

ISLANDS OF CASTILE: ARTISTIC, LITERARY, AND LEGAL PERCEPTION OF
THE SEA IN CASTILE-LEON, 1248-1450

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Islands of Castile: Artistic, Literary, and Legal Perception of the Sea in Castile-Leon, 1248-1450

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Before Spain encountered the Americas, it first encountered the sea. This dissertation explores the roots of that encounter by examining perceptions of the sea in late medieval Castile-Leon reflected in art, literature, and law. It analyzes the changing attitudes of the Castilians towards the sea through an examination of its perceived place in their world, underscoring the complexity of Castilian attitudes toward the dangers and opportunities presented by the marine environment. Conceptual separation and union serve as the two foundational concepts employed for the analysis of evidence from each of the three genres under examination. Each genre highlights in various ways either the strong contrast drawn between land and sea or their seeming union conceptually. These complexities are manifest in a broad variety of sources, from collections of miracle tales to fifteenth century romances. Analysis of legal distinctions between land and sea reveal significant differences in perception regarding the nature of each environment and the rights and responsibilities of Castilians acting in either.

Findings include that artistic sources reveal that a fearful attitude toward the sea accentuated by helplessness before its power dominated thirteenth century imagery, contrasting with the greater unity of land and sea reflected in miniatures from fifteenth century sources. A similar pattern of separation and union emerges in the literary evidence, where fear of the loss of agency when traveling at sea in early sources gives way to fifteenth century examples that praise its value. A comparison of the laws contained in the *Siete Partidas* with the late medieval records of the *Cortes* of Castile-Leon reveals that while the Castilian monarchs tended to consider the sea as firmly outside of their realm throughout the majority of the period of this study, strategic necessity led to an inexorable growth in the importance of the sea in the affairs of the kingdom generally. Together, the evidence supports the conclusion that by the mid-fourteenth century the view of the sea as other, typical of all early Castilian sources, gave way to a fifteenth century perspective that welcomed it in many respects, laying the foundation for the development of a great maritime empire.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is one side, the Grand Mar, that encircles the whole world¹ and which they call the ocean, and the great river Guadalquivir, and on the other side, the Mediterranean Sea and the Guadalete River...²

The quote above, contained in a letter dictated by Alfonso X, describes the location of the Puerto de Santa María at the mouth of the Bay of Cadiz. The description offers a fitting place to begin an examination of the place of the sea in the Castilian realm itself, giving us the king's perception of the southern town's place in a wider world, and illustrating a central assumption about the relationship between coastal communities, their kingdom, and the sea beyond. The image of this town, surrounded by rivers and sea, belies the expanse of wide sun-blasted plains with sparse scrub, limited rain, and little in the way of agricultural possibilities that constituted reality for the majority of Castilians living on the high plateau of central Spain, an area that now contains Europe's highest capital, Madrid, then a sleepy village of shepherds on an uncertain frontier. Then as now, life on the *meseta* was a study in contrasts, at once sun-drenched yet sometimes freezing in the winters; abundant in opportunity for those seeking land, but lacking in fresh water and difficult to farm; offering land and opportunity for those willing to stake a claim on

¹ This image of a great ocean encircling the world is also present in the Hereford Mappa Mundi (c1300), the only surviving large-scale wall map from the medieval era. See Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Paradigm* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2001).

² Manuel González Jiménez, *Diplomatario Andaluz de Alfonso X* (Sevilla: El Monte Caja de Huelva y Sevilla, 1991), 487.

the southern frontier, but rife with the risks that settlement entailed. Thus, this short description of a coastal community is an immediate study in contradictions with regard to the Castilian experience in the Middle Ages. Finding the place of the sea in this world so far removed from marine influence requires a focus on the very fringes of that reality, the literal edges of the realm itself, in those places where Castile abruptly met the sea. That story begins with the events of 1247 and the subsequent unfolding of nearly two centuries of interaction with the challenges and opportunities presented by the sea.

In 1247, Fernando III, king of Castile-Leon (1217-1252), commissioned Ramon Bónifaz to assemble a fleet in order to break the Muslim blockade at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River, the gateway to the inland port of Seville. Although besieged by land, the inhabitants refused to surrender and had the ability to resist him indefinitely as long as they received supplies and reinforcements by river. The following year, in 1248, Bónifaz led the fleet south along the Portuguese coast and engaged the much larger Muslim blockade. The larger, more powerful Castilian vessels lured the Muslim vessels into deeper water, where the *naos*³ could make full use of the wind, eliminating the numeric advantage held by the Muslims, and routed them. Bónifaz then moved up the Guadalquivir to Triana, where the Muslims had blockaded the river by chaining two large vessels together and anchoring them to the shoreline, creating a large bridge between Triana and Seville. Employing the great weight of the *ñaos* under his command to full

³ The general Iberian word for a sailing vessel reliant on sails rather than oars for propulsion, equivalent to an English *cog*, distinguished from galleys by a broader beam and height in the water. *Ñaos* were used for both military and commercial purposes, though they were not suited to shallow navigation near the shore, where galleys were preferable owing to their superior maneuverability and shallower draft. Covarrubias gives the definition as “del nombre latino NAVIS, bajel grande de alto bordo.” Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, ed. Felipe C. R. Maldonado and Manuel Camarero (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1994), 773.

advantage, he made full sail with the brisk morning wind and headed directly into the obstacle. The barrier shattered, and 100,000 residents along the river fled the impending Castilian conquest of Seville, which fell to Fernando III shortly thereafter.⁴

The acquisition of Seville marked a turning point in the *Reconquista*, providing the Castilians with the most important inland port in southern Al-Andalus, and opening three distinct maritime areas to the Castilians: the Straits of Gibraltar, the southern Atlantic, and the Mediterranean, each offering different opportunities and decidedly different challenges. Dramatically different geographical realities led to differences in the subsequent development of the maritime communities in Old and New Castile, ranging from the type of vessels best suited for navigation in each respective area to the economic development such coastal communities could expect. Food anxiety, a staple of maritime communities on the southern frontier, was sometimes an issue for northern communities as well, and dependence on the sea for livelihood thus reinforced the bond of the northern alliance of coastal communities later known as the *Hermandad de las Marismas*, at the same time underscoring the perception of coastal communities as fragile and pitiable in the larger cultural sense. The nearly all-consuming threat of invasion in the south meant a fixation on security and the attendant obligations that threat required of local communities, one that could often prove costly. Legal definitions of the limits of the

⁴ This account is widely recorded in Spanish historiography; I use here the account from Francisco Javier de Salas y Rodríguez, *Marina española de la edad media: bosquejo historico de sus principales sucesos en relación con la historia de las coronas de Aragón y de Castilla* (Madrid: Impr. del Ministerio de marina, 1925), 207. It should also be noted that this account does not include mention of Aragonese and Genoese ships participating in the action, though Archibald Lewis suggests this was the case in Archibald R. Lewis, "Northern Sea Power and Gibraltar," in *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer*, ed. William C. Jordan, Bruce McNab, and Teofilo F. Ruiz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 141.

realm itself reinforced a tenuous perception of the utility of coastal communities in the South, while simultaneously failing to take into account the much more complex relationships between land and sea in the North. Ultimately, as the southern boundaries solidified and external threats diminished in the late fourteenth century, the sea began to appear in these sources in ways suggesting a greater integration of the sea into the larger Castilian worldview as northern communities began to request active royal participation in their formerly intensively independent affairs. Thus, by the early fifteenth century, Castile had begun to move toward a conceptual integration of the sea into the larger Castilian worldview, having begun to dismantle the walls it had figuratively built against it in the thirteenth century.

The following chapters offer a glimpse at the effect the dramatic expansion of maritime horizons had on wider perception of the sea in Castile through an analysis of a broad variety of artistic and literary sources spanning nearly two centuries. Unless specifically noted, the use of the word “sea” will refer to all ocean areas, for this study aims to discuss Castilian interaction with and perception of the marine environment as a whole rather than concentrating on a particular body of water. Such a generalized view is essential given the focus of the following analysis, which is to present, compare, and contrast the reflections of Castilian views and presumptions about the sea and the means they employed in expressing them throughout the late medieval period. As the following analysis will reveal, the experience of Castilians with the Atlantic did not make the Mediterranean less formidable in terms of the references to challenges and dangers presented by the sea in the *sources*, which tend to make little distinction between one body and the other when dealing with the activities of Castilians at sea. In terms of scope,

the dissertation concentrates these reflections of the development of maritime culture on the period following the newly-conquered southern territories of al-Andalusia, for the sea became critical to the security of those territories from 1248 forward and subsequently received a great deal of attention throughout that period.⁵ By contributing the added dimension of the sea into our existing understanding of the Castilian worldview in the late Middle Ages, this study aims to provide a necessary and nuanced background to the place of the sea in the Castile prior to the later maritime expansion of a unified Spain in the Early Modern period. In addressing that issue, so seemingly unrelated to the land-based focus of southern expansion, the study also contributes to a richer, more complex understanding of the Castilian experience in the Middle Ages.

In assessing three major lenses through which Castilians revealed attitudes and assumptions about the sea – art, literature, and law – and combining these in an examination of the perceived role of human agency in meeting the challenges of the sea itself -- the dissertation reveals the dynamic nature of the relative importance of the sea throughout Castile during the period under study. The chapters that follow reveal that Castilian attitudes toward the nature of man’s interaction with the sea and even assumptions about the physical nature of the sea itself changed markedly between 1248 and 1450. The nature of the boundary between land and sea, both in physical and

⁵ Given my intention to address the sea in broader terms, I will not spend a great deal of time on a discussion of the long history of autonomy of the northern coastal communities which have, at any rate, been studied and written about in great detail. Among the many works on the subject, see Javier Ortiz Real and Rogelio Pérez-Bustamante, *Cantabria en la baja Edad Media* (Santander: Ediciones Tantín, 1986), Enrique San Miguel Pérez, *Poder y territorio en la España Cantábrica: La baja Edad Media* (Madrid: Dykinson, 1999), Jesús Ángel Solórzano Telechea, *Santander en la Edad Media: Patrimonio, parentesco y poder* (Santander: Universidad de Cantabria Ayuntamiento de Torrelavega, 2002), Luis Suárez Fernández, *La Edad Media en Cantabria* (Santander: Institución Cultural de Cantabria Instituto de Arte Juan de Herrera, 1973).

