restore relations with the Lara. This would take a dramatic reversal of fortunes: Juan Núñez I de Lara had begun the reign as the main champion of the de la Cerda princes, but the shifting sands of foreign policy had drawn the king of France, with whom Juan Núñez had spent the previous years along with his brother, Nuño González, towards the Castilian side. More importantly, the fraying of relations with Aragón provided opportunities for Juan Núñez, whose disputed property of Albarracín had been promised by *infante* Sancho to Pedro III in 1281.[156] In 1289, employed the classic grant-making tactic to establish a new relationship with Juan Núñez by giving the Lara magnate the lordships of Moya and Cañete.[157] Located 27 miles east of Cuenca and the same distance south of the disputed lordship of Albarracín, this grant would strongly appeal to Juan Núñez by reinforcing his family's hold over the region, but would also provide Sancho with a buffer against Aragonese aggression given its position near the border.

However, the return of the Lara signalled shifting balances at court, and this set the scene for the pattern of Sancho's later years. Though the twists and turns of noble rebellions are often unclear and their motivations deliberately obscured by the chronicles, a pattern nonetheless emerges in the disputes of the later years of Sancho IV's reign. On each occasion, we see disputes relating to the local interests of magnates escalating to the centre, often in response to the king's interventions, followed by confrontation. For example, the

[154] See above, 188-9.
[155] C. Cawley, *Medieval Lands*. *A Prosopography of Medieval European Noble and Royal Families,* https://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/index.htm, accessed June 2022.
[156] MHE, II, doc. 18.
[157] *CSIV*, 82.

return of Juan Núñez to Sancho's court in 1289 was soon disrupted when Sancho heard that he planned to strike against his 'enemies' (*contrarios*), Pedro Diaz de Castañeda and his brother Nuño, in their familial heartland in Asturias de Santillana (modern Cantabria).[158] The geopolitics at play here are significant, since the Castañeda and Lara were locked in landed rivalry. The *LBB* records that the descendants of the two families both collected *behetría* rights in 21 lordships in the *merindades* of Castrojeríz and Cerrato, lying between Burgos and Valladolid.[159] Meanwhile, the *LBB* also bears testimony to Castañeda *solariego* possessions clustered in Asturias.[160] Juan Núñez's desire to target his enemy in his solid power base highlights the importance of local power structures in shaping the strategies of feud. Sancho IV intervened, urging Juan Núñez to call off his plan, but relations soon deteriorated and neither the queen's mediation nor the offer of exchanges of castles could prevent him from leaving to render homage to Pedro III. Beyond fear of the king, no justification is given in the chronicle narrative, but it seems reasonable to suggest that Juan Núñez read Sancho's prevention of conflict with the Castañeda as a sign of ill-will towards him, whereas he clearly expected to be free to pursue his own landed interests when making his return to Castile after such a long absence.[161]

Moreover, geopolitics also played a major role in a later conflict with the Lara, when Sancho managed to secure the lordship of Molina following the death of Isabel, Juan Núñez's daughter-in-law. Sancho convinced Isabel's mother, Blanca, half-sister of his queen, María, to designate the kings of Castile as the heirs to the lordship, which lay east of Guadalajara. This was a major coup for Sancho, and once it had been confirmed in Blanca's will of 10 May 1293 he moved immediately to confer the lordship on María, setting out that it would

[158] ibid.
[159] *LBB*, I.20, 25, 28-9, 35, 39-41, 43, 45; XI.10-11, 13, 15, 25, 31-2, 41, 59-62.
[160] ibid., X.27, 46, 74-5, 101, 104, 132, 134, 149, 162, 174.
[161] *CSIV*, 83.

descend to the heirs to the Castilian throne.[162] Naturally, this was a significant disappointment for the Lara, who had hoped to add Molina to their nearby base between Albarracín and Cañete. Indeed, other conflicts between Sancho and his magnates were triggered by imbalances in local politics. In June 1291 trouble arose for the king in Galicia, where the *adelantado mayor*, Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, joined forces with Juan Núñez de Lara. This may have been a result of Sancho's decision to reinforce one of Alburquerque's local rivals, Pay Méndez de Canderrey, with the castle of San Martin de Abavides in March of the same year.[163] Once again, therefore, we see how the interplay between the situation on the ground and the king's decision-making conditioned the major conflicts of Sancho's later reign.

When reconciliation came following these conflicts, it often involved a reshuffling of power relations in the locality and an assertion of service. The first confrontation with the Lara in 1290 saw Sancho's allies (including Estebán Fernández de Castro, the Castañeda brothers, Ruy Gil de Villalobos and Estebán Pérez Florian, a former vassal of Lope Díaz de Haro) overpower Juan Núñez at Moya, and his submission was confirmed with castles given to Juan Núñez in tenancy, though it was agreed that royal vassals would be installed to hold them from the Lara lord. The castles in question were scattered throughout the kingdom: San Estéban de Gormaz near Soria, Fermoselle, in Zamora, and the castle of Trastámara in Galicia. By contrast with the earlier grant of Moya and Cañete, it is significant that the gift was now scattered tenancies, to prevent their being used as a coherent base for revolt. Likewise, Sancho responded to *infante* Juan's rebellion of 1293 through a careful combination of destabilising his opponent's power base and offering chances for

[162] *Gaibrois*, III, doc. 484.
[163] C. Olivera Serrano, 'Fortalezas y villas del rey: notas sobre la frontera galaico-portuguesa en tierras orensanas a fines del siglo XIII', *Cuadernos de estudios gallegos*, 48 (2001), 105-6.

reintegration. He confiscated Juan's lordships of Baena, Luque and Zuheros and gave them to the nearest large *concejo*, Córdoba, citing not only their services but also because *infante* Juan 'rose against us and against our laws, to disinherit us most falsely and inappropriately'.[164] As we have repeatedly seen, however, grants were as much a tool of reconciliation as they were rewards for loyal service, and this explains why Sancho left the door open for the rebellious *infante*. In a different document he framed the confiscation of these southern lordships as an exchange, granting him Iscar in return.[165] This was a shrewd move because the Iscar was located near Valladolid, a royal stronghold. For the *infante* to achieve compensation, then, he would have to return to the king's grace, and if he did not, Sancho had lost nothing by this grant. Finally, office-holding was always part of stabilising the locality: Sancho punished Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque's indiscretions by stripping his office of *adelantado*, replacing him with another lord with regional interests in Galicia and a track record of service (he had done a stint as admiral), Pay Gómez Chariño.[166] *Infante* Juan also lost his post as *adelantado mayor* of the Frontera and, as he had done in previous tight spots, Sancho rotated Juan Fernández *Cabellos de Oro* in to fill the gap. The interplay between local and central interests was thus pivotal in the praxis of rebellion and reconciliation, and there were many more considerations at play than patronage alone. Rather than being forced to indulge over-powerful magnates, the king was able to manage his grace (alongside punishment) to get the best out of his most important subjects.

Conclusion

[164] 'se levanto contra nos y contra nuestros derechos muy falsamente y commo non deuie por deseredar a nos'. *Salazar*, M-35 f61.
[165] *Salazar*, M-6 f164v.
[166] *Gaibrois*, III, doc. 12.

Alfonso X and Sancho IV articulated a mode of royal rule that both reflected and shaped the structural features discussed in the previous chapters. They operated on a strong interpretation of royal justice, used grants and offices strategically and emphasised their service. Some of the conflicts of 1275-1295 can be explained, as many historians have done, in terms of resistance to royal over-reach, such as the grievances provoked by mounting royal taxation, or by the attempt to recover land for the *realengo* or again by the violent treatment of figures like Simón Ruiz de los Cameros. Others stemmed from failure to balance competing interests, with the elevation of Lope Díaz de Haro standing out in this regard. Moreover, the context of the succession dispute following the death of *infante* Fernando was bound to fan the flames of division, both by setting Sancho against his father and by providing a potential focal point for later challenges, especially that of *infante* Juan. We must also bear in mind the importance of the peninsular context: the ability of the kings of France, Portugal and Aragón to demand restitution for the de la Cerda children was a destabilising factor which altered political calculations at multiple levels.

However, the roots of the difficulties experienced by Alfonso X and Sancho IV lay in the evolving interactions between centre and locality. The growth of conciliar power provided mechanisms for local regulation through *hermandades* in times of crisis and for negotiation with the monarch through the Cortes. The congested landholding of the north of the kingdom demanded a different kind of attention from peripheries like Vizcaya, which provided a useful base for Lope Díaz de Haro but a problem for Sancho once he fell, or Andalucía, which required different strategies again owing to vulnerability to incursion or the existence of large royalist *concejos*. What this chapter reveals most clearly is that the structural orientation of all these varied localities towards a single centre, which was made to sound simple by the discourses of *servicio* and the royal jurisdiction, was disrupted in practice

because political circumstances introduced uncertainty over the operation of that centre. Before 1275, opposition to Alfonso X had taken the form of increasingly bitter feuds between the monarch and various noblemen. However, the nobles had not secured widespread support from the town councils or established a figurehead who could offer alternative governance. Though *infante* Felipe numbered among the rebels, the king's other sons had joined with *infante* Manuel, their uncle, to act as negotiators the king's behalf.[167] Age might have been a factor, with Fernando 17 in 1272 (whereas Sancho was 24 at the time of his rebellion in 1282). However, the most important point is that being the king's son did not inherently make one a viable figurehead for a challenge to the monarch, or an efficient conduit for grievance to make its way from the centre to the locality. This contrasts strongly with the ability of Sancho to capitalise on the resentment of his father's fiscal and judicial policies in the 1280s, as a result of his position in the government in 1276-81. Had he lived, *infante* Fernando might himself have acted as a conduit for rebellion after having acted as an alternative royal centre when Alfonso X left for Beaucaire. When he became king, Sancho found that other connections between local aspiration and central redress came to undermine him, but he also derived his solutions from management of the politics of grant-making. Thus, whereas historians have often reached for words like 'failure' and 'disappointment' to describe the later years of Alfonso X and Sancho IV, it is more helpful to think in terms of a collision between a rapid process of centralisation and the destabilisation of that centre by political circumstances. The question posed by the dramatic expansion of royal jurisdiction, fiscality and power was what would happen if the king could not successfully act as the single head of the kingdom he claimed to be. This question was to be posed with unprecedented urgency when Sancho IV died in April 1295.

[167] Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 150.

8. The Politics of Minority, 1295-1325

The Minority of Fernando IV

Fernando IV's accession provoked a profound challenge for the patterns of politics that had built over the previous decades. Given our understanding of the proliferating structures that connected centre to locality at the end of the thirteenth century, it is abundantly clear why so many of these were shattered in 1295. And yet, the same themes, languages and behaviours were deployed by each side in the face of a genuine political crisis. There is no need to follow the chronicler in his moralising condemnation of the greed and lawlessness of practically everyone apart from his heroine queen. Instead, there are salient features of the politics of these years that most explain the messy course of events, including: the fraught emergence of multiple centres; the mobilisation of networks in the locality; and the interplay between *desafuero*, *servicio* and the common good.

When Sancho died on 25 April 1295, Fernando was nine years old, and hence María de Molina moved to secure the regency in accordance with her husband's wishes. To cement the newly established accord with the Lara, the first *alférez mayor* of the new regime was Nuño González de Lara, the younger brother of Juan Núñez II.[1] According to the chronicler, Nuño then played a prominent part in ceremonies in Toledo proclaiming the new king. Along with his brother, he also counselled María de Molina in her early move to cancel the unpopular *sisa* tax.[2] The regency therefore attempted to replicate the processes of an operational centre, integrating key players for service and addressing policy. As in the early 1280s, however, the uncertain authority of the king meant that there were multiple potential

[1] *Benavides*, doc. 8.
[2] *CFIV*, 93.

configurations of power. *Infante* Juan ramped up his challenge, moving to Granada and preparing to invade with Nasrid backing to proclaim himself king of Castile and León.[3] By 1296, he had secured the backing of Juan Núñez II de Lara, who was concerned by the dominant position of *infante* Enrique at the regency court. They cemented their alliance through the marriage of Juan Núñez to Juan's daughter and gave their allegiance to Alfonso de la Cerda. According to the chronicler, they agreed that Alfonso de la Cerda would take the throne of Castile, Toledo, Córdoba, Murcia and Jaén, while *infante* Juan would be king of León, Galicia and Seville.[4] This division was a return to a patrimonial understanding of the Castilian kingdom prior to Fernando III, sweeping aside Sancho IV's achievement of securing a united inheritance from Alfonso X.[5] There is independent corroboration of the chronicler's account, with Jaime II of Aragon addressing the *infante* by his assumed title of King of León on 4 November 1296.[6] Jaime's willingness to encourage the designs of *infante* Juan against the king of Castile was part of a new strategy to exploit the weakness of the Castilian centre, following the abandonment of his claims over Sicily.[7] Having committed himself in January 1296 to assisting Alfonso de la Cerda in his campaign to secure his inheritance of the throne, he then agreed with the pretender that Murcia, Medina and Requena would pass to Aragón.[8] While his brother attacked Soria to the north, Jaime II invaded Murcia in August, with only Lorca, Mula and Alcalá remaining outside his power.[9] From this victorious standpoint he urged *infante* Juan and Juan Núñez to 'make war with all your might against the said doña María and don Fernando [IV], her son'.[10]

[3] ibid.
[4] ibid., 97.
[5] González, *Fernando IV*, 46.
[6] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 10.
[7] Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers*, 270; O'Callaghan, *Medieval Spain*, 398.
[8] *Benavides*, doc. 41.
[9] Loaysa, *Crónica*, 161; González *Fernando IV*, 56.
[10] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 10.

While it is not always convincing to attribute the dislocations of the period 1275-1325 to the succession crisis sparked by the death of Fernando de la Cerda, this is evidently a case in which the options presented to *infante* Juan and Jaime II were fundamentally changed by the fact that the new king's legitimacy was open to challenge. It is difficult to imagine such an outright claim to the throne had it not been for the uncertain right to rule of Fernando IV's father, but we should also note that no such claim arose from anyone other than Alfonso de la Cerda during Sancho's reign. One might therefore suspect that the youth of the new king was at least as significant a factor in determining his opponents' strategies as the dynastic situation. A vacuum at the centre of decision-making, which a regency could only fill imperfectly, was the most damaging eventuality for Castile given its structural developments over the past half-century, with all its orientations towards a single centre.