conceptual terms, was a fundamentally important issue in this gradual change. At the heart of the conceptual assumptions at work in late medieval Castile regarding the sea was an insular approach to the activities of Castilians there, an attitude revealed in all of the sources in use in this study and one that gradually gave way to a less polarized view of land and sea and their relationship in the larger Castilian realm. This insular approach was a product of a staunch characterization of the sea as other, as firmly outside the realm, and of the legal construction of liability and responsibility that required vessels at sea to operate as islands at sea, solely responsible for their own safety and completely dependent upon themselves. Yet, change is only part of the story revealed in the following pages. If literary evidence shows that in 1250 Castilians perceived the sea as dangerous, even treacherous it was still so two hundred years later. Storms were still terrifying, and the prospect of drowning still loomed large. Sailors still called upon divine intervention when faced by the ferocious and limitless power of the sea, and merchants continued to ply their trade by familiar sea routes. However, by 1450, the evidence demonstrates that Castilians were increasingly confident in their ability to go to sea and meet its challenges – and to seek out and exploit its opportunities. The sea had become part of the Castilian worldview, a beckoning gateway to limitless possibilities

Historiographical Background

The secondary literature concerning Castilian maritime history contains virtually nothing addressing the variety of questions under examination in the following dissertation, indeed, a comment made by Susan Rose in her recent *The Medieval Sea*, the latest and most substantial attempt at a history of the sea in the medieval world, neatly summarizes the nature of the problem concerning the study of Castilian maritime culture

generally. While addressing the issue of Castilian maritime literature, she notes that “the sea was principally a source of inspiration for the writers of romances, and of effective metaphors for theologians for the uncertainties of human existence, until the mid-fourteenth century,” later adding that the writing style from that time forward shifted toward one emphasizing “boundless adventure.”⁶ However true the two points might be on the surface -- and I do not contest their validity to a certain degree -- they are remarkably superficial in their approach to a subject that, as the following chapters reveal, included greatly more sophisticated perceptions and expectations about the sea itself. In addressing the cultural legacy of those perceptions, this dissertation seeks to remedy precisely the sort of presumptions that quote reveals and to lay bare the nuanced views of the sea the surviving evidence provides us. What this effort requires is a new approach to the subject entirely, one involving a new focus that moves beyond the purely economic and military foci of earlier studies and takes a fresh look at what those issues, among others, reveal about the larger question of perception of the sea in Castile throughout the late medieval period. In making that effort, this dissertation seeks to add a new, necessary dimension to the historiographical corpus of Castilian maritime studies, one currently sorely lacking.

Economic and military issues govern the realm of medieval Iberian maritime studies. Of those studies specifically addressing Castilian maritime trade, Wendy Child’s 1978 *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the Later Middle Ages* remains canonical for the narrative

⁶ Susan Rose, *The Medieval Sea* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 4.

of maritime trade in northern Castile in the late medieval period.⁷ Her work shows that a relatively thriving trade existed in northern Castile on the Bay of Biscay, particularly from the mid-thirteenth century on, and that a thriving economy increasingly dependent on that trade developed among the northern coastal cities throughout the later Middle Ages. Yet, despite the strength of the work in its analysis of the maritime culture of Old Castile, it provides little analysis of New Castilian maritime issues or the relationship between one and the other – a gap my dissertation addresses through its holistic approach to Castilian perceptions of the sea. William Phillips and Carla Rahn Phillips in *Spain's Golden Fleece*, while dealing primarily with early modern to modern issues, detail the development of the wool trade in New Castile, the creation of the *Mesta*, the royal system of management of transhumance, and the explosion in importance of the wool markets following a late medieval upsurge in production.⁸ Both of these studies focus on the economic importance of the wool trade and consider the role of maritime export as part of its impact on the economy. Robert Lopez has addressed trade in commodities quite broadly in his *Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages*, and, although the Castilian section is limited, it remains one of the first treatments in English of the importance of the Genoese/Castilian connection in the development of Castilian maritime culture.⁹

⁷ Wendy R Childs, *Anglo-Castilian trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978).

⁸ Carla Rahn Phillips and William D Phillips, *Spain's Golden Fleece: Wool Production and the Wool Trade from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

⁹ Robert Sabatino Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976). See also his excellent companion volume of source materials, Robert Sabatino Lopez, Irving Woodworth Raymond, and Olivia Remie Constable, eds., *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World: Illustrative Documents translated with introductions and notes by Robert S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond; with a foreward and bibliography by Olivia Remie Constable* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

Lopez' work illuminates the critical role that the Genoese played generally in the re-establishment of trade networks reaching from Italy to northern Europe in the late medieval period. In his section addressing Castile, he notes their important role in Seville as royal advisors in maritime issues and their ability to control the carrying trade for a significant period following the Castilian conquest of the city. My dissertation departs from the basic political and trade relationship as portrayed so well by these scholars and instead focuses on how assumptions of ownership and liability reflect unique expectations on the parts of Castilians and foreigners alike in their dealings with the sea.

While the secondary literature is limited regarding maritime trade in late medieval Castile, it is decidedly more expansive with regard to military issues. Despite the fact that historians agree that Castile did not have a "navy" in the modern sense of the word until the fourteenth century, many studies address the use of military naval power in those terms.¹⁰ Although now more than a century old, Cesáreo Fernández Duro's *La marina de Castilla* remains quoted in every study of Castilian maritime development and contains a particularly good chronology of the Admiralty, as well as an appendix including relevant sources.¹¹ Here, he underscores the critical importance of the North as a source of naval power.

¹⁰ Even in the fourteenth century, when Alfonso XI regularized the use of "galeras reales," a long-held practice referring to vessels actually owned by the king of Castile personally, one cannot refer to the institution of a permanent "armada" at that time. Fleets continued to be ad-hoc and largely a mixture of a few royally owned or sponsored warships, mercenary forces often leased for the duration of the engagement, and impressed vessels and crews, often taken by force as the "fleet" moved along the coastline.

¹¹ Cesáreo Fernández Duro, *La marina de Castilla desde su origen y pugna con la de Inglaterra hasta la refundición en la Armada española* (Madrid: El Progreso editorial, 1894).

As one would expect, the majority of work on Iberian naval power necessarily focuses on the development and activities of the Catalanian fleets, but a work making an attempt at comparison in terms of development between Castile and Aragon is Francisco Javier de Salas y Rodríguez' *Marina española de la edad media*.¹² While the work admirably summarizes the growth of both maritime powers on a macroscopic scale, it suffers from a nationalized trajectory that seeks commonality in the disparate factors at work in the development and success of each of these maritime cultures. Where it is especially lacking is in its failure to account for the multiplicity of forces at work in the creation of a conceptual framework allowing for the eventual incorporation of the sea into the worldview of Castile itself as integral to the ultimate success of maritime activities in Castile. In particular, the critical role of royal perception in accepting responsibility for Castilian subjects at sea, as well as coming to grips with the idea of the sea as part of the royal sphere of influence itself, receives no attention at all. Instead, the history privileges an assumed – and unsupported -- natural and comfortable expansion of royal power from land to sea. By addressing the complexity of the forces at work in the shaping of perceptions toward Castilian maritime culture, the following chapters remedy this omission.

More recent studies on Castilian military naval actions have tended to focus on the impetus for the formal establishment of the Castilian navy in the fourteenth century. Studies such as that done by Lawrence Mott recognize the need for an evaluation of the development of Castilian naval power and seek to address the root causes for the growth

¹² Salas y Rodríguez, *Marina española de la edad media: bosquejo historico de sus principales sucesos en relación con la historia de las coronas de Aragón y de Castilla*.

of that institution. Mott's work tends to focus on the early modern period and particularly the Catalan role in maritime dominance in the Mediterranean, but recognizes the importance of Castile's constant struggle in the Straits as critical to larger maritime developments.¹³ The most recent work on the subject comes from Camil Busquets i Vilanova's *La mar en Guerra*, a work that seeks to address naval warfare on a broad scale, concluding that Castilian naval power grew as a direct response to the need for control of the Straits of Gibraltar and the ensuring of security within the borders of the kingdom of Castile.¹⁴ The focus of these studies on the military struggle is an entirely necessary endeavor, but the contribution of the current dissertation greatly expands the horizons of that debate to include the perception of Castilians toward the sea during the tumultuous century they typically describe and beyond. In so doing, this study moves the argument beyond the struggle for control of the Straits itself to the fundamental change in the attitudes of Castilians toward the arena upon which that struggle played out.

On the broader level of contextualizing the sea as part of larger sociological and historical studies, works such as Philip Steinberg's *The Social Construction of the Ocean* address important issues regarding the relationship between societies and the sea.¹⁵ Although his focus is on the larger "world-ocean" and the interaction between politics, geography, and spatial territoriality from 1450 on, his conclusions are provocative. Among the more important contributions of Steinberg's study is that the dynamically

¹³ Lawrence W. Mott, "Iberian Naval Power, 1000-1650," in *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Richard W. Unger and John B. Hattendorf (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Camil Busquets i Vilanova, *La mar en guerra* (Madrid: Editorial Naval, 2004).

¹⁵ Philip E Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

contentious nature of land acquisition and identification is a process that has occurred at sea as well, particularly in the early modern period, and that it has followed remarkably similar patterns dependent on locality. Steinberg concludes that there are essentially three models for interaction with the sea: The “Mediterranean”, where the sea is defined as “non-possessible but nonetheless a legitimate arena for expressing and contesting social power,” the “Indian Ocean,” where the sea serves as an “asocial space between societies”, and the “Micronesian”, where the sea serves as “an extension of land-space”.¹⁶ My research reveals that late-medieval Castilian perception of the sea combines all of these modern models. By illuminating the nature of that Castilian perception, my study seeks to add a new dimension to the framework he has described, contributing substantially to this dialog by applying some of this theoretical framework to pre-modern Europe. In so doing, this study will add to the sort of work on European expansion done by authors such as Robert Bartlett.¹⁷

Steinberg’s work was one of the first such studies to assert the importance of contextualizing the sea within existing socio-historical narratives. Previous works involving the sea and interaction with societies tended to come largely from the physical sciences, particularly geology and oceanography. His work has since inspired contributions from a variety of sources and disciplines addressing similar interests. From the historian’s perspective, regional studies of the Mediterranean, Pacific, and Atlantic world have emerged, each increasingly seeking to contextualize the sea within the larger

¹⁶ Ibid., 207.

¹⁷ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

historical narrative of these areas. Among the more provocative recent works in this area is that of Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun's edited volume, *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* that includes some of the best new work on efforts by historians to bring the sea into the larger discussion of historiographical issues in a variety of areas.¹⁸ Many of the essays focus on the omission of the sea from the larger sociological and historical studies of oceanic peoples in particular, such as the Pacific Islanders, and address the important question of how such a vast and dynamic area can actually lie at the heart of the development of an entire socio-economic system. Particularly relevant to this study is the opening essay by the editors, *The Sea is History*, defining the sea as a realm of untold history and as a territory where alternate perspectives on that history abound. The multi-faceted approach to perception revealed in the following dissertation is one such alternate perspective, offering a fresh alternative to the mainstream maritime history that has dominated the discourse up to this point.

Finally, in an approach similar to that which I employ in this dissertation, but with a much wider scope, Barry Cunliffe's *Facing the Ocean* attempts to frame the history of Atlantic coastal peoples in an innovative way over a period from 8000 BCE to 1500 CE, ultimately concluding that Atlantic coastal cultures ranging from Iceland to Gibraltar had more in common with each other than with the land polities of which they were part.¹⁹ Cunliffe's study is an interdisciplinary one, utilizing myth, geography, landscape history, photographic evidence, and archaeology in attempting to recreate the "façade" of the

¹⁸ Bernhard & Mackenthun Klein, Gesa, ed., *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁹ Barry W. Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: the Atlantic and its Peoples, 8000 BC-AD 1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Atlantic as experienced by the coastal residents of each of the various areas he treats. Despite its undoubted contribution to the emerging field of Atlantic studies, Cunliffe's work fails to address the interaction between land and sea beyond their intersection at the seashore, and is much more convincing when addressing ancient and classical eras. Where he is most successful is in showing rather compellingly that the Atlantic was not the primary focus of those coastal settlements situated upon it until late in the medieval period, and that they were instead much more concerned with rivers until that time. Cunliffe spends a good deal of effort elucidating what he perceives as coastal communities existing in a liminal space between land and sea, but my conclusions argue for a much more immediate delineation between land and sea than he has offered. In addition, whether dealing with perception, sailors, or trading systems, Cunliffe seeks the kind of common *mentality* that my study does not. His is a work seeking to frame the peoples of the coastal communities of the "Atlantic façade" as collectively sharing "common beliefs and values over thousands of years, conditioned largely by their unique habitat on the edge of the continent facing the ocean."²⁰ On the contrary, as the following chapters will show, I do not even believe that a common maritime culture existed in Castile-Leon during the much more limited *longue durée* of my own study.²¹

²⁰ Ibid., vii.

²¹ As I will demonstrate, northern and southern maritime cultures in Castile operated under very different conditions in terms of economic viability, military concerns, and general independence. Thus, a common maritime culture, defined as a generally accepted approach to the conduct of mercantile and military efforts at sea, would be impossible to articulate for Castile.

Chapter Summary

My dissertation is an exploration of perception of the sea in late medieval Castile, a systematic attempt to deconstruct the reflected impressions of that perception from 1248 to 1450. To that end, each chapter involves the application of a different lens in searching for that perception. The choice of each of these lenses reflects the three major thirteenth-century sources of information about that perception, forming a foundational baseline for comparative analysis with later evidence. In each case, the comparison and contrast of those sources with later examples demonstrate both continuity and change during the two centuries under scrutiny in the following pages.

Chapter II begins this exploration through a dramatic comparison and contrast between images of land and sea contained in the thirteenth century *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and the fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript of the *Libro del Caballero Cifar*.²² This close analysis of the composition and presentation of the sea in its own right and relative to both land and humans is the first of its kind relative to the maritime imagery these manuscripts contain and provides a solid visual representation of the concept of spatial differentiation and integration explored in succeeding chapters. In addition to the graphic representation of the imagined conceptual relationship between land and sea the images provide, they also serve to introduce themes of fear, the role of divine intervention at sea, and the critical subject of the role of human agency in meeting the challenges faced by Castilians at sea. Each of these important issues appears in

²² Alfonso X, "MS. T.I. 1: Cantigas de Santa Maria (Código Rico)," (San Lorenzo del Escorial: Monasterio del San Lorenzo, c. 1265), Unknown, "MS. Espagnol 36. *Libro de Cavallero Cifar*," (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale c. 1450).

subsequent chapters, and thus the opening visual evidence is critical to the ensuing analysis.

Chapter III takes up the issues of differentiation and integration begun in the preceding chapter, introducing literary evidence from a variety of late medieval Castilian sources that both conform to the prior chapter's presentation and greatly expand the discussion by adding considerable detail and nuance. The role of divine intervention as critical to survival at sea appears often over the centuries in literature, but as they progress, human agency increasingly emerges as the most significant factor in the success or failure of endeavors at sea. The treatment of storms, one of the most persuasive examples of the growing importance of agency in literary narrative, provides another example of measurable change in perception over the late Middle Ages in Castile. Here, the generally undifferentiated representation of storms seen in art give way to strongly differentiated depictions in literary accounts appearing between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The difference in presentation revealed in the analysis is both linguistic and contextual, offering solid support for a conclusion that familiarity with the sea through first-hand experience resulted in highly nuanced accounts. This experience, reflected in the quality and detail provided, greatly enhanced the literary impact of activity at sea. Concurrent with the growth in the importance of agency is an increased emphasis on the part of authors generally regarding the expertise and experience of individuals on all matters related to marine travel, to such as extent that by the fifteenth century, we begin to see names attached to individuals never referred to earlier as anything other than *marineros*. In a trend that will continue in subsequent chapters, this literary analysis also provides evidence for an intriguing integration of land and sea in a

textual sense through an adaptation of the sea to serve as an appropriate setting for a chivalric tale. The adoption of the sea as a proper locus for the deeds of land warriors would find full flower in the fifteenth century *El Victorial*, considered the seminal work in the *Siglo de Oro* genre known as the *caballeria*, a work figuring prominently both here and in chapter V.²³ Overall, the literary evidence presented in this chapter establishes a growing confidence, familiarity, and assimilation of the sea into the larger Castilian sense of the realm from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries.

Chapter IV moves the focus from art and literature to law and the proceedings of the royal courts of Castilian monarchs in continuing the exploration of the differentiation and integration of land and sea addressed in the preceding chapters. In examining the prescribed relationship between land and sea, the thirteenth-century *Partidas* form a solid legal foundation for the conceptual framework of understanding of these two environments so remarkably consistent in the previous chapters' treatment of art and literature. Here, unambiguous language demarcates land from sea, assigning specific characteristics to each, and providing a framework for the transference from land to sea of legal principles of liability and responsibility. The legists of the *Partidas* employed a comparative construction between a variety of land and sea components in creating these maritime laws, and an analysis of the conceptual conflation at work between the two seemingly disparate concepts emphasize a pattern of integration consistent with the needs of a kingdom-wide law code which demanded a uniform approach to legal issues regardless of environment. By contrast, the chapter also argues that royal decrees issued

²³ Gutierre Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, ed. Rafael Beltrán Llavador (Salamanca, España: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 1997).

from the various Cortes held during the period underscore a generally hands-off attitude toward the sea for most of the late Middle Ages, a stance that changed dramatically towards the end of the period with an affirmation that royal protection of Castilians could, in theory, extend to Castilians at sea. Ultimately, the chapter argues that legal attempts to make clear distinctions between land and sea conformed with a larger royal perception of the place of the sea in the realm, but were often at odds with the practice of ordinary Castilians, who ultimately petitioned the king for a change in that exclusionary policy.

Having examined the artistic, literary, and legal facets of perception regarding the sea, chapter V turns to an analysis of the sea as experienced by Castilians throughout the late medieval period, an analysis highlighting several important distinctions between expectation and experience regarding maritime issues. The chapter begins with an analysis of the institution of military hierarchy and leadership aboard vessels, showing that the confident language of the thirteenth-century laws of the *Partidas* heralded a Castilian desire to create familiar environments at sea, closely ordered encapsulations of Castile itself, where social and legal norms could stand as bulwarks against the dangerous and disordered sea. In adopting the same vertical military hierarchy applied on land, the early legists sought to replace the perceived reliance on custom and collective action that marked maritime life with greater predictability. Yet, the vertical hierarchy they imagined, coupled as it was with a assumption of the primacy of military leadership, never really developed until the early fifteenth century, and communal action at sea remained a constant in accounts of action at sea, its influence felt in nearly every example available from the late medieval Castilian record.

The laws governing maritime liability in the *Partidas* presumed and even celebrated the role of agency at sea as a means of countering the disorder generally imagined to exist there in the thirteenth century, and this made it easy to imagine individual liability in neat and clearly defined terms. However, as the evidence presented in this chapter shows, there was always a significant difference between the perceptions of those who made a living from the sea regarding ownership, liability and the laws as imagined by royal legists, and the notion of *usos y privilegios* always loomed large in the equation. Indeed, this chapter presents solid evidence for a much more liberal understanding in the minds of Castilians as to their rights than the laws would suggest, and a decidedly communal approach to shared liability aboard vessels argues for a much less rigid application of liability than that presented in law. Just as in the case of legalistic notions of military hierarchy, individual liability, the very focus of the maritime laws of the *Partidas*, never supplanted communal action as the means of meeting challenges at sea. Ultimately, although the law was unable to create reality by presumption of agency, the fact is that agency eventually seemed to triumph by the fifteenth century. Castilians increasingly displayed skill and experience at sea, and more and more Castilian military men earned reputations as able naval commanders. Thus, while the carefully constructed legal vision of the *Partidas* never became reality in late medieval Castile, the islands of Castile they imagined did indeed take shape from the very beginning.

Methodology

In seeking to address the perception of medieval Castilians toward the sea, I am inviting comparisons to the methodological approach to *mentalité* associated with the

French *Annales* school. With their emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, coverage of long historical periods, and focus on discovering and articulating commonality of experience in aid of reconstructing medieval perception, it is in many ways an excellent fit. Indeed, my dissertation borrows two important cornerstones of the *Annaliste* approach to what Jacques LeGoff termed the “new history”: the role of geographic determinism in historical experience and the search for *mentalité*. Both of these approaches arose from the second generation of *Annalistes*, a group including George Duby, Jacques LeGoff, and Fernand Braudel. Braudel’s emphasis on the importance of geography to history, and as determinant and potentially limiting to human agency, first appeared in his *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*, and was an important influence on my methodological thinking regarding land and sea. I do provide substantial evidence throughout the pages that follow for distinct limitations on agency imposed by the sea on Castilians, as well as evidence demonstrating that they recognized a distinction in the ease of exercising agency on land as opposed to sea.²⁴ I do recognize the importance of Braudel’s temporal structuralism as a methodological tool, but I do not employ it in service of a unified vision of a single Castilian worldview enduring over a great period of time. By focusing the majority of my attention on perception throughout the dissertation, I instead lean toward *mentalité* as the most important influence on my work.