The impact of the vacuum of royal arbitration was exacerbated when Diego López de Haro entered Castile from Aragón. He claimed the lordship of Vizcaya, which had been taken away following his brother's death at Alfaro in 1288.[11] At the time, the region was in royal hands, nominally under the control of the young *infante* Enrique, Fernando IV's brother, who was born in the same year as the scandal.[12] Youth therefore left Vizcaya unguarded on two counts, its lord seven years old and its king nine. When the Lara lords, Juan Núñez and Nuño González, offered Diego support, the other *infante* Enrique, *el Senador*, Fernando IV's great-uncle, opposed this new noble coalition. He called an assembly of the bishops, promising to protect them from *desafueros* and taxes, if they gave him the safeguard of the kingdom. He then summoned the *concejos* of all the towns of the regions of Segovia, Ávila

[11] J. A. García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre, *Vizcaya en la Edad Media. Evolución demográfica, económica, social y política de la comunidad vizcaína medieval* (San Sebastián, 1985), I, 187-8.
[12] *CFIV*, 93; González, *Fernando IV*, 32.

and Extremadura (though the major cities themselves did not attend), and expressed his desire for affairs to return to their state under his father, Fernando III.[13]

As well as mobilising what support the crown had, Enrique's offers of protection to the towns and churchmen were a response to pressure following the re-emergence of the *hermandades*. After Sancho IV died, the question of how a fragile situation in the locality would be resolved without firm direction from the centre returned. Correspondingly, the brotherhoods soon re-formed. On 17 May 1295, Salamanca, Alba de Tormes and Zamora grouped together, followed by Castile on 6 July, León and Galicia on 12 July and Extremadura and Toledo on 3 August. On 19 July, Seville and Córdoba received Écija into their *hermandad*, which must have been formed before then. In September, the southern *concejos* of Jaén, Baeza, Úbeda, Andújar, Arjona and Santisteban del Puerto joined with the knights Juan Sánchez and Simón Pérez de Bedmar. In the following month, Murcia, Cartagena, Lorca, Alicante, Mula, Guardamar, Molina Seca and Alhama formed an *hermandad*. This agreement, which was almost identical in wording to that of León and Galicia, confirms the fact that the previous exceptionalism of Seville and Murcia had now ended.[14] On 6 August 1296, a splinter *hermandad* with a stricter agreement formed in Castile between Vitoria, Briones, Salinillas de Buradón, Portilla and Salvatierra, agreed in Haro, particularly addressing crimes. On 22 September 1296, Jeréz de la Frontera joined Seville and Córdoba. On 15 August 1297, the separate agreements were rolled together to form a *Hermandad General* of Andalucía. Alongside the major *hermandades*, there were also some smaller agreements made in 1296, in Cuenca and Talavera. These strongly emphasised the defence of the king and their *fueros*.[15]

[13] *CFIV*, 94.
[14] González, 'Movimiento hermandino', 37.
[15] Álvarez, *Las Hermandades*, 28-9.

Just as we saw in 1282, the *hermandades* responded to the destabilisation of central authority. Justice, law and order, taxation and defence all relied on clarity and finality in decision-making, in a moment where it was not clear who had the authority to make any of these calls. The damaging disintegration provoked a plea for consensus from the regent: in late summer 1295, María de Molina proposed to hold a Cortes at Valladolid where they could proclaim Fernando 'with one voice in concord' and 'put an end to the assemblies that were being made everywhere'.[16] At Cuéllar in 1297, the Cortes went further, demanding a council of 12 townsmen to 'advise and serve' the king.[17] Nevertheless, uncertainty over justice continued throughout the minority. A case from 1298 illustrates this. When *infante* Enrique arrived in Zamora to address disturbances among the city's elites, he wanted to imprison those who seemed guilty to him, but the queen insisted that their cases should be heard properly. Enrique, much disgruntled, carried out an enquiry in his lodgings with the help of a scribe, but the accused appealed to María, who told them to go to her lordships of Toro or Valladolid where she would respond. Enrique, furious at being overruled, arrested one of the city's *alcaldes* and executed him without trial.[18] Extrapolating from cases like this, we can see how, when local priorities encouraged lords of all kinds to expand and concentrate their rights, hold offices with a more certain judicial authority, and secure royal confirmation of contested lordships or precious privileges, pressure was bound to be placed on the arbiters of court positions, royal grants and legislative settlements.

We can therefore see how the politics of minority clashed with the political structure that had grown over the course of the reigns of Alfonso X and Sancho IV, with their emphasis

[16] 'una voz en concordia'; 'se partirían estos ayuntamientos que se facian en cada comarca'. *CFIV*, 94.
[17] 'consejar e servir'. *Cortes*, 135.
[18] *CFIV*, 114.

on royal justice, expanded officialdom and decreasing reliance on tenants. Indeed, when these strands connecting court interests and local ones were severed, it is not surprising to observe politics dissolving into its constituent parts. This was bound to bring local networks to the fore. The events of 1296 are a perfect example. For many parties, the focus of that year fell on Palencia, a city situated within striking distance of both Burgos and Valladolid, in which Juan Núñez and *infante* Juan had amassed strength under the command of one of the city's predominant elites, Juan Fernández.[19] María de Molina responded by dispatching Alfonso Martínez de Olivera, a rival of Juan Fernández in Palencia who had secured promotion as *comendador mayor* of the order of Santiago in León. She gave him a difficult task: prevent the city's knights and those of surrounding villages from joining the rebels. Though Alfonso Martínez warned of the local clout of Juan Fernández, María had a plan. It was notorious that *infante* Juan was rapacious in collecting *yantar*, an issue that the royal party had specifically addressed at the Cortes of Valladolid in 1295. She told Alfonso to use this information to turn the townsmen against the rebels. Sure enough, when *infante* Juan approached, he sent a letter ahead to Palencia to arrange the collection of *yantar.* In the presence of representatives of the *hermandad*,[20] Juan Fernández spoke out in the town council in favour of payment, since the *infante* was their lord and the son of Alfonso X. Alfonso Martínez, however, brandished a list of the provisions they would have to provide, amounting to a thousand *maravedís.*[21] If they agreed, how much more, he asked, would they have to pay, not only now but any time a lord arrived, when it was clearly pronounced at Valladolid that they owed no more than 30 *maravedís*? The council turned against Juan Fernández and agreed to shut the gates to the rebels.[22]

[19] The chronicle does not furnish more information other than that Juan Fernández was 'a very powerful man of the town' who fully supported *infante* Juan. *CFIV*, 97.
[20] González, *Fernando IV*, doc. 2.
[21] One manuscript tradition records a figure of 10,000 *maravdís*. See Benítez, *Crónica*, 20, n. 25.
[22] *CFIV*, 98-9.

The confrontations in Palencia reveal the interplay between different power structures: the noble rebels, operating at first out of their power bases or approaching from exile in foreign courts, had networks of supporters in key cities on which they relied at crucial moments. At the same time, these clients had to weigh up the influence of others in the *concejo* and, in these years, the *hermandad*; and they also had to consider the new pronouncements of the Cortes. The dilemma they faced, though on one level narrowly focussed on the contingencies and circumstances of 1296, was also conditioned by wider contexts. Townsmen well understood how the competition for landed power in the thirteenth century had led noblemen to exploit their rights more directly, especially when it came to *yantar*, and had become accustomed to reaching to the royal centre for protection and guarantees against these aggressions. This explains why the debate at Palencia revolved around two issues. On one hand, the councillors could not ignore the coercive power of major magnates and their web of dependents within city walls, but balanced against that were the assurances emanating from the royal court, as recently as the previous year, about the limits that they could put on noble requests. The self-assurance with which the latter could be trusted over the former would naturally be shaken by the absence of a dominant royal figure at the centre.

Finally, it is striking how players of all sizes had to consider the geopolitical implications of their movements. For a city so close to the boy king's refuge at Valladolid to open its gates to major rebels would have been devastating for the royal cause, and, conversely, if the rebels had found themselves shut out of urban centres in the key corridor between Burgos and Valladolid the weight of their challenge would have been much reduced. These geopolitical realities were reflected in the crucial grant-making decisions of Fernando IV's government in 1296: having proven its loyalty, the *concejo* of Palencia was reinforced with

the nearby castles of Dueñas, Fuente Empudia and Tariego, while the king's vassal, Arias Díaz de Asturias, was given Valderrábano, 40 miles from the city, in a bid to strengthen the region's resistance. Finally, the heroics of Alfonso Martínez de Olivera were recognised with a grant allowing him to establish a *mayorazgo*, as well as fiscal privileges for a hospital he founded in Palencia.[23] That the documentation bears witness to such close attention to detail by Fernando's regents speaks volumes as to the fundamental importance of local networks to events of kingdom-wide significance.

Moreover, the entanglement of noble networks showed how hard it could be to gather consistent support around a single banner. The chronicles describe the frustrating siege of *infante* Juan's fortress of Paredes de Nava (near Palencia) in 1296, which lasted for months without success. Whereas the vernacular chronicle attributed the failure to straightforward cowardice,[24] Loaysa made a more astute observation. He wrote that many of the besieging army were in the service of those they attacked, and hence were so reluctant to cause damage to the fortress that their camp resembled a market rather than a siege.[25] The dense thicket of connections, particularly in the north, made it difficult to act decisively and caused serious embarrassment for the eleven-year-old king. Similarly, the intervention of the king of Portugal in 1299 was extremely destabilising in the problematic region of Galicia, where Fernán Ruíz de Castro had joined with Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque to disrupt royal justice in the region. Having been betrayed in the past, María de Molina rejected Castro's complaints about his losses in the region of Trastámara, and instead sent her son, Felipe, to Galicia to address lawlessness.[26] Felipe was only seven at the time, and hence required the

[23] *Salazar*, O-17 f296-8v; González, *Itinerario y regesta*, 65, 68. See also A. C. Marchán Fernández, *La administración local de Palencia en el antiguo régimen (1180-1808)* (Palencia, 1988), 35-6.
[24] *CFIV*, 105.
[25] Loaysa, *Crónica*, 186-88.
[26] See *CFIV*, 105.

assistance of his guardian, Fernán Martínez de Biedma, a Galician knight based in Seville whose family was later to rise to prominence in royal service.[27] Simultaneously, the minority government did what kings often did in times of regional instability, fortifying loyal servants: Juan Rodríguez de Rojas, the *merino mayor* of Castile, was given the properties of Poza and Pedrajas in Bureba, while Diego López de Sarria was rewarded for his services against *infante* Juan with incomes from the church of San Salvador de Piñera and the lordship of San Pedro de Lancara, in Lugo.[28] The maintenance of order thus involved the combination of regional and central powers, in the form of local lords, members of the royal family and the highest royal officers. Indeed, these different forces may have been chosen for their connections, since the daughter of Fernán Martínez de Biedma was married to Ruy Díaz, the nephew of Juan Rodríguez de Rojas.[29] In times of instability, therefore, the intertwined networks of the locality constituted both a major problem for the centre, and its only recourse.

Analysing the major dynamics of Fernando IV's minority reveals a crisis driven by the disintegration of the central power structure around which the polity had come to revolve. Without an adult male king, it was easy for *infante* Juan to exploit uncertain legitimacy and mount a serious challenge through his claim to the throne of León; the definition of service was less stable, diluting the promises made by various lords to María de Molina; the clarity of decision-making over succession to disputed lordships was now missing, hence the opportunity for demands by the Haro; and the source of guaranteed protection against *desafuero* was effectively powerless, leading both *infante* Enrique and the various *hermandades* to take semi-legitimate courses of action in the name of protecting rights.

[27] Zurita, *Anales*, IV, 145.
[28] *Benavides*, docs. 109, 121.
[29] Álvarez, *Ascenso social y crisis política*, 100.

Under these circumstances, geopolitical realities and interwoven networks forced politics into localised power struggles, over which regents struggled to assert authority. Without a stable centre, the system's languages, institutional patterns and interest networks provided no way for consensus to emerge naturally, and it would be a long struggle for Fernando IV and his defenders to restore it.

Fernando IV's Adult Rule – The Early Years (1301-1307)

Once Fernando IV reached adulthood, it became evident that Castilian politicians had learned the lessons of the minority, acknowledging that a functioning royal centre enabled stability not felt since Sancho IV's death, though of course the conclusions each came to as to what to do with these lessons differed according to the interests at play. Fernando IV's assumption of the full responsibilities of kingship was a relief to some and a threat to others, but no one tried to ignore it, or still less seek a 'triumph' for their class over royal lordship.