My reconstruction of perception of the sea in late medieval Castile frequently expresses the “mental worldview” of Castilians in a manner entirely consistent with that

²⁴ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 ed., 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

employed by the *Annalistes* in their presentation of *mentalité*, an approach first articulated by Marc Bloch in *Les Rois Thaumaturges*.²⁵ Bloch's study of *mentalité* was not concerned with the effectiveness of the royal touch, but rather with the ways in which people expressed their belief in the king's ability to cure scrofula, why they appeared to believe it, and how the interaction shaped a relationship between the king and his subjects. In like fashion, my dissertation eschews the direct study of maritime culture, with an attendant focus on ship technology, trade volume, bills of lading, or military development in favor of the study of how Castilians imagined the sea and articulated that worldview in visual and literary media. That is to say, at many points I consciously attempt to recreate a mentality within a given moment, as in the case of my treatment of thirteenth-century vs. later perception of the sea on a larger scale, equivalent to the *longue durée*. However, as I present and analyze the evidence offered here, I consciously avoid employing *mentalité* as a set of mental structures setting limits on human thought within a given timeframe. This structural approach would apply certain essentialist arguments to my discussion of perception, especially as it does not allow for the demonstrable change in perceived experience I discuss throughout the dissertation. Indeed, in addressing change as an integral part of my study of perception, and demonstrating that such change was an evolutionary part of the relationship between land and sea discussed throughout my work, I am specifically addressing one of the shortcomings of the *Annalistes*' approach to *mentalité*.

²⁵ Marc Bloch, *Les Rois Thaumaturges*, trans. Léopold Benjamin, 1st English ed. (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1973).

There are significant pitfalls in attempting to articulate *mentalité*, and I have actively sought to avoid them. One of the reasonable criticisms of the methodology is its dependence on largely elite voices, a perennial hurdle for medieval scholars generally. The scholar seeking to reconstruct perception must be aware of the limitations involved in projecting the perspective of dominant voices onto a larger *mentalité* involving subordinate ones. An excerpt from Le Roy Ladurie's classic study of the experiences of the inhabitants of Montailou, a small village in the Pyrenees, based on records from the inquisition investigating allegations of Cathari heresy, offers an excellent example of the possible problems attendant with overreaching in ascribing worldview and *mentalité*:

We have no statistics on the subject, but it may be that the people of Montailou wept slightly more easily than we do, both in happiness and in sorrow. People cried, of course, at the prospect or reality of misfortune, or for the death of someone dear to them, in particular for the death of a child, even when it was very young. Both men and women grew pale, trembles and wept when afraid that they were about to be betrayed to the Inquisition. Among the shepherds, we see men bursting into tears at a breach of friendship or solidarity, especially when accompanied by threats foreshadowing arrest by the Inquisitors.²⁶

²⁶ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montailou: The Promised Land of Error*, 1st English ed. (New York: Braziller, 1978).

Le Roy Ladurie grounds his work, for the most part, in Inquisition records from which he reconstructs a larger historical narrative of the village and its inhabitants, but the limits of that reconstruction become clear in this passage. While we may often wish to ascribe what we perceive to be “common” or “expected” behaviors to the subjects of our historical scrutiny, we cannot forget the distance between the voice we read in the written account and the events as they occurred on the ground. Shepherds may well have burst into tears as their testimony in the Inquisitional records describe, but they might also exaggerate their reactions at given moments because they believed it was in their interest to do so. In other words, the study of *mentalité* can encourage an easy generalization that may move the investigator away from a sound consideration of the limitations of the evidence in use.

Francois Furet, having distanced himself from the *Annales* school at least in part as a consequence of the pitfalls of the study of *mentalité* demonstrated by the above quote, derided its pursuit as “merely a Gallic substitute for psychoanalysis,” and posited that the results of such research endeavours “yield endlessly debatable results.”²⁷ The most significant distinction between my approach and the traditional study of *mentalities* is that by focusing on perception of the sea alone, rather than a reconstruction of a specific Castilian *mentalité*, I am avoiding the descent into an overly narrative psychological discussion of the sort Furet described. In addition, although I am very much concerned with the *longue durée* in terms of the scope of my study, I do not seek to

²⁷ Francois Furet, "Beyond the *Annales*," *Journal of Modern History* 55 (1983): 404-05.

define one central governing *mentalité* in operation over the course of the late Middle Ages in Castile.

Two fundamental comparative elements undergird the foundation of the dissertation: the concepts of spatial differentiation and of integration, a distinction emphasized throughout the entirety of the late medieval period in Castile and apparent in all of the sources. In each chapter of the dissertation, the fundamental method of analysis involves teasing assumptions and inferences from each of the three major genres under examination. The Castilian sources analyzed here display a strong tendency to distinguish land from sea in the earlier thirteenth century evidence, and to make lesser or greater attempts to integrate the two conceptually in later fourteenth and fifteenth century examples. Thus, in each chapter, analysis involves comparison and contrast between earlier and later sources, revealing both continuity and change over the period of the study. In providing four facets of that perception, these chapters combine to reveal a consistent pattern of perception regarding the sea. Because of the wide variety of sources in use in the chapters that follow – a range including art, chronicle, literature, law, and royal court proceedings -- an acknowledgement of the distinctions in genre that influence and in some cases nearly pre-determine the portrayal of the sea they present is essential. In each case, considerations of patronage and purpose loom large.

The close analysis of land and sea present in the imagery of the thirteenth century *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and the fifteenth-century artistic illustrations contained in the Paris manuscript of the *Libro de Cavallero Cifar* represent the artistic component of the four-part exploration of maritime perception in the following study, and each requires a

recognition of genre and its effect on subsequent analysis.²⁸ In the case of the *Cantigas*, a collection of Marian miracle tales solely devoted to venerating her intervention in otherwise hopeless situations, depictions of helplessness and desperation are an essential element in the composition of certain miniatures. By contrast, the miniatures of *Cifar* served a different purpose within their manuscript, adorning what was largely a chivalric adventure tale. Thus, in the case of the comparative analysis of these two manuscripts appearing in Chapter II, the primary focus is on the distinction between land and sea and their respective representation within each manuscript, where differences are striking and independent of genre-specific requirement. Each of the chronicles of the kings of Castile presented in Chapter III served slightly different political purposes from the point of view of their patrons, and each framed the ruler under consideration in either flattering or unflattering terms depending upon the desired outcome. For this reason, references from them included in the chapter either serve to point out descriptions of the sea and the actions of men upon it as heavily influenced by patronage issues, or to demonstrate the continuity of certain tropes appearing over the nearly two hundred year period of this study which appear independently of such considerations. Ultimately, the analysis reveals significant comparative points that stand independent of genre and find voice in the other evidence from contemporary sources.

Chapter IV employs the same comparative framework using the thirteenth century law code *Las Siete Partidas* and the records of royal court activity preserved in the

²⁸ Images appearing in this dissertation come from the facsimile editions of both works owing to cost and ease of duplication. The sources for these images are Francisco Ramos Rafael Rico, *Libro del Caballero Zifar: códice de Paris*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Moleiro, 1996), Alfonso X, *El "Codice rico" de las Cantigas de Alfonso X el Sabio: ms. T.I.1 de la Biblioteca de El Escorial* (Madrid: Edilán, 1979).

Cuadernos del Cortes of Castile-Leon.²⁹ The focus of this chapter is on the law and its creation of clear distinctions between land and sea, revealed through a conceptual analysis that unfolds with a recognition of the prescribed nature of the laws the code contains. Indeed, the conceptual underpinning of the *Partidas* was one involving prescriptions for a law governing a unified kingdom, and in many cases, especially in the maritime marine section governing a military hierarchy, relied on expectation and idealized performance rather than existing precedent and widely-recognized and practiced legal principles. For that reason, the *Partidas* is an especially important and useful source for the study of perception, given that conceptual emphasis and expectation of outcome framed each prescribed law. In comparing the thirteenth-century statutes of the *Partidas* with the royal decrees preserved in the *Cortes*, emerging patterns of conceptual integration between land and sea become clear by the fifteenth century, where matters presented before the monarchs at court demonstrate a strong turn toward inclusion of the sea in the larger realm.

In Chapter V, a combination of all of the genres previously introduced form the foundation for a broader examination of the role of agency and its description over the period of this study. This chapter introduces two new sources, both travel narratives, and their inclusion offers another genre specific challenge. In the case of the travel narratives of Pero Tafur and Ruy González de Clavijo, careful attention to details of maritime

²⁹ Manuel Colmeiro, *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de Leon y de Castilla. Introducción escrita y publicada de orden de la Real Academia de la Historia, por su individuo de número don Manuel Colmeiro*, 5 vols., vol. 1 (Madrid: Est. tip. de los sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1883).

activity appear, of the sort previously undocumented in earlier sources.³⁰ Yet, the genre itself, demanding something of a diary format, promoted the daily recording of information and arguably contributed to the proliferation of these details. A similar conclusion is possible when considering the important literary source *El Victorial*, which also makes its appearance here, a fifteenth-century chronicle of Pero Niño, Count of Buelna. However, though containing elements similar to the travel accounts and even to formal chronicles, the work is more of a combination of the two, sometimes following a daily recording format and elsewhere a narrative literary style.³¹ Like the two travel narratives appearing in the chapter, *Victorial* also provides detailed information on the daily activities of mariners, arguing for a tendency influenced by the genre itself. Yet, royal chronicle evidence offered in the chapter shows that a similar pattern appears in other contemporary source material, thus supporting a conclusion that a larger change in perception was underway in Castile at the same time. This change in perception solidly points toward an integration of land and sea in conceptual terms, consistent with the evidence presented within the individual analyses of each major genre.

From 1200 to 1450, Castilian attitudes toward the sea changed markedly, as did the sources recording those attitudes. In some cases, those responsible for the creation of that material played important roles in the subsequent portrayal of the sea. In others, considerations that are more important relegated the appearance of the sea and events occurring there to a minor or even incidental role. Through an analysis of both physical

³⁰ Pero Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, ed. Miguel Angel Pérez Priego (Sevilla: Fundación José Manuel Lara, 2009), Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán*, ed. Francisco López Estrada (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1999).

³¹ Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*.

and conceptual impressions, these four chapters answer the fundamental question laid out in this dissertation – What did Castilians think of the sea, and how did they imagine its place in the larger realm? Taken together, these four brief studies on perception in art, literature, law, and the combined treatment they receive in addressing agency and liability reconstruct the larger place of the sea in the realm of late medieval Castile. Collectively, they contribute to a much more sophisticated view of the gradual process at work in the assimilation and presentation of perspectives regarding the sea, perspectives at times hidden and difficult to find in the thirteenth century, much more prominent and even celebrated by the fifteenth.

CHAPTER II

IMAGES OF THE SEA: THE VISUAL PERSPECTIVE

Medieval Castilians did not regard the sea as a frontier. It is perhaps the most intuitive relationship that comes to mind when dealing with the known relative to the unknown, and this was certainly the case for the thirteenth century Castilians as southern Andalusia fell into their hands following the conquest of Seville; for despite their long access to the Bay of Biscay on the northern Cantabrian coast and the port of Cartagena on the Mediterranean, the sea had played little direct role in the great southern reconquest, and held a limited place in the larger Castilian perception of the world as a whole. Indeed, the very use of the term frontier itself has a connotative meaning decidedly at variance with the Castilian experience of the forward edge of the southern expansion. Far from being unfamiliar with dealing with the unknown on land, the Castilians had an extensive and thoroughly articulated system for negotiating both conquest and colonization on the *frontera*. Their familiarity with the challenges of the frontier is apparent in the late medieval law, where maritime legislation displays a concerted effort to familiarize the sea by using language and legal constructions in such a way as to make that new space amenable to existing frameworks of understanding the relationship between individuals and property on land. Rather than creating law out of whole cloth in order to meet the challenges of a new maritime frontier, these laws reflect a perception of the sea as amenable to the application of existing strategies for dealing with its challenges. Literature of the period tended to portray the sea as a dangerous arena, instantly

bestowing noteworthy bravery on all those willing to brave its perils, in contrast to the expected assumption of such risk encountered by those involved in the reconquest or colonization of the southern lands. By using language and imagery suitable for providing a familiar context for actions in a place unfamiliar to the majority of those hearing the tale, literature also tended to grant an air of the familiar to events at sea while simultaneously emphasizing its alien nature. In any event, law and literature both provide us with ample evidence to show that the sea in late-medieval Castile was, in spite of some experience, a relatively unfamiliar place for them.

If the sea was not a frontier as Castilians so well understood that concept, it was something new and much more dangerous in some ways, a function of the increased prominence it held in Castilian affairs from 1248 onward. Nowhere do these sentiments appear with greater clarity than in the visual imagery of the period. To be sure, the evidence is somewhat scant, at least with regard to the number of sources – there are only two significant works from which to draw -- but each is resplendent with examples more than sufficient to reconstruct some important assumptions about the place of the sea in the medieval Castilian world. These images present a variety of perspectives on the place of the sea in the late medieval Castilian world, both portraying the sea as a place where one could encounter dangers unknown on land, and where isolation and treachery abounded. We find marked contrasts between land and sea, as well as an approach to the integration of human beings with these respective environments that reflected a burgeoning comfort and confidence with their place there as the Middle Ages waned.³²

³² Human agency and its relationship to image construction receives treatment in Harold Kleinschmidt's *Perception and Agency in Medieval Europe* as part of a chapter devoted to the demonstration of the relationship between perception and agency in medieval manuscript illumination. Kleinschmidt describes

The contrast between the imagery of the thirteenth century and that of the fifteenth reveal a decidedly altered perspective, one that tends to present land and sea in greater harmony and grants a certain degree of familiarity to the human subjects shown at sea.³³

This chapter will scrutinize the imagery contained in two major sources, the thirteenth-century *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and the mid-fifteenth century *El libro del Cavallero Cifar*.³⁴ I have chosen to compare the illuminations contained in these two manuscripts for two reasons: one, they provide a suitable chronological frame for my

illuminations as evolving from “translating perception into action,” and instead becoming “instruments for visualizing hierarchies.” (24) His analysis of imagery from the fourteenth-century *Codex Manesse* emphasizes the role that deliberate construction of the illumination played in the perception of that image by the viewing audience. He concludes that “artists no longer expected viewers to generate predetermined reactions when looking at the picture; instead, artists positioned viewers as observers of interactions among persons in different hierarchically arrayed spaces without being themselves involved.” (25) His analysis suggests that both illustrator and viewer were involved in the creation of a perceptual model of understanding the image, and thus that the image was a negotiated experience between the two. Kleinschmidt’s example of the sixteenth-century portrayal of Seville by Theodore de Bry demonstrates what he believes is the consequence of centuries of change regarding spatial hierarchies and their presentation. The image, he argues, demonstrates a lack of topographic fidelity that he sees as evidence of the illuminator’s desire to privilege the relationship between Seville and the sea – a privileging that I also argue occurs in the *Cifar* illuminations analyzed in this chapter. (34) See Harald Kleinschmidt, *Perception and Action in Medieval Europe* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2005).

³³ There are no art historical studies devoted solely to the depiction of the sea in medieval manuscript illumination, but the most recent and best study dealing with the subject as part of a larger analysis of landscape illustration in the period in France appears in a chapter entitled ‘Seas and Waters’ in Patricia May Gathercole, *The Landscape of Nature in Medieval French Manuscript Illumination* (Lewiston, N. Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997). Her treatment primarily deals with rivers and lakes, but demonstrates that seascapes in French manuscripts in the late medieval period tended to evince more detail in some respects than those present in the Castilian record. This is particularly true with regard to the depiction of fish, the tones and variations in coloration of sea and sky, and the portrayal of shadows cast by vessels at sea. At the same time, French manuscripts also tended to frame the sea in a manner suggesting vast or infinite horizons, just as in the Castilian examples presented in this chapter. Gathercole, *The Landscape of Nature in Medieval French Manuscript Illumination*.. Also see the general treatments of landscape available in, Christopher De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1986), J. J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).. Although not focused on the presentation of seascape and limited in scope to mostly English source material and to ships in particular, Joe Flatman’s study of the presentation of vessels, especially the degree to which they are or are not reliable as archaeological evidence, is a useful resource. Joe Flatman, *Ships and Shipping in Medieval Manuscripts* (London: British Library, 2009).

³⁴ Alfonso X, "MS. T.I. 1: Cantigas de Santa Maria (Códice Rico).", Unknown, "MS. 11-309. *Libro de Cavallero Cifar*," (Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional, c. 1280).

larger study; and two, they are the only two manuscripts produced in Castile in the late medieval period containing numerous miniatures including the sea and activities there as subject matter. The images contained in these two works are of inestimable value in reconstructing the visual aspect of the Castilian perception of the sea, especially as both sources lean very heavily toward a non-symbolic representation of both land and sea environments. That is to say that in contrast to other late medieval manuscript illumination, both of these works are decidedly less bound by an iconographic approach to the subject matter at hand, with the artists attempting to reproduce the world in a decidedly realist perspective as opposed to the highly symbolic use of imagery so prominent in a religiously-sponsored work.³⁵ Yet, it was precisely because the subject matter was the occurrence of miracles that the patron, Alfonso X, King of Castile (1252-89) demanded such a high degree of fidelity to reality. Miracles were, after all, especially noteworthy when they seemed to occur in an otherwise realistic setting, for they occurred

³⁵ The use of the term “realism” in describing the content and style of the *Cantigas* is a convention of analysts working with the miniatures and its use is accepted and adopted by the most accomplished art historians working with them, particularly Pedro Guerrero-Lovillo, the late John Keller, and Ana Domínguez-Rodríguez. Within the context of that usage, realism in the *Cantigas* is an attempt at a faithful reproduction of an 'objective' reality, aiming for an un-romanticized portrayal of quotidian subjects. The most recent example of this usage would be in Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, and Pilar Treviño Gajardo's *Las Cantigas de Santa María: formas y imágenes*, where the authors analyze Alfonsine iconography, architectural presentation, decorative detail on windows, jewelry, and clothing, concluding that such attention to quotidian detail created a collection of miniatures marked by a conscious realistic depiction. For example, in addressing the study of buildings as presented in the miniatures of the *Cantigas*, Domínguez-Rodríguez notes that “Las miniaturas alfonsies son, probablemente, las más importantes representaciones españolas del siglo XIII que nos informan sobre los preparativos, etapas, y utilidades de la construcción gótica.” (The Alfonsine miniatures are probably the most important thirteenth century Spanish representations informing us about the preparation, phases (of construction), and utilization of Gothic construction) (101). More important was the clear break from earlier tradition represented by the artistic style itself: “Las miniaturas que ilustran estas cantigas muestran la vitalidad y frescura con que los iluminadores alfonsies podían crear imágenes sin tradición previa en que apoyarse.” (31) (The miniatures illustrating these canticles demonstrate the vitality and freshness with which the Alfonsine illuminators could create images without reference to previous tradition.) For the contrast between an iconographic versus the more realistic portrayal considered the *Cantigas* style, as well as the most recent analysis of comparisons between the *Cantigas* and contemporary European miniature production, see Ana Domínguez Rodríguez and Pilar Treviño Gajardo, *Las Cantigas de Santa María: formas e imágenes* (Madrid: AyN Ediciones, 2007).

only upon divine intervention into an otherwise purely earthly event. Also important was Alfonso's personal experiences, related in some of the stories featuring his own salvation at the hands of the Virgin, and his belief that the physical book itself had curative powers – demonstrated by scenes showing him calling for the *Cantigas* and actually holding them his arms as he suffered from an illness.³⁶ Alfonso's personal interest in the project and his belief in its power contributed to an insistence on an accurate retelling and depiction of each miracle contained in the collection. The imagery used in illustrating the miracles of the *Cantigas* provides us with a tremendously detailed snapshot of medieval life in Castile because it was critical that they do so in order to bring the reality of the miracles to life. The resulting panels of images would have been instantly recognizable to any Castilian of the period, down to the depiction of such mundane details as the type of toys in use by children, the implements wielded by artisans, and produce for sale in the market square.³⁷ In other words, the illustrators recreated the world as they saw it as a means of providing as realistic a backdrop as possible for the subsequent appearance of something entirely out of the ordinary, thereby enhancing its value as an event worthy of veneration. Inadvertently, they also left us an invaluable resource for deconstructing their perception of the world as well.

³⁶ The panel series showing the volume – presumably Escorial T.I.1 (E) – occurs in *Cantiga 209*. The extent to which Alfonso's own work appears in the *Cantigas* remains one of the liveliest scholarly debates regarding this work. See Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, "Imágenes de presentación de la miniatura alfonsí," *Goya* 131 (1976): 287-91. Also see Joseph T. Snow, "A Chapter in Alfonso's Personal Narrative: The Puerto de Santa Maria Poems in the CSM," *La Corónica* 3 (1980): 10-21. Joseph O'Callaghan makes the most complete argument for his personal investment in the work in his Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa Maria: a Poetic Biography* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

³⁷ A generalized approach to the notion of "daily life" as presented in the *Cantigas* may be found in John E. Keller and Annette G. Cash, *Daily Life Depicted in the Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988). Keller's work remains the single best introductory source for the marvels contained in the *Cantigas*, though the quantity of imagery is lamentably small.