The methods used by Fernando IV to establish his rule were intended to convey the king's maturity in decision-making, availability for judgement and firm control over service. The message to Castilian political society was that a single royal centre had been re-established. Fernando IV's itinerary expanded dramatically: whereas in 1300 he had visited only six different cities, all clustered around Valladolid and no further afield than Ciudad Rodrigo, in 1302 he journeyed to 17 different places, including his first visit to the symbolic city of Toledo since his proclamation in 1295. In 1303 he covered even greater distances, including Seville and Córdoba in his itinerary for the first time.[30] In addition to making himself visible

[30] González, *Itinerario y regesta*, 138, 198, 236.

by travelling, Fernando IV also called his first meeting of the Cortes (though, true to form, the chronicler attributed this to the nefarious influence of Juan Núñez II de Lara).[31] At the Cortes of Medina del Campo in 1302, as well as securing five *servicios*, Fernando set up his rule in terms of the service that had come to define royal politics. The preamble to the ordinance declared that he gave its contents 'understanding that what they ask me for is right and is much my service, and because they always served me and the kings from whom I descend well and truly, and manifestly they served me and serve me still as good and loyal vassals should serve their king and their natural lord'.[32] His point, though inelegantly laboured, was that he now expected the loyalty and service of his kingdom. Crucially, though, he was also signalling that he alone would decide what amounted to serving him well. This contrasts with the wider set of justifications used during the minority, for example in 1299: 'because we know that it is the service of God and ours and the great benefit of all our kingdoms and the improvement of all our land'.[33] Unceremoniously dropping reference to *pro* and *mejoramiento*, the adult king now elevated his service to the rank of a general good as we saw in Chapter 6.[34] Sure enough, the overtures made to Fernando IV as various noblemen jostled for position were framed in terms of service: *infante* Juan and Juan Núñez tried to make Fernando fear Enrique by pointing out that 'he would never have him for his service' while 'they would serve him and uphold his honour'.[35]

Of course, serving the king elicited offices and other grants which were the main ingredients of power for the magnates drawn into the court. *Infante* Enrique's bid for control began with

[31] *CFIV*, 123.
[32] 'Et yo entendiendo que me pidien derecho e que es muy grant mi seruicio, et porque sienpre siruieron muy bien e verdadera mientre a los rreyes donde yo vengo, et sennalada mientre siruieron e siruen a mi assi como uasallos buenos e leales deuen seruir a su sennor natural'. *Cortes*, 162.
[33] 'por que sabemos que es sseruicio de Dios e nuestro e muy grand pro de todos los nuestros rregnos e mejoramiento del estado de toda la nuestra tierra'. ibid., 140-1.
[34] See above, 220-32.
[35] 'nunca lo podria aver para su servicio, é que si él quisiese, que ellos le servirian é tendrian la su honra'. *CFIV*, 126.

his effort to remove the *mayordomazgo* from Juan Núñez, who had held the prestigious post since at least July 1302. Knowing the need for saving face and balancing interests, Fernando IV granted the request but returned Moya and Cañete, in royal hands since the rebellion, to Juan Núñez as compensation.[36] Further displaying his kingly quality of reintegrating former opponents, Fernando IV brought Pedro Ponce de León into the position of *mayordomo mayor* in November 1302.[37] However, the main enigma in interpreting Fernando IV's reign is understanding the nature and limitations of the authority he was able to construct using these mechanisms. He had to contend with the structural difficulty of resolving the competing interests after the civil war, which bequeathed many opposed forces with a recent history of competition. There was now a single adult king who would be expected to organise and define his service, guarantee local custom and meet the expectations embedded within the newly expanded royal jurisdiction; the question was whether Fernando could fill these shoes.

There are two episodes that illustrate these issues particularly clearly: the resolution of Aragón's challenge over Murcia and the *pleito de Vizcaya*. Regarding the first, the lack of trust and clear direction at the Castilian court were clearly displayed throughout the negotiations. The first proposal came at Badajoz in April 1303, with the kings of Portugal and Castile meeting representatives of Jaime II. It led to a truce and the first efforts to resolve the two most important issues in Castilian-Aragonese relations: compensation for the *infantes* de la Cerda if they dropped their claims, and the division of the region of Murcia, with Alicante, Guardamar and Monteagudo remaining in Aragonese hands.[38] However, since the meeting was brokered by *infante* Juan and Juan Núñez de Lara, utilising their

[36] ibid.
[37] *Benavides*, doc. 224.
[38] González, *Fernando IV*, 153.

connections with the king of Portugal, neither *infante* Enrique nor Diego López de Haro were inclined to go, and the former personally exhorted Jaime II not to attend.[39] Enrique and Diego rejected the terms of Badajoz, and even expressed willingness to support Alfonso de la Cerda's claim.[40] Instead, they sought a separate meeting with the Aragonese party. In this context, Juan Manuel's influence at the centre suddenly soared. Though his peripheral power base in Murcia had so far offered Juan Manuel little influence in the politics of the reign, and instead had required significant efforts merely to hold onto his lordships in the face of Aragonese expansion, Juan Manuel's numerous Aragonese connections and cordial relations with Jaime II suddenly became an exceptional asset. He was able to write to Jaime on behalf of his new allies at court and to use his network (especially the Calvillo) to communicate with the Aragonese.[41] *Infante* Juan tried to do the same, with a particularly affectionate letter discussing various gift exchanges intended to demonstrate his cordiality with Jaime II.[42]

Infante Enrique, Diego López de Haro, his son Lope Díaz, and Juan Manuel eventually met with Jaime II at Ariza (near Zaragoza) in June. Their agreement, made to counter that produced at Badajoz, was as follows: after Alfonso de la Cerda had renounced his claim to the throne, Fernando would compensate him with the kingdom of Jaén, Valdecorneja, Pedraza, Almazán and other Castilian properties. His brother would be considered an *infante* of Castile with commensurate patrimony. Jaime II would be recognised as lord of all Murcia, with Juan Manuel retaining Alarcón. If Fernando IV did not accept these terms, they would formally leave his service and fight against him alongside Jaime.[43] In the end, Fernando IV

[39] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 41.
[40] ibid., doc. 45.
[41] See e.g. ibid., docs. 42, 48, 52, 53.
[42] ibid., doc. 43.
[43] *Benavides*, doc. 234.

was spared the miserable prospect of the Ariza pact by the death of *infante* Enrique at Roa in August 1303. His death heralded the firm ascendancy of Juan Núñez, who was named *adelantado de la frontera*. There was now no question that the Aragonese question would be settled via Portuguese negotiation at Torrellas.[44] Seeing that their approach had no future without their figurehead, both Juan Manuel and Diego López de Haro reconciled with Fernando IV, renouncing their pacts with Jaime II.[45] The events of 1303 show dramatically how the Castilian court lacked a unifying direction, which was especially vital in matters of peninsular significance such as this. Fernando IV, despite his moderate success in integrating former opponents into one government, had failed to step into a leading role. He had allowed Portuguese mediation to appear too much the policy of *infante* Juan and Juan Núñez, and had not established an atmosphere of trust needed to prevent this from threatening Enrique and the Haro. He had also underestimated how Juan Manuel's personal losses in Murcia and dense network across the Aragonese border would embolden him to treat independently with Jaime II.

Contentious matters requiring a confident royal will kept coming. As he attempted to rebalance the court following *infante* Enrique's death, Fernando was met with perhaps the most important decision of his reign: the matter of Vizcaya. In the context of the changes to noble landed power discussed in the first section, Vizcaya was particularly attractive to anyone who could stake a claim because of its territorial unity and lucrative ports. Vizcaya had been the patrimony of the Haro lineage since the mid-eleventh century, and in the first half of the thirteenth century had sheltered Diego López de Haro (d. 1254) during protracted disputes with Fernando III.[46] Diego López de Haro had been allowed to take hold of most

[44] See above, 52.
[45] *CFIV*, 133.
[46] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 44.

of Vizcaya, apart from Orduña and Valmaseda, in 1295.[47] This usurpation ended up being tacitly accepted by the Castilian monarchy, such that the new lord successfully founded the new port of Bilbao in 1300 and secured royal privileges for it in 1301.[48] However, Lope Díaz de Haro also had a daughter, María Díaz de Haro. This might not have posed a problem, except in 1287 she had married *infante* Juan, thus setting the scene for the fracas when her husband claimed the lordship on her behalf in 1304.

Fernando made the following pronouncement: María Díaz would give up her claim to Vizcaya, and in return Diego López would give her his property in Tordehumos, Iscar, Santa Ollala, Cuéllar, Valdetorío, Córdoba, Valdecorneja and Murcia (it is once again notable that even now Fernando IV preferred to keep any goods passing to *infante* Juan scattered across the kingdom rather than concentrated in one of his power bases). Fernando IV also offered to give Diego López something from the *realengo* 'so that he would remain at peace'.[49] Any hope of acquiescence from Diego López was misplaced, however: according to the chronicle, the Haro lord responded with a thunderous speech full of threats. Pointing out the collective strength of Castile's 'good men', he warned:

> 'Be sure that if we all gather together, we will all be in agreement about you, on the one hand that we will not suffer you to do any of the things that you do, and on the other that we want to be lords and powerful in all the kingdoms, and we want all matters to be arranged by us; and by this agreement everything will be to your damage and your disempowerment'.[50]

[47] *CFIV*, 95.
[48] *Salazar*, D-9 f71; *Benavides*, doc. 175; *CFIV*, 95.
[49] ibid., 133-5.
[50] 'cierto sed que si nos todos avenidos somos, toda la avenencia será sobre vos, lo uno en que vos non sofrirémos que fagades ninguna cosa de cuantas vos facedes, é lo otro en que querremos nos ser señores é poderosos de todos los reinos, é querrémos que todos los fechos se libren por nos, é así se tornará toda esta avenencia en vuestro daño é en vuestro desapoderamiento'. *CFIV*, 134.

This is an eye-catching speech, and one which has been taken by some authors as the moment when the veil slipped and the nobility articulated their true political ethic.[51] It is not one that deserves so much credence, however. Not only is there no external corroboration of the chronicle narrative that never missed an opportunity to see the worst in noble motivations, but Diego López continued to operate in his capacity as *alférez mayor* and hence engage on some level in the world of royal service that had so much more ideological weight than noble separatism.[52] Indeed, the chronicler's manipulation of the nobility's motivations is revealed plainly in the case of *infante* Enrique: the chronicle alleges that he tried everything to keep his lands from returning to the royal demesne, but this is disproved by his surviving will, which emphasised the 'loyal and true service' he did to Fernando IV and María de Molina (*servicio leal e verdadero*) and ordered all royal grants he had received to be returned to the *realengo*.[53] Instead, Diego López's speech, if it happened at all, is better read as an angry outburst at a moment of humiliation and loss for a magnate who had suffered repeated reversals in the previous months. It was a frustrated demand for royal decision-making that operated as expected according to justice rather than any inherently combative expression of class-consciousness.

The threats supposedly snarled at Fernando IV in 1304 did not prevent Diego López from taking the judicial process seriously when it recurred in subsequent years. 1305 and 1306 saw repeated iterations of this difficult case, which was finally settled in 1307 with the agreement that Diego López would hold all of the possessions for life, and on his death María Díaz would be recognised in all the lordships of her father. Lope Díaz, Diego's son, would receive Orduña and Valmaseda, and the royal properties of Miranda de Ebro and

[51] González, *Fernando IV*, 171.
[52] *Benavides*, doc. 296.
[53] ibid., doc. 240; Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 110.

Villalba de Losa (a substantial downgrade from the former offer of Haro, made in 1306). Santa Olalla, meanwhile, would be held by María Díaz and her sons while Diego lived, and when he died they would pass to Lope Díaz.[54] The chronicle engages closely with the various arguments put forward with such attention to detail that, as José Luis Bermejo put it, it is as if written by a jurist.[55] The chronicler was, of course, well versed in Castilian governmental process and possibly working from now-lost case papers, but his account speaks volumes as to the embedded understanding of royal justice that he would follow the legal niceties so closely. In 1305, *infante* Juan again demanded his wife's inheritance, repeating his argument and adding that the inhabitants of Vizcaya had accepted María in accordance with their *fuero*. Several other subplots also ran at the same time, many of them focussed on aspects of due process, such as whether Diego López had responded within his allotted time and whether María Díaz had begun the plea correctly in person.[56] The crucial point is that the norms followed here were steeped in Roman Law, and Roman Law as interpreted by the court of Alfonso X. For example, as Bermejo showed, Fernando IV's rejection of the claim that Sancho IV had illegally deprived Lope Díaz's descendants of their rights followed the pattern of the Roman Law process *unde vi*. Moreover, the king's jurists rejected Diego's argument that the case could be appealed to the pope, contending that Castile was 'exempt in the church of Rome'.[57] This argument, with its basis in Roman Law, is found in the *Siete partidas*.[58] Finally, the timetable of appeals followed in the case was exactly that prescribed in the *Leyes del estilo*.[59] The critical point, then, was that Castilian court society was, for a time, fully absorbed in the ideas, processes and arguments digested

[54] *CFIV*, 150.
[55] J. L. Bermejo, 'El proceso sobre Vizcaya a través de la Crónica de Fernando IV', *Estudios Vizcaínos*, 3 (1971), 7.
[56] *CFIV*, 137-8.
[57] P. Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation. Iberia before the Black Death* (Oxford, 2019), 159.
[58] Bermejo, 'El proceso sobre Vizcaya', 12.
[59] ibid., 11-14.

from Alfonso X's transmutation of Roman Law concepts. Though the protagonists spoke in terms of the 'Fuero de Castilla', the detail reveals a profound shift in terms of viewing the king's court as the apex of a Castilian legal edifice.

The long-running contest over the lordship of Vizcaya has been seen both as an expression of noble acquisitiveness and as part of the slow assertion of central control over regions with traditions of independence.[60] Sitting between those two interpretations, though, is a third story, in which the case can be seen as one part of the expected functioning of the Castilian political structure. Certainly, local priorities, individual family patterns and ambitions would shape contests at every level, but noble power was sufficiently intertwined with the central structure that recourse to final arbitration was habitual, even as every party hoped for an advantageous outcome and could lash out if disappointed. As a result of the changes discussed in Chapter 4, the central structure was not purely royal and personal, but shaped by legal principle, even if the legal right was uncertain and thus had to be decided politically. It is most revealing that when, amid his unsuccessful efforts to mobilise the *concejo* of Palencia in 1296, *infante* Juan explained his victimhood and deprivation over his wife's lost inheritance, the response came back that 'if don Diego had done him an injury, he should show it to the king their lord and the queen his mother and *infante* Enrique... and they showed many reasons and examples demonstrating that when such cases arose in Castile and León the king always decided them with the agreement of his prelates and noblemen, and hence the case was not theirs to decide'.[61] The fact that Fernando IV, attempting to balance

[60] González, *Fernando IV,* 233; Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 46.
[61] 'si don Diego tuerto le ficiera, que esto que lo mostrase al Rey su señor e a la Reina su madre e al infante don Enrique... e mostraron muchas razones e muchos ejemplos, porque cuando tales pleitos acaescieron en los reinos de Castilla e de León, que el Rey con acuerdo de los sus prelados e de los sus ricos omes lo libraban siempre'. *CFIV*, 99.

conflicting interests emerging from a minority, could not altogether make his judgements stick until 1307 does not mean that the nobility did not want effective kingship.

As an illustration of how the *pleito* sat naturally within the demanded pattern of royal oversight, it is worth noting that, at Medina del Campo in 1305, when the proceedings over Vizcaya saw their most lengthy turn, Fernando IV gave other land dispute judgements with the full participation of former opponents. For example, he settled a dispute over properties near Plasencia between a royal vassal, Pedro González de Córdoba, and the relative of a royal scribe of Sancho IV. The claim had first been made before *infante* Juan, who had set out a measure of compensation to be paid to Gonzalo Fernández. Then, 'at the request of the *infante* Juan', the judgement passed to the court of Fernando IV, who in the presence of his counsellors and Juan himself, confirmed the justice of the decision and issued the royal privilege.[62] In much the same way, Fernando gave another judgement later that year at Burgos between the order of Calatrava and Ruy Díaz de Rojas.[63] These kinds of judgement demonstrate the flow of uncertain cases upwards to the royal court in exactly the way that Alfonso X imagined. They also show how sorely decision-making had been missed during the minority, and indicate that ultimate arbitration could be provided, especially if weighty figures like *infante* Juan aided, rather than obstructed, the process.

It would be misleading, however, to imply that arbitration was satisfactory to local society by default. To appreciate the urgency of decisive resolution to conflicts, it is helpful to follow the twists and turns of one example from our case studies. A protracted dispute between the monastery of Las Huelgas, located just outside Burgos, and the council of

[62] 'por ruego del ynfante don Juan'. *Salazar*, I-41 f51-4.
[63] *Salazar*, I-41 f49v-51.

Segovia, fought over the lordships of Manzanares and Santa María de Prados, sheds light on the characteristics that royal arbitration needed to display. Beginning in 1302, the dispute saw several iterations, with Segovia first being awarded the rights by Fernando IV once its former tenant, the *infante* Enrique, had died.[64] The *concejo* set about asserting its rights, but the monastery complained in 1304 that it had done so with excessive violence against the inhabitants of Santa María de Prados. Both parties were called to Ávila, where the *concejo* was found guilty by the king's *alcalde*, in the absence of the representatives of Segovia. As a result, the lordship of the village was transferred back to the monastery. This judgement was upheld by the king in February 1305, when he ordered his officials to assist his *portero* in its execution. He declared the council rebellious for its actions and failure to come to justice, and ordered it to pay the huge sum of 1.3 million *maravedís* for the damage it had caused, though he did reserve its right to set out petitions before a royal tribunal at a later date.[65] However, in the following month Fernando carried out a spectacular *volte face*. He voided his previous letter, on the grounds that the representatives had been summoned but he himself had not been present, having gone instead to Zamora.[66] Two years later the dispute seemed to end in Segovia's favour, freeing it of any competing claims to the lordship of Santa María de Prados. The *concejo* complained that the lawsuit had been carried out unfairly, and Fernando agreed to quash it and destroy the contradictory letters.[67] This destruction clearly did not take place, since in 1311 the monastery once again attempted to secure the lordship and the reparations that it had been granted in 1305. Bizarrely, the king obliged, ordering the *alguacil* of Segovia to pay the 1.3 million *maravedís* and return the lordship to Las Huelgas.[68]

[64] *Las Huelgas* 1284-1306 doc. 109.
[65] ibid., doc. 175.
[66] ibid., doc. 176.
[67] *Las Huelgas*, 1307-1321, doc. 202.
[68] ibid., doc. 232

This example demonstrates the possibilities for the manipulation of a malfunctioning, distracted and contradictory centre. Indeed, it is possible that the royal letters were written by whichever party had the upper hand and were simply endorsed by the king or his chancery. The case reveals that, at the local level, there was a clear desire for arbitration and dispute resolution through the due process that the king was supposed to provide, alongside more informal means of pursuing one's interests. At the same time, this was clearly complicated by strategies stemming from the king's mobility, where parties could frustrate their opponents by moving the king away from places where he was formally due to give judgement. It also highlights the emerging possibilities for tension between the assertion of the kings' officials to the right to provide judgement on his behalf, and the continued importance of the king's presence and will. For local society, the defining issues at the court, such as the disputes over Vizcaya, were less significant than the capacity to defend local rights or secure legitimation for recent acquisitions.

The early years of Fernando IV's reign thus show the beginnings of a return to normal rule, and support from multiple sections of political society for that. But various parties did not yet believe in Fernando's independence or constancy, and hence he was only able to make decisive interventions in certain situations. The evident vacillation of royal decision-making, whether in the case of Vizcaya or in smaller-scale disputes like that between Segovia and Las Huelgas, explains the repeated motifs of Fernando IV's greater interest in hunting than governance and susceptibility to flattery in the chronicles.[69] It also explains the attempts by the Cortes, for example in 1305 and 1307, to secure assurances that the king would be

[69] See e.g. *CFIV*, 120; Loaysa, *Crónica*, 206.

available to hear their cases on a regular and predictable basis.[70] Moreover, we should remember the very high rate of taxation in these years, which increased the urgency of demand for effective central government. Fernando's ineffectual style of personal arbitration was perhaps the product of his personality, but it also owed something to the sheer number of competing interests he had to resolve in the aftermath of a protracted minority. Noblemen were therefore just as ready to resist him and his judgements or to plot against him as they were to support him.

Fernando IV's Later Years (1307-1312)

The later years of Fernando IV were full of contradiction, conflict and uncertainty. On the one hand, they demonstrate the king's expectation that he could act in the full capacity of an adult king and the hope on all sides for an effective centre; on the other, various failures and disputes continued to disrupt efforts to establish consensus. Two main themes are visible throughout: an atmosphere of fear, distance and mistrust prevailed; and yet leading subjects needed the centre and were willing to push for its reform.

Evidence for mounting fear and distance between the king and those who would normally have considered themselves his natural counsellors accumulates through the later years of Fernando IV's reign.[71] The protracted conflict with Juan Núñez II de Lara and *infante* Juan is a meaningful example. Its roots lay in 1306, when the king's efforts to integrate Diego López de Haro following the Vizcaya case left Juan Núñez strangled for influence.

[70] *Cortes*, 176, 185.
[71] For a discussion of the increasing importance of 'fear' as a legitimising discourse for the Castilian aristocracy in the fourteenth century, see F. Foronda, *El espanto y el miedo: golpismo, emociones políticas y constitucionalismo en la edad media* (Madrid, 2013), 77-141.

Apparently, an outburst to this effect was overheard in 1306 by a Portuguese knight and reported to Fernando, beginning a period of frosty relations.[72] Juan Núñez was forced to come to the king's court at Valladolid and deny the allegations, making a speech emphasising his loyal service. Later, however, Juan Núñez renounced his vassalage because he felt the king had not heard him 'according to law and justice' (*por fuero e por derecho*). This renunciation drove Fernando to attack, and Juan Núñez narrowly escaped. Fernando IV was therefore driven to request assistance in the west from Jaime II, directly and through Juan Manuel, who wrote to him from Cuenca.[73] The Aragonese king did not commit troops, but he forbade anyone of his kingdom to sell or give livestock, arms or any other supplies to any of the towns or possessions of Juan Núñez 'or anyone else in the disservice of the king of Castile'. In his declaration that 'we are most pleased that the king of Castile is avenging himself well in punishing those who do not serve him and that he gives them to understand that he is king and lord of his land', we find clear expression of a coming of age narrative, in which the king regulated his own service.[74] According to the chronicler, this was echoed by María de Molina and *infante* Juan in a later iteration of the conflict: they told Juan Núñez that 'no matter how honoured they were', everyone in Castile knew that those exiled would not dare to stay in the kingdom for the period of the king's anger.[75] One side of the picture, then, is of a king stepping up his coercive response to perceived slights, and indeed being encouraged to do so by interested parties.

However, as we have seen, noblemen had entrenched lordships and networks through which they could resist royal displays of force. Juan Núñez's decision to join up with Diego López

[72] *CFIV*, 142.
[73] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 145.
[74] 'auemos grant placer quel Rey de Castella auenga bien en castigar aquellos qui lo desieruen e que les de a entender que es rey e sennor de su tierra'. Archivo de la corona de Aragón, CANCILLERÍA, Registros, NÚM. 236, f. 166r.
[75] 'por honrados que fuesen'. *CFIV*, 153; see also Grassotti, 'La ira regia', 32.

de Haro and his son, for example, shows the potential geopolitical power that could be gained from strategic bases. The chronicler depicts the three noblemen conspiring in 1307 to fight the king from the combined weight of their lordships.[76] Though again clearly critical of the magnates, the chronicler's geopolitical intuition was sound: the combined lordships of the Lara and Haro would create a substantial block stretching from Moya and Cañete up to the Navarrese border that would be extremely difficult for Fernando IV to handle. This was exacerbated when he found that Juana Núñez, sister of the rebel, was building an unlicensed castle at Villafranca Montes de Oca, within striking distance of Burgos.[77] Similarly, when a brief reconciliation with Juan Núñez, which saw him integrated as *mayordomo mayor*, broke down in August 1307, Fernando IV demanded the return of Moya and Cañete and for the Lara lord to leave the kingdom within 30 days. Juan Núñez, however, replied that he was disinclined to relinquish his lordships or leave Castile, because he felt he had served the king well and because 'he was as much a natural inhabitant of this land as any of its other denizens'.[78] We can therefore see how the more settled, territorial kind of lordship we saw emerging in Chapter 1 gave potential avenues to resist the king's anger and refuse exile. A similar sense of security in lordship is evident around the same time in Fernando IV's brief dispute with Pedro Ponce de León, a former *mayordomo mayor.* We do not know the cause of the king's anger, but it led Fernando IV to desire to strike from León into Asturias, Pedro's major power base where he had been given earlier royal grants. María de Molina discouraged him, however, warning that Asturias was a difficult place to mount a winter campaign.[79] Therefore, geopolitical considerations were once again at the forefront of Castilian political strategy. They, in addition to Fernando's own shortcomings, explain why noblemen could, or had to, take risks in the face of royal anger. They had an enormous

[76] *CFIV*, 144.
[77] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 147.
[78] 'tan natural era de esta tierra commo cualquier de los que más naturales eran della'. *CFIV*, 152.
[79] ibid., 149.

amount to lose from the prospect of confiscation, and their embedded networks of supporters and military infrastructure gave them confidence in their ability to ride out the challenge domestically. The forces of integration had thus changed the stakes for everyone.

Fernando's desire to establish himself as a mature adult ruler, the distrust that desire could produce and geopolitical considerations also help explain the military campaigns of 1309. Fernando IV's ambition to attack the Muslim *taifas* was highly significant. Though the modern term *reconquista* (reconquest) is too clumsy to be particularly useful, it is undeniable that victories against Muslim enemies on the peninsula conveyed a special prestige for Castilian monarchs. Alfonso X and his son put their own involvement in Christian victories to political use, repeatedly memorialising events at Seville and Tarifa in privileges.[80] Fernando IV was desperate to add his own triumphs the list. At the same time, our understanding of the pull to the centre sheds light on a more basic reality: Fernando needed to establish himself as a leader.[81] A competent leader would have control over a functioning court; would establish trusting relationships; and would resolve disputes in a just and timely manner. In short, he would manage a structure built and explained in terms of the royal *servicio.* More than anything else, campaigns against the Nasrids were a chance to fulfil Fernando IV's service. This makes sense of the way in which the king set up his campaign. He had already fought through the opposition of *infante* Juan and Juan Manuel to get an agreement with Aragón, and now when Juan Manuel desired to go to Murcia to command the campaign from there in his capacity as *adelantado mayor*, the king refused to let him leave his side.[82] Fernando's decision is understandable, since his aim was to show

[80] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 21.
[81] For a discussion of the role of gendered expectations in these aspects of kingship, see P. Martínez, 'Failure as Man, Failure as King: Fernando IV the Unmanly King in the Chronicle of Fernando IV', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 94 (2017), 575-89.
[82] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 192.

control of a collaborative and harmonious centre, but it was a mistake: geopolitical considerations were still important and it was reasonable that Juan Manuel would wish to exercise a closer degree of control over Murcia following the Aragonese rapprochement. It also ignored the fact that the *adelantados* were fully expected to serve at distance in their territory as well as with the king. Juan Manuel's grievance thus added to the overall atmosphere of unease and distrust rather than dispelling it. The picture at the beginning of the campaign, then, is of over-extended responsibilities frustrating a king who was trying but unable to act as a strong centre.