The situation is somewhat different with regard to the *Cavallero Cifar*. Realism was also an important element in the images contained in the manuscript, but unlike the *Cantigas*, this emphasis was not a necessary element in its construction. *Cifar* is an adventure tale with didactic elements, and its illustration serves to enrich the production as ornamentation, rather than serving as staging elements working in close concert with the textual elements of the story. Despite the overall focus on a chivalric adventure, however, *Cifar* does contain some moments intended to convey the presence and guidance of the supernatural, such as two separate images of the Christ child appearing in the crow's nest of a vessel. However, there is general agreement among art historians that the artistic representations contained in the miniatures are tending toward a realist style which was, at any rate, burgeoning near the mid fifteenth century, having begun to infiltrate the Iberian peninsula from the Italian artistic centers.³⁸

This analysis contained in this chapter will compare and contrast the imagery from these two sources, beginning with a close analysis of how each of these sources represented the relationship between land and sea, where the union of sea and shore reveals striking differences in the perception of one relative to the other. Close analysis and comparison of various images from the *Cantigas* will reveal distinctly different representation of land and seascapes, differences that accentuate a sense of otherness associated with the sea and present themselves in stark visual terms. When comparing

³⁸ It is Keller who has made the most forceful argument in this regard, though I have some disagreements with his evaluation of the Paris *Cifar* as being "more concerned with realism" than the *Cantigas*. An earlier remark by John Walker in his analysis of tradition and technique in the creation of *Cifar* makes a passing remark about the "realistic" aspect of the miniatures, but his project was one of literary evaluation. We have yet to receive a full analysis of the art contained in the *Cifar*; the publication of the 1996 Moleiro facsimile may yet make the possibility more likely. John E. Keller and Richard P. Kinkade, *Iconography in Medieval Spanish Literature* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), Roger M. Walker, *Tradition and technique in El libro del cavallero Zifar* (London: Tamesis Books, 1974).

these images with those of the fifteenth-century *Cifar*, however, we find land and sea in a much more fluid, enveloping harmony, and this artistic representation of perception finds echoes in the analyses of literature and law that will follow later in this dissertation. Fear of the great power of the sea itself, as well as of the loss of agency associated with sea travel, reveals itself in images from both manuscripts and, with regard to the reliability of crews at sea, represents one of the constants appearing over time. Ultimately, the chapter will reveal that while there was a great deal of consistency in the perceived experience of Castilians at sea over the late medieval period, there was also a considerable amount of change, especially with regard to the visual display of the relationship between land and sea. In the end, the imagery analyzed in this chapter provides a stunning visual backdrop to the changing place of the sea in the Castilian realm and serves as an essential introduction to the larger maritime mentality explored in the following chapters of this dissertation.

Sources

My analysis of images from these two important sources represents the first scholarly treatment of maritime imagery in late medieval Castile directed toward illuminating our understanding of perception of the sea in that period. It is also the first study to compare directly imagery from both of these sources for that purpose. For that reason, it is critical at this point to provide some essential background on both of the sources under investigation in order to lay the foundation for the subsequent close analysis of imagery.

Las Cantigas de Santa Maria

In 1265, with his theories of law rendered via his *Espéculo de las Leyes* and *Las Siete Partidas*, the great patron of learning Alfonso X turned his attention to what would become his favorite work: *Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*, a collection of miracles attributed to the Virgin Mary set to music and accompanied by miniatures that address nearly every conceivable aspect of life in thirteenth-century Castile-Leon.. The *Cantigas* consists of 353 individual miracle stories, existing today in four manuscripts: MS. 10.069 *Códice de Toledo* (To), located at the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Codices T.I.1 and B.I.2 (E), at the Monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial; and the Florentine Codex B.R. 20 (F), located at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, Italy.³⁹ Of these four, the Toledo codex is considered the oldest, as it names Alfonso as “King of the Romans”,⁴⁰ a reference to his election as Holy Roman Emperor in 1257, and preserves glosses, evidently in Alfonso’s own hand. Codex B.I.2 is apparently the most complete and correct with regard to its collection of miracles; its miniatures represent musicians with their instruments performing the accompanying music. Considered an unfinished continuation to Codex T.I.1, Codex B.R.20 contains only 90 pages of miniatures, many of them unfinished, and does not contain music, though the pages have space allocated

³⁹ Alfonso X, "MS. T.I. 1: Cantigas de Santa Maria (Códice Rico).", Leon King of Castile and, Alfonso X (1221-1284), "Ms. 10.069 Cantigas de Santa Maria, Códice de Toledo (To)," (Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional (Spain), c.1265), Alfonso X, "MS. B.I.2 (Códice de los músicos)," (San Lorenzo del Escorial: Monasterio del San Lorenzo, c. 1265), Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María: edición facsímil del códice B.R.20 de la Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale de Florencia, siglo XIII*, ed. Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, Agustín Santiago Luque, and María Victoria Chico Picaza, 2 vols. (Madrid: Edilan, 1989).

⁴⁰ "...porque en su prologo se declara Alfonso ‘rey de romanos’". José Guerrero Lovillo, *Las Cántigas: Estudio arqueológico de sus miniaturas* (Madrid: S. A. Tipográfica de Madrid, 1949), 20.

for its inclusion.⁴¹ Codex T.I.1, known as the *Codice Rico* or “rich codex”, stands as the jewel of the surviving manuscripts. My analysis will address only Escorial T.I.1 and B.R.20, as the miniatures from B.I.2 illustrate musicians and their instruments only.

Escorial T.I.1, or *Codice Rico*, is an imposing manuscript, measuring 35 x 50 centimeters in size and containing 512 folios featuring 1,264 miniatures. The text of each *cantiga* appears on the verso in two columns of French gothic script. The accompanying miniature panels completely occupy the facing recto, and with one exception consist of a series of six images captioned at the top, laid out for viewing from left to right and top to bottom. The text is entirely Galician-Portuguese, held in great esteem during and after Alfonso’s time as the best linguistic medium for both lyric and narrative poetry and, like Provençal, preferred to Castilian for this purpose. Like all of the surviving codices, the T.I. 1 is in excellent condition, its brilliant colors and gold and silver illumination highlights still vivid, and even the unfinished miniatures of the B.R.20 are still splendid after the passing of nearly 750 years.

The *Cantigas* was the jewel of the *taller Alfonsi*, clearly a work designed to do justice to both the king commissioning its production and the Virgin Mary, the subject of the devotional tales contained within. Yet, the *Cantigas* was far more than a treasured devotional aid for a king. Recent scholarship argues that Alfonso actively used the *Cantigas* in aid of establishing wider support for his own secular authority, as a propagandistic tool in his continual struggle with the powerful Castilian nobility, and as a

⁴¹ John E. Keller, "Daily Living as Presented in the *Canticles* of Alfonso the Learned," *Speculum* 33 (1958): 485.

means of garnering support for southern settlement generally.⁴² In short, the manuscript was available to the public from the beginning in a variety of ways. Musical notation accompanied each *cantiga*, and Castilians could hear and sing these songs in churches. Thus, the messages these songs contained about the king's important role as a mediator between his people and the benevolent Virgin had a ready means of transmission. Alfonso provided the book for public display during important festivals in Seville, making the illustrations available for all to see, another important means of transmitting the messages he wished to share with his people regarding his role as king within the Castilian realm. The subject matter of the *cantigas* themselves contained many exciting and unusual events that would naturally attract the attention of the wider public, thus emphasizing the important role Alfonso wished to associate between his kingship and the larger miraculous events depicted in the tales. The wide variety of subjects presented in the tales covered a very broad spectrum of Castilian society and was thus a fine medium for a monarch to address his subjects in tandem with a spiritual message.

⁴² The argument was first forcefully expressed by Maricel Presilla, in an unpublished doctoral dissertation. Presilla argued that Alfonso intended to use the *Cantigas* as a means of solidifying his own centrality in Castilian society, and to encourage his subjects to associate his own ability to mediate in their lives with that of the Virgin herself. More recently, Amy Remensnyder has expanded that argument by asserting that the Castilian kings imagined Marian devotion as largely personal, and implicitly used that devotion in aid of their own secular goals. Connie Scarborough, in her most recent work, takes a step further in declaring the *Cantigas* as a political tool for propagandizing Alfonso's agenda, and that its public performance and display was part of a carefully orchestrated attempt to enlist the Virgin in his personal political agenda. One may see similar arguments with both Snow and O'Callaghan regarding the importance of southern settlement and the larger role of the *Cantigas* as a means of legitimizing Alfonso's wider claims to a more centralized monarchial power. See chiefly the following: O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa Maria: a Poetic Biography*, Maricel Presilla, "The Image of Death and Political Ideology in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria : art music, and poetry : proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221-1284) in commemoration of its 700th anniversary year--1981 (New York, November 19-21)*, ed. Israel J. Katz, et al. (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987), Amy Remensnyder, "Marian Monarchy in Thirteenth-Century Castile," in *The experience of power in medieval Europe, 950-1350*, ed. Robert F. Berkhofer, Alan Cooper, and Adam J. Kosto (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), Connie L. Scarborough, *A Holy Alliance: Alfonso X's Political Use of Marian Poetry* (Newark, Del.: Juan de la Cuesta, 2009), Joseph T. Snow, "Current Status of Cantigas Studies," in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Art, Music and Poetry*. (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987).

We know that the work on the project began sometime around 1265 and that the T.I.1 was complete by 1280, but details surrounding the artists responsible for the miniatures or the poets engaged in the translation and creation of original poetry remain the subject of some debate. At least one artist is specifically mentioned in *Cantiga 377*: one Pedro Laurencio, a man who “painted swiftly and well in her books,” where “her books” refers to the *Cantigas*.⁴³ The cantiga also describes Laurencio as the recipient of land from the king in return for an especially beautiful painting of the Virgin, leading both John Esten Keller and Kathleen Kulp-Hill to conclude that the king was, in fact, Alfonso X, and thus this was one of his painters.⁴⁴ Matilde López Serrano’s work with the miniatures led her to conclude that one of them was a calligrapher named Juan González and believed he was in the king’s service; she bases that assumption on the presence in *Cantiga 384* of a reference to a “monk who wrote admirably letters in gold, blue and rose”.⁴⁵

⁴³ “...fez un miragr’ a Reynna Santa Maria do Porto | por un ome que se tiinna con ela e os seus livros pintava ben e agina, assi que muitos otros | de saber pintar vencia.” (Queen Holy Mary of the Port performed a miracle for a man who trested in Her and painted Her books well and delicately so that he surpassed may others in knowing how to paint.) Walter Mettmann, ed., *Cantigas de Santa María de Alfonso X, Rey de Castilla y Leon* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1986), Vol.3, 309.