Fernando IV's last years were dominated by bitterness following the desertion of *infante* Juan, Juan Manuel and Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña and the consequent failure of the siege of Algeciras in 1309. Fernando tried to show gratitude to his supporters and displeasure to those who had let him down: he promoted the archbishop of Santiago to chancellor for León and provided him with 10,000 *maravedís* a year from the tithes of his benefice, and gave Marchena to Fernán Pérez Ponce and his goods in Plasencia to the master of Calatrava for their services at Algeciras.[83] He gave the *concejo* of Seville a privilege protecting them from Portuguese wine imports in 1310 for their service at Gibraltar and Algeciras.[84] 1310 saw new officers in many of the major posts: *infante* Pedro was *mayordomo mayor*; Lope Díaz de Haro was made *alférez*; Sancho Sánchez de Velasco was brought back in as *adelantado mayor* of Castile to discard Fernan Ruiz de Saldaña; Rodrigo Álvarez de Asturias was replaced as *adelantado mayor* of Galicia by Alfonso Suárez de Deza and then Pedro Ponce de León; and a Sevillian *procurador*, Martín Fernández Portocarrero, was elevated to *adelantado mayor* of León and Asturias.[85] Such dizzying rotation of officers is a show of

[83] González, *Itinerario y regesta*, 475, 483; *Salazar*, B-3 f356v; Benavides, doc. 467.
[84] González, *Itinerario y regesta*, 485.
[85] Jular, *Adelantados y merinos mayores*, 225.

desperation, and not many of the new appointees lasted long, but they demonstrate the centrality of office-holding to the kingdom's political dynamics. Fernando's effort to remain visibly in control was also evident in 1310 when there was a revolt of the urban knighthood of Córdoba, with which Fernando dealt personally through the brutal brand of justice that had become the norm in recent decades.[86]

His major problem, however, was the damage done to relations with Juan Manuel and *infante* Juan. In the former's case, overlapping networks with the Aragonese court meant that Jaime II could act as a mediator. Juan Manuel justified himself by stating that he had not received the post of *mayordomo* as the king had promised.[87] He requested the office once again as a condition for their reconciliation, and was given it in May 1310, with *infante* Pedro compensated with Almazán and Berlanga.[88] Reconciliation with *infante* Juan was more fraught. Despite Fernando's invitation to him and Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña to attend the wedding of his daughter, Isabel, in Burgos in 1310, it was now notorious that the king wanted violent revenge. In the abbreviated chronicle written in the household of Juan Manuel in the mid-fourteenth century, the entry for 1311 simply reads: 'King Fernando [IV] wanted to kill the *infante* don Juan'.[89] The themes of fear and distance abound in these passages of the vernacular chronicle, with multiple instances of the king or his mother encouraging Juan to approach the court, and the *infante* opting for the safer (but less politically fruitful) path of staying a short distance away. Others acted out of anxiety or opportunism in the context of the king's displeasure: when it was found that he had fled and was gathering his forces in his vassal's lordship of Saldaña (near Palencia), the *concejo* of

[86] *CFIV*, 165.
[87] *Juan Manuel*, docs. 209, 213.
[88] *CFIV*, 165.
[89] 'uoluit rex dominus Fernandus interficere dominum Iohannem infantem'. J. C. Martín Iglesias, 'El denominado *Cronicón* latino de don Juan Manuel. Nueva edición y estudio', *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales*, 38 (2015), 146.

Ávila attacked and captured Juan's lordship of Oropesa.[90] Knowing the strategic importance of the area around Palencia in previous conflicts, Juan Manuel went to his nearest lordship, Peñafiel, while Juan Alfonso de Haro also went to secure his lordships in Los Cameros.[91] In all this the importance of saving face and managing proximity to the Castilian king is unmistakeable. From the perspective of the nobility, the core problem was that the king, though he was using the expected mechanisms to manage his relationships at the centre, appeared hostile and unpredictable, and hence reliance on local power bases seemed a safer option.

Critically, though, whereas flight from the centre was a perennial part of the dynamics of royal-noble relations, the Castilian political structure was integrated to the point that there was no alternative to the structures of royal service. An example from 1308 demonstrates what this means. In the aftermath of the failed attempt to punish Juan Núñez, rumours circulated that Fernando IV desired revenge against both Juan Núñez and the nobles who had failed to dislodge the Lara lord from Tordehumos (that is, *infante* Juan, Pedro Ponce de León and Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña).[92] The words placed in *infante* Juan's mouth by the chronicler are most revealing: with the nobles having heard about the king's violent intent towards them, he said, 'we tell you that we will not stay with you in any place, and if you wish to direct our service, we will serve you in one location, and we will do this to protect you from error and ourselves from danger'.[93] The assumptions at play here repay close attention. As we have so often noted, the key ideology for the proper functioning of the royal

[90] *CFIV*, 167. There is corroborating evidence that Oropesa had been under the *infante*'s control since 1302. See Sobrino, *Catedral de Ávila*, doc. 38.
[91] *CFIV*, 167.
[92] ibid., 156.
[93] 'vos decimos que non entrarémos convusco en una villa, é si nuestro servicio oviéredes menester, servir vos emos todos en uno en una comarca, é esto farémos nos por guardar á vos de yerro é á nos de peligro'. ibid., 157.

centre was service, and any attempt to repair the government would be built on it. However, the rupture at the heart of the court and the atmosphere of mistrust made the proximity that service was built on problematic, and hence the proposal was for a kind of distant service. The essential tension of Fernando IV's kingship is laid bare by this episode: the king's personal authority in the aftermath of a fractious minority was weak and vulnerable to personal slights, but the power of the integrated royal centre to attract service meant that it could never be ignored.

The weight of the centre explains a second defining feature of Fernando IV's late reign. Our structural analysis shows that, albeit in different ways and according to different priorities, all sides responded to Fernando IV's kingship with strategies pitched at reform of the centre. Take, for example, the famous confrontation at Grijota in 1308, which came shortly after *infante* Juan's declaration of service at distance. The group of disaffected nobles said that, since they were all assembled, they wanted to say things 'which are greatly your service and the benefit of the land'.[94] Their demands, expressed first to María, were typical of tropes found everywhere in medieval Europe: the king managed his affairs poorly 'especially because he keeps bad men in his counsel and his estate'.[95] They insisted that they wanted 'to reform the offices of the royal household and all the kingdom, and for the king to give them to whom they desired'.[96] The king thundered that such things had never been said by vassals to a lord (though they assuredly had); and Diego López de Haro, the *mayordomo mayor*, said that he should not throw out the smallest man of his household at their bidding because 'it seemed that they did so out of their own ill will rather than for his service'.[97] In

[94] 'que son muy grand vuestro servicio é pro de la tierra'. ibid., 158.
[95] 'señaladamente por que trae malos omes en su consejo é en la su facienda'. ibid.
[96] 'los oficios de casa del Rey é de toda la tierra que los querian ordenar, é que los diese el Rey á quien ellos quisiese'. ibid., 159.
[97] 'ca más parescia que lo facian por mal querencia, que non por su servicio dél'. ibid.

the end, though, the king feared the reaction if he refused to reorganise his officialdom on their terms. As a result, a significant number of the major posts changed hands: Fernán Remón, *canciller* to *infante* Juan, became the royal chancellor; Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña and Rodrigo Álvarez de Asturias became *adelantado mayor* of Castile and Galicia respectively; and Ruy Pérez de Sasamón would become *notario mayor*.[98] Though the chronicler wrote that they went on to redistribute every other royal office, he certainly exaggerated; for one thing, a certain level of balance remained in the fact that Diego López de Haro continued holding both posts of *mayordomo mayor* and *alférez real*.[99] Nevertheless, this did not prevent Fernando from feeling personally aggrieved, as he confided to Jaime II in a letter of March 1308: 'God knows we did it against our will' because his dismissed servants 'have served us very well and truly'.[100]

This episode, and the anguish it caused the king, has been seen as a characteristic moment of royal weakness at the hands of an over-reaching aristocracy.[101] González Mínguez even sub-titled his discussion of this moment as 'the triumph of the nobility'.[102] There can be no doubt that it was a humiliation that undermined the king's personal authority; indeed, the fact that the king's mother still spoke for him itself raises questions about his kingship.[103] However, viewing the dispute as a class-based struggle, or even just a bid for power, ignores the terms in which the dispute was conceived and carried out by all sides, and therefore cannot accurately appraise what it tells us about politics. Though Fernando was being forced to do something against his will, he also acknowledged to Jaime II the strength of feeling on

[98] ibid.
[99] *Benavides*, doc. 410.
[100] 'sabe Dios que lo fisiemos contra noestra uoluntad'; 'nos han seruido muy bien e derechamente'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 179.
[101] Jular, *Adelantados y merinos mayores*, 238-42; Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage,* 133.
[102] González, *Fernando IV*, 254.
[103] Martínez points out that this fits within the chronicler's overall narrative strategy of presenting all kings apart from Alfonso XI as failed men. See Martínez, 'Failure as Man', 585.

the other side: he acted 'seeing how much they have this matter in their heart, and that it falls to us to make them understand that we desire to show favour to them'.[104] Fernando understood his part in restoring consensus. Indeed, throughout the letter he shows that he did not primarily understand their challenge to be seizing control of the government, but rather removing particular named officers whom they resented. Although Fernando would have been keen to represent the situation as under control to the foreign king, it remains the case that the rebels fought for a working centre that would include them and which they could trust, by removing opponents who counselled against them.

Indeed, viewing this as a systemic crisis aimed at reforming the centre makes sense of the broad appeal of the noblemen's message. A functioning centre was so important to the Castilian polity that clamours for it had the potential to upset the control over his 'service' that the king usually enjoyed. As the chronicler put it, Fernando feared 'a great scandal throughout the whole land with the cry they [the nobles] had taken up, in which they said that they did what they did for his service and for the good of the land'.[105] The fascinating references to the potentially broad appeal of the rebels' message in the sources must be taken seriously, especially since they accord with the observed dynamics around Lope Díaz de Haro in the previous chapter. In an extreme way, the noblemen were carrying out a similar purpose to opponents of Sancho's favourite, not to mention multiple Cortes agendas (as recently as 1307, the *procuradores* had petitioned the king for his counsellors not to be foreigners and for their salaries to be well ordered).[106]

[104] 'nos veyendo en como este fecho auian mucho a coraçon e que nos caye de lo faser por les dar a entender que auiemos sabor de les facer mercet'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 179.
[105] 'grand escándolo en toda la tierra con la voz que avian tomado, en que decian que lo facian por su servicio e por pro de la tierra'. *CFIV*, 159.
[106] *Cortes*, 185-7.

Moreover, the final Cortes meeting of the reign reinforces this view. As a fund-raising mission for a putative revival of the king's campaigns, the gathering at Valladolid in 1312 was a success: five *servicios* and a grant of *moneda forera* were approved.[107] However, it also saw attempts by various parties to restore justice to the government in ways that suited them. First, the meeting ratified the agreement made at Palencia in the previous year, which established an accord in which the king would not abuse his taxes or allow abuses by his officers, and hence 'I [Fernando] can be served; and you can live as you should'.[108] Now that the clerics and representatives of the *concejos* were able to make their priorities felt, other aspects of the king's justice were also considered. The sense of grievance caused by a burgeoning network of royal officials, emboldened by their conception of royal authority but insufficiently supervised by a distracted monarch, was felt widely, and Fernando addressed it by restating the duties of his officers, promising to know his officials personally and guaranteeing that local justices would be local men.[109] As we have seen on so many occasions, however, Castilians wanted to restrain royal justice in some quarters while encouraging it in others. The ordinance of the Cortes of Valladolid carried out an extensive reform of the royal justice, with the king at its heart. Fernando once again promised to sit weekly to hear pleas in public, and he also appointed a tribunal of 12 'good men', composed of four *alcaldes* each from León, Castile and Extremadura. The arrangements were thought out in detail, with a timetable for rotation, their salaries and the scribes who would accompany them all described.[110] Finally, the ordinance established a *procurador* who would defend the pleas of poor widows and orphans in the king's court. This might appear insignificant, but it was in fact a key point of principle. Orphans and widows were part of

[107] *CFIV*, 169.
[108] 'yo ssea sseruido, e uos biuades commo deuedes'. *Cortes*, 207.
[109] ibid., 209.
[110] ibid., 198-200.

the king's cases as described in the *Partidas* but had been omitted in the later regulation of royal justice at Zamora in 1274.[111]

In the Cortes of Valladolid, therefore, there were paradoxes that point to a revised understanding of Fernando IV's reign and its part in Castile's history. The kingdom's representatives wanted to defend local custom and restrain a growing structure of royal jurisdiction in some spheres, especially when it reached down into their communities, but they also wanted expansion, regularity and predictability in other aspects. The system had been defined for decades by powerful forces of integration, but those very forces had been tested to the limit by the vacuum at its core; the Cortes of Valladolid was another in a long series of efforts to make that system work. Certainly, there were differences in emphasis between noble rebels and Cortes petitions, and the nobility's evident difficulties in trusting the king and each other underpins their wilder behaviour. Moreover, the complaints of the Cortes were often easier for the king to answer with legislation and assurances, whereas keeping noblemen satisfied in his service after a minority riven by civil war was a tall order. In the end, however, despite the ease with which one might point to Fernando IV's personal weakness to explain what happened, we see how one of his last major acts of government ratified a major reconciliation with former rebels, and found terms on which competing elements of society could once again gather behind a set of principles, allowing for a re-launch of his campaigns with a sound financial backing. In the process of plans being drawn up to attack Málaga, however, Fernando IV died aged only 27.[112]

[111] ibid., 94.
[112] *CFIV*, 169.

Surveying Fernando IV's reign thus requires a revision of some long-standing premises about the operation of the Castilian polity. The failures at the heart of Castilian politics in the early fourteenth century owed less to misallocation of resources or offices or the inherent factionalism of the nobility than to a different kind of vacuum in the centre. The king's default of leadership created opportunities and fuelled conflicts, even if it is sometimes obscure in the sources why exactly Fernando was so difficult for some to trust. This was not only a court phenomenon: the frustrations of obtaining lasting decisions from Fernando IV were felt at every level of the hierarchy, an inevitable result of the Castilian polity's addiction to confirmation and arbitration from the monarch over the last half century. Alfonso X and Sancho IV had created a monarchy highly dependent on personal control, with a more territorial nobility and emboldened *concejos* thoroughly integrated into structures of royal justice, grace, office and service. That Fernando IV was not up to the task has been lamented since he was born, and indeed his failure to convince, for whatever reason, is evident in the sheer amount of mistrust and disobedience. At the same time, we have also to note that the minority bequeathed a set of highly incompatible interests. The king's efforts to step into the role of an adult king produced some lasting judgements, but more often provoked fear and drove potential collaborators away from him. However, the centripetal forces of the polity always drew them back in with agendas fixated on reforming the centre, which remained strong even when its figurehead was weak. Revealingly, the only moment when a project to divide the kingdom between the *infantes* might have been contemplated came in 1311, when Fernando IV fell gravely ill, causing panicked manoeuvres to prepare in case of a new minority.[113] The spectre of a collapsed royal centre

[113] *Juan Manuel*, doc. 224; The chronicle suggests that there was a plot to set infante Pedro against his brother. See CFIV, 168. A small number of manuscripts insert the word 'rey', in such a way as to make it explicit that this was a plot to replace the king. See Benítez, *Crónica de Fernando IV,* 165, n. 240.

haunted Fernando's reign. It was, moreover, to overshadow the remainder of the period to 1325.

Alfonso XI's Minority

The strategies employed to deal with Alfonso XI's minority were both similar to and different from those employed under Fernando IV, though the regency was bound to be on a more unsteady footing given that Fernando had not given instructions before his sudden death. By now, it will be no surprise that the *hermandades* reformed in response to the new vacuum at court. On this occasion, Leonese councils took the lead: the *concejos* of León, Zamora, Salamanca, Benavente, Alba de Tormes, Ledesma, Villalpando, Mansilla, Olmedo, Granadilla, Sayago, Mayorga and Astorga agreed a brotherhood at the end of 1312.[114] However, there were some key differences in the organisation of the *hermandades*. In Andalucía, for example, the councils of the entire region joined into a single entity, the *Hermandad General*.[115] This took some striking actions, as the lack of decisive leadership was felt acutely there owing to the threat from the emir of Granada, who refused in 1312 to renew his peace treaty with Castile. The *Hermandad General* therefore responded by agreeing special contributions for to assist the admiral, to be collected by new officials in Seville, Jaén and Córdoba. It also agreed that royal rents would not be permitted to go to Castile, but instead would be used strictly for their defence. It is significant that the tax was applicable to groups not explicitly part of the *hermandad*, such as private lordships and even Moors and Jews, which underlines the point that the *hermandades* were capable of

[114] Álvarez, *Las Hermandades*, 49-50.
[115] M. García Fernández, 'Algunas consideraciones sobre los objetivos políticos de la Hermandad General de Andalucía', *Medievalismo,* 2 (1992), 62.

ascending to a position of serious power and authority under the right circumstances. By 1314, the power of the *hermandades* was sufficient for the kingdom's clergy to worry that their officials would target church properties and rights.[116]

At the same time, Castilian political structures reached insistently towards the centre for wider approval and guarantee. Not only did the discourse of the royal service demand a degree of reference to the king's interests, but the *hermandades* sought (and indeed expected) support from the Cortes. The acknowledgement that theirs was a local and temporary solution was underlined by their agreement that they would seek central approval: 'and this we will send to ask from the Cortes'.[117] This was not entirely forthcoming for the southern *concejos*. The Cortes of Palencia in 1313 confirmed the *hermandades* of León, Castile and Galicia, though it excluded that of Andalucía. Regardless, the Andalucían *hermandad* held a meeting on 8 May 1313.[118] At the Cortes of Burgos in 1315, the large *hermandades* (excluding Andalucía) were rolled into one, signing up 103 knights and 100 towns of Castile, León, Toledo, Galicia, Asturias and the Extremaduras.[119] The Cortes of Carrión in 1317 even went as far as confirming the agreements made in the *cuadernos* of the *hermandades*.[120] The rights of the *Hermandad General* were confirmed for the final time by the Cortes of Medina del Campo of 1318.[121] It is therefore evident that there was a strong affinity between the structures for local defence of privilege and the central forum which provided the *hermandades* with their legitimacy.

[116] *Pereda*, doc. 475.
[117] 'e esto que lo embiemos asi pedir a las cortes'. M. García Fernández, 'La Hermandad General de Andalucía durante la minoría de Alfonso XI de Castilla: 1312-1325', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 12 (1985), 359.
[118] González, 'Movimiento hermandino', 43-4.
[119] *Cortes*, 247-72.
[120] ibid., 300.
[121] ibid., 332.

However, the security demanded by local society could not be provided until the centre could unify around a clear focal point. The establishment of a regency was the priority in central strategies for coping with the long minority. With the king in Ávila in the custody of the bishop and *concejo* in late 1312, the rival candidates for the regency agreed to María de Molina's request not to jump to conclusions until the Cortes had gathered.[122] This was not only a delaying tactic. The lesson of the previous minority was that any extra uncertainty over the legitimacy of a *tutor* would add to the crippling lack of stability, and this was likely to be even worse when the former king's wishes were not set down. Producing a consensus of this kind was supposed to be the task of the Cortes of Palencia of 1313; however, the events in that city instead revealed the division at the heart of the centre. In a graphic display of this rupture, the assembly at Palencia split into two: the representatives of Castile, León, Galicia and Asturias, who supported the *infante* Juan as regent, gathered with him in the church of San Pablo, while the townsmen and prelates of Toledo and Andalucía convened with *infante* Pedro and María de Molina about 650 yards away in the church of San Francisco.[123] The two groups issued separate ordinances in their own names in a notable departure from the previous minority, where Fernando IV's *voluntad* in the Cortes could at least be simulated by issuing ordinances in his name. Instead, both ordinances tried to represent consensus over the king's guardianship. *Infante* Juan's ordinance described how he had been asked to come to Palencia to be elected *tutor* by the nobility and the *hermandades* of Castile and León. He was petitioned not to share the responsibility with the queen or anyone else, and he graciously agreed.[124] In addition, there would be a permanent council of four knights and 16 'good men' of the towns, who would advise the *tutor* and the king, who would be brought up by his mother, Constanza.[125] Meanwhile, a few streets away,

[122] *GCAXI*, 282.
[123] ibid., 284; Sánchez-Arcilla, *Alfonso XI*, 48.
[124] *Cortes*, 222.
[125] ibid., 222-3.

María de Molina and *infante* Pedro were elected as joint guardians, also to be assisted by a council of four bishops and 16 knights.[126]

Both sides thus hoped to replicate royal government through guardianship, counsel and a shared responsibility to the service of an infant. Their ordinances are entirely laden with references to the king's service, God's service and the 'good and safeguard of the land'. In this respect the language echoed that of Fernando IV's minority. Whereas, in the chronicle, María de Molina is frequently described using language emphasising the common good ('*el pro de la tierra*'), reflecting its mid-fourteenth-century composition, documents issued in 1295-1301 show that it was the language of service and disservice that predominated. Service was also to the fore at the Cortes of Cuéllar in 1297: the declaration of a council of 12 'good men' commanded them 'to counsel and serve me and the queen my mother and the *infante* don Enrique my uncle'.[127] Meanwhile, service was deployed by rivals to justify shifting alliances. For example, in 1298, Fernan Ruiz de Saldaña, a former supporter of *infante* Juan, demanded the grant of Saldaña in return for joining María, though, revealingly, his argument was that he could not adequately serve the king without it.[128]

Knowing how desperately insufficient these rhetorical assertions and institutional mechanisms had been in 1295-7, the rival regencies of 1313 also added other formulations. Knowing that grant-making by a regent would be the surest path to accusations of cronyism, Pedro and María decreed that 'neither we nor the council can give a town, castle or village, or boundaries, tax incomes or rights in the king's name or our name', and nor could they

[126] ibid., 234.
[127] ibid., 137.
[128] *CFIV*, 113.

keep them for themselves.[129] Juan made similar promises.[130] In other aspects, however, the two parties differed in their emphases. Echoing his attitude for much of the last decade, *infante* Juan blamed political problems on Fernando IV's servants and vowed to cast them out. At the same time, he promised not to delegate royal jurisdiction to any nobleman except for the *merinos* and *adelantados mayores* that the regions had been used to.[131] He also addressed the technical mechanisms for representing the royal will: the king's seals would be kept by two 'good men' from the towns (who had not held office before). *Infante* Pedro and María de Molina, meanwhile, decreed that they and the permanent council would swear on the holy cross to protect 'the service of the king, and to maintain the people in right and justice'.[132] More tangibly, they promised not to write their own documents, but to put trustworthy characters in the chancery who would prevent any illegal letters, and to exclude Jews from all household posts.[133] Finally, they went even further in submitting to scrutiny, promising to hold a plenary Cortes every two years, hoping that the transparency of their decisions would lend them force.[134] The minority of Alfonso XI thus saw increasingly desperate searches for formal mechanisms to handle the vacuum at the centre.

These parallel attempts at regency were inevitably unsuccessful, but after Queen Constanza died the two parties reached an agreement at Palazuelos in 1314. Acknowledging the hopelessness of the separate chanceries, they decided to destroy their seals and establish a single chancery that would stay with the king. Instead, they would share the regency between them and would carry blank letters so that they could hear pleas in different *villas*.[135] The

[129] 'nos nin los dichos consseieros en el nonbre del Rey nin por nos non podamos dar villa nin castiello nin aldea nin terminos de ninguna villa nin los pechos nin los derechos'. *Cortes*, 236.
[130] ibid., 223.
[131] ibid., 224.
[132] *Cortes*, 235.
[133] ibid., 239, 241.
[134] ibid., 236.
[135] *GCAXI*, 291.

agreement of Palazuelos therefore made some improvements towards representing a royal will. However, the fragility of the accord was exposed by a challenge against María de Molina by her nephew, Tello, and against *infante* Pedro by Juan Manuel in Huete. The cause of this upset is, unusually, recorded by the chronicler: the *infante* Pedro had purchased properties in Guadalajara from Blanca, daughter of Dionís of Portugal, including Alcocer, Cifuentes and Palazuelos. The problem was that Blanca had made an agreement with Juan Manuel to sell the same properties to him (he was always keen to strengthen his properties in Guadalajara), but she included a clause that if he did not pay in time she could find another buyer. Incensed, Juan Manuel led a rebellion in his lands around Huete and Guadalajara.[136] This was precisely the kind of dispute that a clear decision from an assertive monarch could have averted; but between two simultaneous regents it could not be resolved peaceably. As a result, there was a new attempt at the Cortes of Burgos in 1315 to create a stable centre for the minority. First, all the regents decreed that appeals (*alzadas*) would always come before the court of the king, putting an end to the separation of justice that had caused such destruction in the previous year.[137] Then, they established a new framework for oversight, with a council of 12 knights and good men drawn from the *hermandades*, split into groups of 6 that would alternate every six months. Two of these councillors would accompany each of María de Molina, *infante* Juan and *infante* Pedro, in the hope that this would prevent any breaches of their privileges.[138]

The fractious effects of the divided centre are further illuminated by a scandal that occurred between Juan Manuel and a Murcian lord called Guillén de Rocafull. Guillén was the son of Ramón de Rocafull, a vital ally for Alfonso X during *infante* Sancho's rebellion who

[136] ibid., 293.
[137] ibid., 294.
[138] *Cortes*, 257-8.

acted as *adelantado mayor* of Murcia in 1284.[139] Alfonso rewarded him in Murcia, taking away the Order of Santiago's lordship of Abanilla to endow Ramón, and compensating the friars with Cieza.[140] This, in addition to the family's lordship of Alpera further north, established the Rocafull as a buffer sitting under 20 miles from Juan Manuel's lordship of Elche, sheltering the conciliar territory of Murcia.[141] His role as a substantial lord in the region is demonstrated by his witnessing the oath taken by the council of Cuenca upon Alfonso XI's accession.[142] It was therefore dangerous for Juan Manuel to find himself in a serious conflict with Ramón's son in 1315. The beginnings of the dispute, as so often, are obscure, but the quarrel bursts into the sources with the chronicle's statement that Guillén 'went around reviling and denouncing don Juan, son of the *infante* don Manuel, in front of the king, because he said he had imprisoned him'.[143] By October 1315, Juan Manuel had spoken to Jaime II, who dispatched the Aragonese nobleman Miguel Pérez de Arbe to the Castilian court. Miguel told them: 'the king marvels that they [the tutors] were prepared to hear these things'.[144] The situation escalated dramatically when *infante* Pedro arrested Guillén for his repeated denunciation of the lord of Villena. This caused outrage, with a group that Miguel Pérez calls 'all the *hermandad* of the knighthood of Castile' demanding his release.[145] Subsequently, there were last-ditch efforts to settle the dispute, but they came to nothing.[146] Part of the difficulty was that Juan Manuel refused to answer the tutors' summonses on five occasions, and instead began to threaten the property of *infante* Pedro since the tutors were beginning to take Guillén's side in the feud.[147] In the end, in 1316 Juan

[139] *CODOM II*, doc. 84.
[140] AHN, Uclés, carp. 90, núm. 2.
[141] *CODOM II*, doc. 31.
[142] Chacón, *Colección diplomática*, doc. 50.
[143] 'andaba don Guillen de Rocafuy diciendo mal, et reptando ante el Rey á don Joan, fijo del Infante don Manuel, porque decia que le prendiera'. *CAXI*, 179.
[144] 'el Rey se maravella mucho que ellos las quisieron oyr sabiendo quien es don Johan e qui es don Guillen'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 323.
[145] ibid., doc. 325.
[146] ibid., doc. 326.
[147] ibid., doc. 327.