⁴⁴ Kulp-Hill does so in the footnotes of her translation of cantiga 377; Keller in his *Iconography*. Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa Maria. Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: a translation of the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, trans. Kathleen Kulp-Hill (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), 459, Keller and Kinkade, *Iconography in Medieval Spanish Literature*, 8. However it is important to recognize that Alfonso is named personally many times throughout the text of the *Cantigas*, and this passage is specific in referring to “a king”, rather than to Alfonso. In my estimation, this is not sufficient to conclude that we have definitely identified one of the artists.

⁴⁵ Matilde López Serrano, *Cantigas de Santa María de Alfonso X el Sabio, Rey de Castilla* (Madrid: Editorial Patrimonio Nacional, 1974), 185. This evidence fails in my estimation for the same reason as the preceding example – specificity in the text regarding names is not uncommon, particularly with regard to an association with Alfonso. Thus, I think it is reasonable to conclude that if Alfonso had wanted those names to appear in the volume, they certainly would have appeared there.

Despite the lack of specificity regarding the miniature artists at work on the *Cantigas*, their work is sufficiently distinctive to allow José Guerrero Lovillo to conclude that three separate artists could be identified solely on the basis of their relative skill: one, a careful artist, particularly good with facial expression and hand gesturing, whose work is typified by rather chubby-faced characters with bright, expressive eyes; a second, whose characters display much thinner faces and a certain degree of raw quality to the overall production; and a third, whom Lovillo labels “francamente inhábil” (frankly unskilled), whose work is characterized by lack of spirit or vitality in his characters.⁴⁶ Lovillo also posited that the sites of much of the production of the miniatures were Seville and Toledo, basing his argument on the existence of so many of the landmarks to be found in both cities, including the Moorish walls of the La Macarena district of Seville, and the large Almohadan gates quite reminiscent of those leading to the Patio de los Naranjos at the Cathedral of Seville.⁴⁷ However, one cannot find an example of the Torre del Oro, the famous remaining tower landmark on the shores of the Guadalquivir, once connected to the Triana side of the river by great chains and broken by Ramon Bónifaz and the Castilian fleet in support of the conquest of Seville by Alfonso’s father Fernando. Such a critically important landmark and event, commemorated elsewhere in the city by statuary and even reference in the Cathedral itself, seems conspicuously absent. Perhaps more telling is the absence of a depiction of the *Giralda* itself, the great tower of the Cathedral and a symbol for Seville since its conquest. Given that neither appear in the imagery, it seems difficult to imagine that the artists resided in or were even

⁴⁶ Guerrero Lovillo, *Las Cantigas*. All three are indeed easily identifiable, though there remains no consensus on the number of artists involved in the production.

⁴⁷ One can see the gates in *Cantiga 32*.

from Seville, but the question remains unresolved.⁴⁸ What we can say with authority is that the artists were Castilian, certainly living and working within Castile-Leon, and possibly in the cities under conjecture, certainly in Seville at some point, given that Alfonso spent the majority of his time in that city.⁴⁹

Though the *Cantigas* command a place as the most important source of illuminations available for the study of thirteenth century life, there are remarkably few major studies dedicated to the manuscript and the truly enormous wealth of information it provides. With regard to art studies, one can easily separate existing scholarship into two camps. On the one hand, there is the important and necessary work of categorization, the meticulous cataloguing of the hundreds of details contained in the miniatures, and here we must immediately acknowledge the signal contribution of Professor José Guerrero Lovillo, whose 1949 work *Las Cántigas: Estudio arqueológico de sus miniaturas* remains an essential starting point for those seeking to work with the *Cantigas* miniatures.⁵⁰ As the title indicates, Prof. Lovillo's work takes an archaeological approach to the miniatures, with the result being a comprehensive listing of nearly every possible

⁴⁸ One additional site for the physical locales of the actual work is Galicia, supported by the appearance of a Galician *hórreo* (a long rectangular granary, supported by pillars to raise it from the ground) in *Cantiga 186*. The argument was initially made by Victor Lampérez y Romea, *Arquitectura civil Española* (Madrid: Editorial Calleja, 1922).

⁴⁹ See the public discussion of the importance of Seville to Alfonso X in Manuel González Jiménez and Juan Torres Fontes, *Historia de dos ciudades: Sevilla y Murcia en tiempos de Alfonso X el Sabio: discurso leído el día 8 de marzo de 2007 en su recepción pública, por el Excmo. Sr. D. Manuel González Jiménez y contestación del Excmo. Sr. D. Juan Torres Fontes* (Murcia: Real Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 2007).. All biographies listed in this dissertation contain reference to the importance of Seville to Alfonso's reign. Seville yet retains a civic symbol, found on virtually every manhole cover and most public facilities, showing a NO 8 DO, where the 8 is a skein of yarn (*majeda*). Thus, the rebus actually reads "No *majeda* Do", meant to signify "no me ha dejado," (she did not desert me) a reference to Seville's loyalty to Alfonso X during the rebellion led by his wife Violetta and son Sancho. Also see Manuel González Jiménez, *La repoblación del Reino de Sevilla en el siglo XIII* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2008).

⁵⁰ Guerrero Lovillo, *Las Cantigas*.

category of items pictured in the panels, including clothing, weaponry, architecture, sculpture, painting, naval architecture, and even glass and ceramics. A more recent cataloging effort is that of John Keller and Annette Cash, whose *Daily Life Depicted in the Cantigas de Santa Maria* includes an appendix containing a “Daily Life Categories” index, alphabetized by subject matter, and including miniatures from both T.I.1 and F.⁵¹

The second category of scholarship on the *Cantigas* is that of the detailed analysis of the many subjects and themes identified by those undertaking the daunting task of categorization. Many of these studies focus on historically contextualizing the images or stories themselves, such as Joseph O’Callaghan’s *The Cantigas as an Historical Source*, described by *Cantigas* 321 and 386, as they speak specifically to the king’s ability to cure scrofula by touch.⁵² Richard Kincade’s *Alfonso X, Cantiga 235, and the Events of 1269-78* represents another attempt to contextualize the image and text of the *Cantigas*, describing a period of noble revolt and turmoil during Alfonso’s reign, as well as his belief that he was cured by the Virgin of a terrible infection after being kicked in the face by a horse; on the strength of the descriptions in the *Cantiga* alone, Kincade concludes that it is possible Alfonso even suffered from squamous-cell carcinoma.⁵³ Both of these

⁵¹ Keller and Cash, *Daily Life Depicted in the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, 63-77.

⁵² It is also within this particular article that O’Callaghan reasserts the “non-sacral” nature of Castilian kingship, recently questioned by Amy Remensnyder. Joseph F. O’Callaghan, “The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* as an Historical Source: Two Examples (nos. 321 and 386),” in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Art, Music, and Poetry: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221-1284) in Commemoration of its 700th Anniversary Year--1981 (New York, November 19-21)*, ed. Israel J. Katz, et al. (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987), Remensnyder, “Marian Monarchy in Thirteenth-Century Castile.” I remain unconvinced that the evidence she offers constitutes sufficient grounds for dramatically revising the position held by most Castilian historians regarding the lack of importance of “sacral kingship” to that lineage.

⁵³ Richard P. Kincade, “Alfonso X, Cantiga 235 and the Events of 1269-1278,” *Speculum* 67 (1992). Kincade is even able to argue convincingly for a date of 1278 as the date of creation for the piece, largely

examples, and, of course, O'Callaghan's *Alfonso and the Cantigas: a Poetic Biography*, stand as examples of a contextualizing methodology designed to ferret out the details and solidly ground the *Cantigas* in the real world of Castile-Leon.⁵⁴ With regard to the study of imagery as the primary focus, Connie Scarborough's *Theme of the Runaway Nun*, and James Burke's *Reward and Punishment* both represent work dependent on close analysis of series of related miniatures contained in the *Cantigas*.⁵⁵ The publication of facsimiles of all three of the illuminated manuscripts by the Édilan publishing house in Madrid has made these masterworks much more accessible to scholars and has prompted a wave of studies dealing with all aspects of the composition of these important pieces.⁵⁶

based on his analysis of the events it depicts and the subsequent case he builds using ancillary documents from the nobles under examination, particularly Diego López de Haro.

⁵⁴ O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa Maria: a Poetic Biography*.

⁵⁵ James F. Burke, "Virtue and Sin, Reward and Punishment in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Art, Music, and Poetry: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221-1284) in commemoration of its 700th anniversary year--1981 (New York, November 19-21)*, ed. Israel J. Katz, et al. (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987), Connie L. Scarborough, "Verbalization and Visualization in Ms. T.I.1 of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*: The Theme of the Runaway Nun," in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Art, Music, and Poetry: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221-1284) in Commemoration of its 700th Anniversary Year--1981 (New York, November 19-21)*, ed. Israel J. Katz, et al. (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987).

⁵⁶ For general studies on the miniatures and their creation, see Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, *La miniatura en la corte de Alfonso X* (Madrid: Historia 16, 1991), George D. Greenia, "The Court of Alfonso X in Words and Pictures: The Cantigas," in *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context; Selected Papers from the 5th Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, Dalfsen, the Netherlands, 9-16 August, 1986*, ed. Congress International Courtly Literature Society, Keith Busby, and Erik Kooper (Philadelphia: J. Benjamins Pub. Co., 1990), John E. Keller, "The Art of Illumination in the Books of Alfonso X (Primarily in the *Canticles of Holy Mary*)," *Thought* 60 (1985), Ellen Kosmer and James F. Powers, "Manuscript Illumination: The *Cantigas* in Contemporary Art Context," in *Emperor of Culture*, ed. Robert I. Burns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), Jesús Montoya Martínez and Alfonso, *Composición, estructura y contenido del cancionero marial de Alfonso X* (Murcia: Real Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1999), J.M. Nieto Soria, "Imágenes religiosas del rey y del poder real en la Castilla del siglo XIII," *En la España medieval* 5 (1986).; for studies addressing the relationship between text and image in the various manuscripts of the *Cantigas* see L. Beltrán, "Texto verbal y texto pictórico: las cantigas 1 y 10 del *Códice Rico*," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 9 (1990), María Victoria Chico Picaza, "La teoría medieval de la música y la miniatura de las Cantigas.," María Victoria Chico Picaza, "La relación texto-imagen en las Cantigas de Santa María, de Alfonso X el Sabio," *Reales Sitios* 87 (1986), María Victoria Chico Picaza, "Composición pictórica en el Códice Rico de las Cantigas de Santa María"

Despite the interest and attention of scholars over the past several decades, a significant lacuna remains in the corpus of *Cantiga* scholarship – the study of how these images might provide a basis for studying medieval Castilian perception of the world in a physical sense. We have many studies focused on a variety of behaviors and physical activities displayed in the imagery, but remarkably little targeting this larger issue. This study on the perception of the sea is the first. As my analysis will show, the imagery of the *Cantigas* contains a wealth of information on the perception of the relationship between humans and the natural world on a variety of levels, and it is an especially rich source for understanding the place of the sea in Castile.