Manuel did agree to appear at court in Cuéllar, and Guillén retracted his accusations. As a result, Juan Manuel was cleared of wrongdoing and restored to the *adelantamiento* of Murcia.[148] After this point, we hear little else about the quarrel until Juan Manuel had become *tutor*, and was in a position to take revenge. It appears that he forced Guillén to flee Castile, since in 1321 Guillén appeared at Jaime II's court, hoping to gain the grace and pardon of Juan Manuel. Jaime denied him permission to stay in his kingdom, but nevertheless urged Juan Manuel to consider reconciliation: 'but if he agrees to make amends in a way that suits you, we believe it would be good to receive it'.[149]

It would be tempting to assume, following the classic historiographical tropes, that this case demonstrates the arrogant scepticism of major territorial nobility like Juan Manuel towards any kind of 'central' judgement. Even if it might have suited a low-level player like Guillén de Rocafull to seek redress for grievances at the court, surely Juan Manuel's quintuple refusal to answer the accusations in person suggests nothing but contempt for any oversight? The reality, however, is much more complex. That narrative would be difficult to square with a different case concerning Juan Manuel, this time from 1311: finding himself in a debt disagreement with Aragonese noblemen Ramón Almerique and Bernalt de Sarrià, he complained to Jaime II that many his vassals had been captured in Jorquera and Ves. An indignant Juan Manuel insisted, 'if don Ramón Almerique and don Bernalt wanted to make a demand of me, they should have done so before the king of Castile, my lord, where I am bound to do and fulfil what is right'.[150] Nor would it be possible to explain his 1307 efforts to resolve a dispute between the *concejos* of Murcia and Orihuela, where he explained, once

[148] *CAXI*, 180.
[149] 'si acordare de fazer aquella emienda que a uos cumple creemos que fariades bien de recebirla'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 366.
[150] 'si don Remont Almerique e don Bernalt algun demanda me quisieran faser deuieran la faser ante el Rey de Castiella mio sennor do yo deuo faser et cumplir derecho'. ibid., doc. 223.

more to Jaime II, that the conflict would remain 'until you and the king of Castile see things as one'. He pleaded, 'lord, if you see fit, order whom you please to hear the case for the council of Orihuela, and those of Murcia will send to the king [of Castile] so he can order someone to hear it for them, it will be arranged so that everyone can end up in concord'.[151] These cases suggest a more subtle interplay between local interests and central arbitration. Clearly, there were occasions when it suited Juan Manuel extremely well to approach the king of Castile for justice, or to rebuke others for seeking extra-judicial solutions of the kind he employed himself in his feud with Guillén de Rocafull. None of this changes the fact that Juan Manuel, like all his contemporaries, fully understood, accepted and even demanded a role for the king of Castile in resolving locally conditioned disputes. The fact that the king was a child, unlike in 1307 or 1311, however, left him disinclined to risk mediation from an uncertain centre with which he had recently clashed.

The events of 1313-1315 are therefore most revealing for the structural challenges posed by Alfonso XI's minority. A mass of competing interests jostled for position and hoped to make the regency work for them, but the thorough integration of the Castilian polity meant that any solutions based on multiple competing centres were only ever short-lived. For some historians, the core of these difficulties was the rejection of royal power by assertive *concejos* at the moment of its greatest 'debilitation', or a power-grab by aggressive nobility freed of the shackles of royal restraint.[152] While the permanent councils undoubtedly amounted to unprecedented intervention in royal government by urban *hombres buenos* and there was a clear breakdown of law and order in the locality, the argument that the minority

[151] 'finque desta guisa fasta que uos e el rey de Castiella uos ueades en uno'. 'Et uos sennor si por bien touierdes mandat a qui uos quisierdes que lo vea por el Conceio de Oriuela e los de Murcia enbiar lo an mester al rey porque mande otrosi qui lo uea por ellos e se libre porque todauia finquen auenidos.' ibid., doc. 165.

[152] *Benavides*, I, xxv; Suarez, 'Evolución histórica', 27-9; González, 'Movimiento hermandino', 50; *Las hermandades*, 7; Mínguez, 'Las Hermandades generales', 552.

saw a turn away from centralisation cannot be sustained. In the context of a system that had become used to revolving around a single fixed point of arbitration, it was not possible to do away with reference to the young king's service. The only viable option would be to simulate and guide a single centre. The question, then, is why that proved impossible for any one party to achieve. There are two reasons. First, the pervasive ethic of the royal service meant that every party's claim to legitimacy could be contested by others who also purported to act for the royal *servicio*. Second, there were too many evenly matched claimants to the right to act as regent, all of whom drew on entrenched territorial networks and extensive links with supportive *concejos* in their spheres of influence. These years thus offer vivid demonstrations of both the extent of the chaos caused by the minority and the search on all sides for institutional methods of filling the yawning hole at the centre occupied only by a child.

The tension between Castile's centripetal and centrifugal forces came to a head in the remainder of the minority. The key moment provoking a new alignment was came in 1319 with the deaths of *infantes* Pedro and Juan. Their disappearance from the scene reignited debate over the regency of Castile. This time, however, the sheer length of Alfonso XI's minority began to take its toll, and the modes of confrontation changed as a result. The repeated failure to produce a lasting consensus through centralised mechanisms such as the Cortes or the *hermandades* produced a tendency towards disintegration as new candidates mobilised their networks. The problem was that the most important magnates of the kingdom after the deaths of the *infantes* had particularly clear regional power bases from which to launch their claim for the *tutoría*. *Infante* Felipe, son of Sancho IV, for example, was lord of the Cabrera and Ribera, but had yet to find an avenue to lasting central influence. Just as *infante* Felipe acted from a position of coherent regional strength, one of his major

opponents, Juan Manuel, also imposed himself from his regional power base. In 1319 he immediately went to the bishopric of Cuenca, and there he received the councils' backing to act as regent. Soon afterwards he gained similar endorsement from Madrid, Cuéllar and Sepúlveda.[153] This makes plain the value of Juan Manuel's network-building from his base in Murcia north through Cuenca over the previous years.[154] When it came to the slightly more distant town of Talavera la Reina, however, he had to make more expansive promises and draw heavily on the language of royal service to secure their support, as we saw in Chapter 6.[155] His need to branch out was reinforced when María de Molina underlined that he could be made *tutor* 'if all the land desire it'.[156] Knowing that he would struggle to attract a wide consensus among *concejos* beyond his sphere of influence, Juan Manuel needed to force the issue. He was accompanied by two of his vassals from Ávila, including the brother of the bishop, and they promised that they could persuade their city to support him. Juan Manuel left Ávila with a strong force comprising his supporters from Ávila, Segovia, Cuéllar, Sepúlveda and Madrid (the inflated figure in the chronicle is 800 knights and 7,000 infantry). As a result of his regional dominance and his networks in major cities, Juan Manuel was now in a position to claim a *de facto* regency. With the support of Lope Díaz de Haro he made a new royal seal, and 'with this seal he began to use and give offices and incomes and hear judicial cases'.[157]

Here, at last, we see the full disintegration of the Castilian centre. Successive regencies had failed to produce reliable government, and nor had the rhetoric of royal service and the common good provided a clear resolution to the difficulties of minority. It would be wrong

[153] *GCAXI*, 323; *Juan Manuel*, doc. 349.
[154] Chacón, *Colección diplomática*, docs. 49-50.
[155] See above, 230.
[156] 'si todos los de la tierra lo quisiesen'. *GCAXI*, 325.
[157] 'por este sello començo a vsar e dar el ofizios e tierras e a librar pleytos'. ibid., 327.

to see even this moment as a gleeful power-grab, however. The chronicler's well-known distaste for magnate involvement in government is taken to a new extreme in the case of Juan Manuel, given his long opposition in the adult reign of Alfonso XI. It would therefore be unwise to follow his account of Juan Manuel's intentions at Ávila too closely. Indeed, the agreement he made with *infante* Felipe following their standoff paints a different picture. In March 1320, Juan Manuel reported to Jaime II that he had been forced into this position by the fact that, whereas the *concejos* and prelates had given him a clear mandate to be regent, María de Molina had constructed a coalition against him. Therefore, he and Felipe proposed to share the regency three ways with the queen, as it had been under the previous regime. Once again, Juan Manuel's language was carefully chosen: the agreement was to be made 'without war or conflict so that God and the king can be served and the land protected'.[158] In light of Juan Manuel's effort to give a reasonable account of his actions, it would be better to understand this episode as a product of the overall failure of central legitimising structures to produce an adequate substitute for the royal will since 1312. The difference was not a particular malice by Juan Manuel, but instead the distinctive geopolitical deployment of his networks and supporters, which threatened the establishment based around Valladolid in a different way from previous reigns. Whereas *infante* Juan had found Palencia too internally divided in 1296 and too close to the influence of his enemies, Juan Manuel had been able to put up a united front of conciliar support.

The final years of the minority were dominated by waves of negotiation and conflict between the various parties, none of whom was ever able to gain sufficient ascendancy for a lasting regency. Each group's priority was to mobilise whatever support they could from their

[158] 'sin guerra e sin bulliçio porque Dios e el Rey fuesen seruido e la tierra guardada'. *Juan Manuel*, doc. 353.

respective zones: Juan el Tuerto, son of the dead *infante* Juan, joined by Fernando de la Cerda's son (also called Fernando), was given seven *servicios* by an assembly of the Castilian *concejos* and a seal of the *hermandad* on whose authority they could collect them. These years are notable for the open conflicts in multiple theatres: there was a struggle in Zamora, for example, between the urban oligarchy on the side of *infante* Felipe and the custodians of the castle, who supported Juan el Tuerto.[159] In response, in 1323, Juan el Tuerto tricked Felipe's supporters, García de Villamayor and Juan Rodríguez de Rojas, into visiting him at Burgos under the pretext of collecting the *servicios*, and had them executed.[160] Meanwhile, Juan Manuel seized on an opportunity to poach Córdoba's allegiance when he promised to allow them to elect their own municipal officials, a privilege María de Molina had refused them because it violated the king's rights there since the conquest.[161] Despite the general fragmentation into regional power struggles, however, the centripetal forces of Castilian politics were still evident. The royal offices, for example, remained a focus of political manoeuvring, with Juan Manuel losing his *mayordomazgo* to Fernando de la Cerda and Juan el Tuerto trying to gain control over the post of *merino mayor de Castilla*, which was held by Garcilaso de la Vega.[162] Similarly, all sides tried to give their governance a show of legitimacy through representative assemblies. The chronicle reports that the Cortes were called to Palencia in April 1321 with the aim of establishing a shared regency, but we lack any evidence that a meeting took place. If it did, it must have been cut short by the death of María de Molina in July 1321.[163] The Cortes were later called to Valladolid in 1322 by *infante* Felipe, and consisted of 'the delegates of the councils of the cities and towns of the kingdoms of Castile, León and Extremaduras which have not taken

[159] *GCAXI*, 352.
[160] ibid., 353; Álvarez, *Ascenso social y crisis política*, 186.
[161] *GCAXI*, 336; García, 'La Hermandad General', 359.
[162] *GCAXI*, 326.
[163] ibid., 351.

a *tutor*'.[164] As Sánchez-Arcilla argues, this demonstrates that following the queen's death there had still not been a solution to the regional fragmentation which kept Juan Manuel dominant in Murcia and Extremadura, Juan el Tuerto in Castilla la Vieja and Felipe in Galicia and Andalucía.[165] Indeed, the fact that no one could construct a single centre of power is encapsulated in the fact that Felipe promised to have a tribunal of 24 *alcaldes* 'in the king's household and in mine'.[166]

From 1324, signs emerge that Alfonso XI was beginning to make his voice heard. For example, tensions boiled over between *infante* Felipe and Juan el Tuerto, with Juan el Tuerto insisting that Zamora was part of his charge as regent and Felipe responding that he was there to attend to complaints of outrages.[167] Alfonso sent servants to intervene (the chronicler perhaps inserts himself into the narrative by pointing out that Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid was part of this mission).[168] Later, Felipe had to rush to Seville to quell a rebellion against his deputies. According to the chronicler, the city's elites felt secure in their rejection of Felipe because Alfonso XI sent them a letter ordering them 'to guard the said city for his service and not to admit don Felipe or anyone else'. [169] Certainly, given his own possible involvement and his support for Alfonso XI, the chronicler exaggerates the instant impact of the young king's engagement in the fraught politics of 1324-5. However, the structural features of Castilian politics suggest that, in this respect, his analysis is broadly correct. The disintegration of a structure that had for decades been drawn inexorably inwards had resulted in chaos which only a strong centre could reverse. A monarch on the cusp of his adult rule,

[164] *Cortes*, 337.
[165] Sánchez-Arcilla, *Alfonso XI*, 97.
[166] 'en casa del Rey e en mi casa'. *Cortes*, 341.
[167] *GCAXI*, 354-6.
[168] ibid., 358.
[169] ibid., 367.

even if still only 13, could authoritatively deploy the ethic of royal service, not least because everyone knew they would soon have to cooperate with him as an adult.

This was the message Alfonso XI sent with his first acts after he turned 14 in August 1325: the first privilege to reach Murcia ordered the council to carry out no further business using the regents' blank letters, and instead to send delegates to the royal court.[170] The chronicler gave a memorable summary of the state of the kingdom in this moment:

> 'Nowhere in the kingdom was justice done; the land reached such a state that people did not dare to travel by road unless they were armed or in a company that could defend them from bandits. No one stayed in places that were not surrounded by walls... in this state of affairs, many people of the kingdom left the properties and places in which they lived, and left for the kingdoms of Aragón and Portugal.'[171]

The chronicler had no doubt as to the origins of this lawlessness: the greed, arrogance and incompetence of the regents, who could not put aside their ambitions and who made the situation worse by stealing from the king's estate. It may well have appeared so to many victims, as they revealed in their petitions the Cortes asking for restoration of law and order.[172]

However, the assessment of the young king himself was subtly different. He knew that justice was not being fulfilled 'because the regents were in dispute and as a result of their conflict many towns and villages were destroyed and abandoned'.[173] Here, in a speech that the chronicler may have heard himself, Alfonso provided a more perceptive analysis. The

[170] *CODOM VI*, doc. 49.
[171] 'En ninguna parte del rreyno no se fazie justicia con derecho; e llegaron la tierra a tal estado que non osavan andar los omes por los caminos, sinon armados e muchos en una conpaña por que se podiesen defender de los rrobadores. E en los lugares que non heran cercados no moraua ay ninguno... ca con estas cosas, muchas de las gentes del rreyno desmanparauan heredades e los lugares en que biuian, e fueronse a poblar a los rreynos de Aragon e de Portogal'. *GCAXI*, 369-70.
[172] E.g. *Cortes*, 374.
[173] 'ca pues los tutores andauan desavenidos e por la su desavenencia eran destruydos e yermas muchas villas e lugares en los sus rreynos e la justicia non se cunplia'. *GCAXI*, 373-4.

disaster that had befallen Castile was less down to the individual flaws of the regents than a systematic failure to produce a coherent central regency. Such a consensus would be the only way to represent royal authority and keep the system working. However, royal authority, as it had developed in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, could not be replicated by the central mechanisms available at the time. Neither the Cortes, nor the manipulation of chancery practices nor the division of the kingdom into separate zones of responsibility could reproduce balance in office-holding, resource allocation and decision-making that ensured healthy interplay between centre and locality. Competition between different factions protecting interests in distant and differing local contexts could not be resolved without a fulcrum, and increased invocation of the common good did not work in a political culture where that '*pro de la tierra*' could not be divorced from the service of God and the king.

Conclusion

The interpretive keys for understanding the politics of minority therefore lie in the structural development of Castile, which had drawn diverse elements of society into a new relationship with the centre. Both minorities saw thorough breakdowns of law and order, but this was neither the result nor the cause of any predominance of one group or the other. Neither was the period exactly a 'parenthesis' in the growth of royal power; rather, it was an illustration of the weight that the Castilian centre had acquired. The growth of central power is not synonymous with order and concord; the boy kings might have been weak in terms of their personal capacity to direct the kingdom (a trait Fernando IV sometimes continued to display in his adult rule), but the fraught politics that stemmed from this weakness underline the

integration of the Castilian polity and the insistence that reform of the centre was the answer to political malaise.

Final proof that these features were the product of profound structural change comes through comparison of the dynamics analysed in this chapter with the earlier minority of Enrique I (r. 1214-1217), the young son of Alfonso VIII (r. 1158-1214). There are some superficial similarities: a boy king coming to the throne at a time of rapid adjustment (in this case after the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, which would open the way to the conquest of Andalucía); a regency left nominally to his mother (in this case, Eleanor of England, who soon passed the it to her daughter, Berenguela) but challenged from the outset by one of the foremost magnates of the kingdom (Álvaro Núñez de Lara). Indeed, just as in 1295-1301 and 1312-1325, a crucial factor was custody of the young king, which Álvaro Núñez secured in 1215. The historiography has also taken a similar interpretive line, with Valentín de la Cruz describing the minority as opening 'a dangerous power vacuum'.[174]

However, there are some revealing differences. First, while custody of the king mattered just as much at the end of the thirteenth century as at the beginning, the consequences of that control were different. Álvaro was able to claim the title of *conde* after getting hold of Enrique I, as did his brother a year later; he disrupted the settled pattern of courtly office-holding, ejecting the long-serving Gonzalo Rodríguez Girón as *mayordomo mayor*; and he re-allocated tenancies and patrimonies, converting his possession of the castle of Alhambra into a lifelong grant in January 1217 and giving the castle of Grañón to Gonzalo Núñez de Lara in tail.[175] He also exercised full control over the nascent fiscal system, provoking fierce

[174] V. de la Cruz, *Berenguela la Grande, Enrique I el Chico (1179-1246)* (Gijón, 2006), 109.
[175] ibid., 154; J. González, *El Reino de Castilla en la época de Alfonso VIII* (Madrid, 1960), vol. 3, docs. 983, 1009, 1014; Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 54.

resistance from the church over his claims to ecclesiastical *tercias*.[176] The overwhelming control afforded to Álvaro inevitably caused grievance, and civil war loomed before Enrique I's chance death. By contrast, it was extremely difficult for anyone to exercise the same level of control during the minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI. María de Molina did cancel the *sisa* in 1295, and her regency government succeeded in managing the king's resources to try to keep loyal officers in post and reinforce supportive networks. Overall, however, the greater integration of different elements into the royal centre made it much harder for any one faction to take over. This is partly because the stakes were higher: the royal centre was now the apex of a much more elaborate fiscal and jurisdictional system. The issues at play were not only the allocation of royal castles, but the domination of kingdom-wide taxes, decisions over inheritance of vast lordships like Vizcaya and desirable jurisdictional offices. Knowledge of the raised stakes may explain why, whereas the *Partidas* suggested that the king should take control when he was 20, no one ever thought it wise to wait that long: Alfonso X first changed it to 16 to avert a minority for Sancho; Fernando IV took the helm at that age; and Alfonso XI ascended when he was even younger at 14.[177]

Indeed, it is also striking that the processes for representing or opposing royal authority in 1214-17 took a much more informal shape than under Fernando IV and Alfonso XI. When Álvaro was given custody over Enrique I, the agreement was made at a *curia general*. Berenguela had him swear on the Holy Evangelists and the Cross to be a true friend and vassal of the king, and to consider his 'benefit and honour' (*pro e su onrra*). He swore not to dispossess anyone or grant out land without her consent, to impose any tax or start any wars, and to allow the people their *fueros*. [178] While the contents are recognisable, this oath

[176] Cruz, *Berenguela la Grande*, 136.
[177] *Partidas*, II.15.iii.
[178] C. Hernández Alonso, *Crónica de veinte reyes* (Burgos, 1991), 289.

contrasts strongly with the formalised assemblies of the Cortes in 1295 and especially Palencia in 1313. Critically, Álvaro had to make no reference to service, an unavoidable refrain in later crises. The combatants also behaved differently: whereas Berenguela launched a military campaign against Álvaro, targeting Autillo and appealing for support from her husband, Alfonso IX of León, the opponents of the regency in the late thirteenth century adopted more formal means of establishing an alternative centre alongside leading troops, whether by claiming the throne of León, holding a rival Cortes or representing consensus by mobilising *concejos* within their sphere of influence. The problem under Enrique I was the predominance at court of one noble lineage, which gained control over tenancy and court office. The problem under Fernando IV and Alfonso XI was the much more thorough political integration, which elevated the role of royal appellate jurisdiction, drew *hermandades* into the picture and mobilised local networks. Moreover, the predominance of the ideology of royal service made it much harder to claim legitimacy than Álvaro had achieved.

Conclusion

'The king's court is like a fair, to which every man brings the thing which they know how to sell'.[1]

Libro de los Cien Capítulos, *c*. 1280-5.

How did power work in Castile at the end of the thirteenth century? This thesis proposes several answers. The first section showed how different configurations of power emerged in regions incorporated into the Castilian kingdom at different times. While subject to different pressures, noble and conciliar lordship expanded into the shapes available to them, producing networks that intensified their control over the locality. In the more fragmented north of the kingdom this produced politics dominated by shifting local alliances based on land and office, while the middle band of the kingdom saw opportunities for noblemen carved out of conciliar offices and landed expansion. In the south-eastern periphery, land coalesced under large *concejos* and gravitated towards a smaller number of major players, who had to consider both Castilian and Aragonese interests. As lordships and towns grew and developed, royal authority also expanded, creating challenges and opportunities in different quarters. Different powers were integrated into a more connected regnal system as a result of the desire for office and grants of a more permanent nature than the old tenancy system, the need for central confirmation of local arrangements, and the construction of mechanisms for consultation that accompanied the expanded fiscal regime. Regional variation and homogenisation thus inflected each other, shaping priorities and possibilities for political groups at all levels. The second section examined how, in addition to bolstering the jurisdiction of these officers and deploying grants strategically to reward and endow loyal followers, kings cemented their position at the head of the polity by pursuing a Roman-

[1] 'La corte del rey es como la feria que lievan a ella los omnes todas las cosas que entienden bien vender.' *Cien capítulos*, 74.

law-inspired primacy over the arbitration of the law, and by capitalising on a political culture that elevated the monarch's service to the level of a common good that could only be articulated definitively by an active adult ruler.

When these evolving pressures and connections collided with the events of 1275-1325, the stability of the centre was radically undermined by the departure of the monarch, a disputed succession and consecutive minorities. Alfonso X and Sancho IV both articulated an assertive kingship based on judicial supremacy, strategic use of resources and occasional violent treatment of disloyal servants. They also provoked, and scrambled to respond to, complaints about the impact of their fiscal and judicial policies on the localities, which were channelled more effectively from the periphery to the centre after 1275. The question of what to do when the effective kingship that had been expected and demanded went missing saw various proposed solutions between 1295 and 1325, but ultimately too many interests had been propelled into the vacuum, and Castile failed to produce formalised methods to replicate an independent royal will. The extended minority of Fernando IV produced enmities that proved too difficult for the monarch to reconcile, though the politics of his reign was nevertheless conducted through the framework of reforming the centre, not rejecting it. The events of 1275-1325 therefore underscored certain elements of Castile's structural development: the entangled networks of noblemen and town councils caused certain areas to be vigorously contested, as seen in the confrontations over Palencia, while the different structures of peripheral zones like Murcia and Vizcaya caused those powerful there to exercise central influence in different ways. Likewise, central authority was easier to impose on the ground when there was a strong alignment of officers with the relationships of trust and service at the court. A monarch whose efforts to command produced more fear than trust, like Fernando IV, found that he could only make his judgements effective at

certain moments when bolstered by other forces, and his vacillation had serious consequences for all who relied on his decision-making.

By way of conclusion, these arguments suggest three further points. First, they invite some reflection about what was really different in 1325 compared with a century beforehand. Historians have seen in this period a breakdown of cooperative relations between kings and noblemen, driven in large part by the end of rapid conquests and the easy opportunities for enrichment they seemed to provide. On the contrary, given the continued interest in the king's hereditary grants and the thorough participation of the nobility in official and fiscal structures, this study has shown that what mattered most about the huge conquests of Fernando III was the way the king's authority mapped onto the territory of the whole kingdom. Thirteenth-century Castile was a varied tapestry, with competitive northern zones differing markedly in terms of power structures and potential energy from the newly incorporated territories to the south. This is builds on the usual assumption that the northern regions were dominated by the 'old nobility', by contrast with the southern frontier: the difference is not only in personnel but in the varied modes of network-building, competition and connection to the centre that developed in each of Castile's regions. This thesis has shown that parties had different options depending on where they were and what support they could energise. Following the end of large southern expansions, more important than the change in patronage opportunities was the growing richness, complexity and formalisation of the king's jurisdictional, fiscal and office networks and the way these were embedded into the new territories and the old. As a result, the chance for one lineage to dominate the royal government under a minority, as happened in 1214-17, was long gone: government instead relied on balance in interests based around service to a monarch, even if that provoked crisis when the king was a child. Political history is too easily boiled down

to conflict and selfish pursuit of interests; the way in which different systems worked and fitted together mattered, and the ways in which people in the past tried to make those systems work when they faltered reveals much about their patterns even when social and institutional dynamics are obscured by the nature of our sources.

Second, this study's emphasis on the combination of long-term structures and short-term events calls for a re-assessment of the place of the period between Alfonso X's later years and his great-grandson's accession in Castilian history. This was the critical period in which the ideas that fill the pages of legal and institutional historians were tested in the furnace of political practice. It was the moment when the orientation of the entire system towards the centre was revealed, and strategies tested to cope when that centre multiplied or imploded. The well-worn depiction of these decades as a 'hiatus' therefore ignores the constitutional experimenting and stress-testing that occurred, and the political lessons learned by various sides. Consequently, Alfonso XI's methods were shaped by the realities of power as exposed in the decades leading up to his adult rule. Many of the aspects of his rule were identical to those of his predecessors, with the crucial difference that there was more alignment between intention and results. He had Juan el Tuerto executed on charges of treason in 1327, and also disposed of his former favourite, Alvar Núñez Osorio, who faced criticism in the locality for appropriating noble salaries, in 1328.[2] Over the rest of his reign, he was particularly successful at using grants and offices to reintegrate former opponents, as discussed in Chapter 5.[3] While it is undoubtedly true that some of Alfonso XI's actions directly cemented Alfonso X's legacy, above all the Ordinance of Alcalá in 1348,[4] others more directly called to mind the praxis of kingship *after* 1284. The most recent precedent for Alfonso's splendid

[2] Sánchez-Arcilla, *Alfonso XI,* 125-33; Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 154.
[3] See above, 206-7. See also Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 46, 115.
[4] ibid., 194.

knighting and coronation in 1332 was Sancho IV's actions in Toledo. Similarly, the *Real Hermandad* established by Alfonso XI in Burgos in 1338, which differed in that it explicitly bolstered the non-noble knights of the city, nonetheless drew on the associative repertoire that had been so frequently called upon between 1282 and 1325.[5] Moreover, Alfonso XI developed the concept of royal service, as seen in his emphasis on knighthood through the *Orden de la Banda* and his aggressive stipulations about the obligations due in return for salaries in 1338.[6] Finally, the stunning victory at Río Salado in 1340, for which Alfonso earned so much adulation by his chroniclers, paved the way for the conquest of Algeciras that had eluded Fernando IV.[7] Therefore, for all the justified exaltation of Alfonso XI's talents and speculation about Castile's future had he not died young,[8] we must not lose sight of the fact that, had Alfonso been afforded only the 11 years as an adult monarch enjoyed by his father and grandfather, his reign may not have been remembered all too differently from theirs. What matters is not just his particular brand of 'successful kingship', but the way in which he capitalised on a set of structural features that emerged owing both to long-term developments and the specific trials of 1275-1325.

There is one final point. Thinking about the forces and structures of Castilian politics reveals that different layers of the polity could have both integrating and fragmentary effects. The nobility and the *concejos* both had locally rooted networks to which they resorted when in conflict with the monarch or to mitigate the catastrophic vacuum at the centre. At the same time, they had an entangled web of interests and dialogues that drew them towards the middle, in search of legal guarantees, favourable judgements, offices, grants or prestige. The monarch, naturally, encouraged the thickening of these ties through office-holding and

[5] Ruiz, 'Transformation of the Castilian Municipalities', 18-19.
[6] Arias, *Triumph of an Accursed Lineage*, 130.
[7] Sánchez-Arcilla, *Alfonso XI* , 217-39.
[8] Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*, 147.

grant-making policies, through taxation structures and through legislation. However, for all the conscious and unconscious efforts at integration, the royal centre could cause fragmentation when it disintegrated, through dynastic strife, minority or mismanagement of trusting relationships. Overall, this thesis argues that the balance was towards integration in the fraught years of 1275-1325, with even the minorities demonstrating the continual search for an effective centre and the insufficiency of alternative structures above the local level. This particular balance of fragmentary and integrative forces helped shape Castile's trajectory within European politics. Roman-law-inspired monarchies, elaborate fiscal systems, nobilities of service and representative structures were developing apace across the continent, but Castile's continued stitching of every level of the hierarchy into the personal arbitration of the monarch provided a distinctive set of opportunities and challenges for the Castilian polity in the coming centuries.

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