El Libro del Cavallero Cífar

El libro del cavallero Cífar is the story of the knight Cífar and his adventures including shipwreck, piracy, questing beasts, abduction by wild animals, and his ultimate reunion with his family. In this particular chapter, the focus will be on the imagery the manuscript contains and what it reveals to us about the sea; issues surrounding the story

(Editorial de la Universidad Complutense, 1987), Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, "Texto, imagen, y diseño de la página en los códices de Alfonso X el Sabio (1252-1284)," in *Imágenes y promotores en el arte medieval: miscelánea en homenaje a Joaquín Yarza Luaces*, ed. Joaquín Yarza and Ma Luisa Melero Moneo (Bellaterra (Barcelona): Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Servei de Publicacions, 2001), Ana Domínguez Rodríguez and Pilar Treviño Gajardo, "Tradición del texto y tradición de la imagen en las Cantigas de Santa Maria," *Reales sitios*, no. 164 (2005), John E. Keller, "Verbalization and Visualization in the Cantigas de Santa Maria," in *Oelschläger Festschrift* (Madrid, España: Estudios de Hispanófila; Distribuido por Editorial Castalia, 1976), John E. Keller, "The Threefold Impact of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*: Visual, Verbal, and Musical," in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Art, Music, and Poetry: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221-1284) in Commemoration of Its 700th Anniversary Year - 1981*, ed. Israel K. Katz and John E. Keller (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987).; some examples of individual image studies involving single cantigas or groups include F. Corti, "Narrativa visual de la enfermedad en las *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," *Cuadernos de Historia de España LXXV* (1998), O. Manzi and F. Corti, "Viajeros y peregrinos en las *Cantigas de Santa María*," *Temas medievales* 5 (1995).

itself will appear in the next chapter.⁵⁷ There are two surviving manuscripts of *Cifar*, the earliest of which dates from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, held at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid; and a sumptuously illuminated manuscript housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, dated by María Elena de Arizmendi, based on analysis of the artistic style, to circa 1465.⁵⁸ The Paris manuscript of *Cifar* is second only to the *Cantigas* in quantity of color illuminations, and it is certainly comparable in terms of the lavishness of the production, which must have been enormously expensive given its size (15.62 inches high by 10.62 inches wide). As the second most lavish Castilian medieval manuscript in existence, we can probably assume that royal patronage was behind the project.⁵⁹

We know little about the author of *Cifar*, and even less about the artists responsible for the magnificent artwork contained therein.⁶⁰ Knowing that a team of

⁵⁷ The relationship between text and image is an important one in *Cifar*, and as Christopher Donahue has noted, the influence of the former on the latter was often quite lacking. Donahue's efforts to address the influence of the narrative on subsequent production of miniatures in *Cifar* is the first to explore that subject. Ultimately, he concludes that "there is little reason to believe that the illustrators of Espagnol 36 were more than superficially familiar with the story of the *Libro del cavallero Cifar* or with the teachings it contains, for most of the images can be shown to depend entirely upon uncomplicated and easily-identifiable details contained in the narrative that surrounds them." His thesis contests with the important seminal study on the miniatures done by Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux, who argued that the illustration of the sequence of images involved with Cifar's son Roboan's journey to the *Insolas dotadas* constituted solid evidence that the illustrators wished to guide the reader to a particular interpretation of the narrative. Christopher Donahue, "Notes on the Illumination of Espagnol 36, BnF ("*Libro del cavallero Cifar*")," *Hispanofila*, no. 150 (2007), Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux, "*Las Islas Dotadas: Texto y miniaturas del manuscrito de Paris, clave par su interpretación*," in *Hispanic Studies in Honor of Alan D. Deyermond: a North American Tribute*, ed. A. D. Deyermond, John S. Miletich, and Studies Hispanic Seminary of Medieval (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1986).

⁵⁸ Unknown, "MS 11-309.", Unknown, "Cavallero Cifar."

⁵⁹ For the possibilities regarding patronage and potential involvement in the creation of the manuscript, see E. Michael Gerli, "Zifar Redivivus: Patronage, Politics, and the Paris Manuscript of the *Libro del caballero Zifar*," *La Corónica* 27 (1999).

⁶⁰ See the study by Planas Badenas for details regarding the hands involved in the construction of the miniatures, as well as the study by Carmen Bernis for a rigorous presentation of the illustration program.

artists worked on the *Cantigas*, we can reasonably infer that there may have been a similar group involved in the production of *Cifar*, an inference supported by the study undertaken by Jose Manuel Lucía Megía and his reconstruction of artist's instructions in the margins of some folios of Espagnol 36.⁶¹ Nevertheless, we can learn much about them by closely examining some of the general characteristics of their work. First, the landscapes of *Cifar* are at times more detailed than those contained in the *Cantigas*, and certainly less conventionalized, an issue that I will explore during my analysis of these images.⁶² The artists' approach is realistic with regard to the presentation of human form, expression, landscape and architecture, though it is worth mentioning that there is a certain idealized presentation of castles of the sort not readily found in late medieval Castile, but that one can see in the *Tres Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry, roughly contemporary from northern France.⁶³ The presence of such architecture suggests that the

Josefina Planas Bedenas, "El manuscrito de París: Las miniaturas," in *Libro del Caballero Zifar: Códice de Paris. Vol II. Estudios publicados bajo la dirección de Francisco Rico al cuidado de Rafael Ramos*, ed. Francisco Ramos Rafael Rico (Barcelona: Moleiro, 1996), Carmen Bernis, "El manuscrito de París: Estudio arqueológico," in *Libro del Caballero Zifar: códice de Paris. Vol II. Estudios publicados bajo la dirección de Francisco Rico al cuidado de Rafael Ramos*, ed. Francisco Ramos Rafael Rico (Barcelona: Moleiro, 1996).

⁶¹ José Guerrero Lovillo pioneered a comparative analysis of Cantiga manuscripts T.I. 1 (Codice Rico) and B.R. 20 (The Florentine Codex), resulting in his conclusion that several individual artists could be recognized by their techniques. I have also discovered evidence of more than one artist at work with vessels, and I will discuss that later in this chapter. See Guerrero Lovillo, *Las Cantigas*. Also see Gonzalo Menéndez Pidal, "Los manuscritos de las *Cantigas*: Cómo se elaboró la miniatura alfonsí," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 150 (1951). For Lucía Megía's study, see José Manuel Lucía Megía, "El *Libro del Cavallero Zifar* ante el espejo de sus miniaturas (La jerarquía iconográfica del MS Esp. 36 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France)," in *Lengua, variación y contexto: estudios dedicados a Humberto López Morales*, ed. Humberto López Morales and Francisco Moreno Fernández (Madrid: Ed. Arco [u.a.], 2003).

⁶² Donahue asserts that the landscapes were quite formulaic in comparison with contemporary illustration, but my comparison is not with contemporaneous work but instead with the thirteenth-century *Cantigas*. Donahue, "Notes on the Illumination of Espagnol 36, BnF ("Libro del cavallero Cifar")," Footnote 4.

⁶³ The idealization is quite consistent with Donahue's theory regarding the illustrating team creating images largely independent of the textual context in many instances. Jean Longnon et al., *Les Très riches heures du Duc de Berry, Musée Condé, Chantilly* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969).

artist responsible for the images had travelled abroad and viewed them, or had access to illuminations representing such edifices. Third, the artists' representation of the human form is certainly more natural than we find in the *Cantigas*, particularly in terms of stance and expression. Coloration of skin tone is also notably more lifelike and consistent from image to image, and facial expression is also somewhat more convincing, though in my view there is less variation of individual appearance present in the *Cifar* than one can see in the *Cantigas*. Interestingly, the artists seem less comfortable with animal subjects, rendered more convincingly by the artists in the *Cantigas*.⁶⁴ It is in their presentation of the relationship between land and sea, however, where their truly innovative perspective reveals itself, all the more so because the final illustration was not a reflection of meticulous attention to narrative detail, but largely derived from the artist's own experience or preconceptions regarding that relationship.

Turning now to the issue of design, the smaller pages of the *Cifar* manuscript are only the most basic difference between it and the *Cantigas*. Unlike the miniature panel series contained in the *Cantigas*, the illustrations of *Cifar* are single illuminations of varying size, sometimes occupying the majority of a given page, and always "in-line" with text which wrap around them when they are smaller. They serve chiefly to ornament the story, not encapsulate it.⁶⁵ Sometimes they draw the viewer's attention to a

⁶⁴ See especially Keller's brief study on the presentation of animals in the *Cantigas*. John E. Keller, "The Depiction of Exotic Animals in Cantiga XXIX of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," in *Studies in honor of Tatiana Fotitch*, ed. Tatiana Zurunitch Fotitch, et al. (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1972).

⁶⁵ In this respect I agree wholeheartedly with Donahue's assessment of the relationship between the illustrator and the narrative. There is a wide range of adherence to narrative detail in the construction of the illustrations, some of which seem to draw their construction from that detail, and others which merely present an image of the heading of a given chapter as opposed to describing any significant events within.

particularly important aspect of the textual information unfolding on the page; other times they serve as adornment alone. They are present to add visual excitement to a fictional story, as opposed to the realistic portrayal demanded by the *Cantigas*, where the illustration of miracles occurring in the real world required such an approach. Of the 241 illuminations present in the Paris manuscript, only thirteen involve the sea or vessels, but their importance to my study will be apparent in the comparative analysis including those found in the *Cantigas*. As of this writing, there has been no major comprehensive study of the miniatures contained in the Paris *Cifar*. Keller has posited that this is partially owing to the lamentable lack of interest in late medieval peninsular art as a whole, perhaps a consequence of the wide variety of truly excellent pieces to be found elsewhere.⁶⁶ In any event, it is one of the aims of this work to provide some modest contribution in that direction, in the hope that future Castilian scholars will discover and come to treasure this important collection of artwork as they have already embraced that of the *Cantigas*.

The imagery of the Paris *Cifar* graces a story created nearly two centuries earlier, requiring an explanation as to the relationship between text and image. The essential issue is the representation of land and sea it contains, and the degree to which that representation is demonstrative of a change in attitude toward the sea generally in Castile. In that instance, the imagery of the Paris *Cifar* is excellent evidence for two major

In that regard, they are quite different than those found in the *Cantigas*, where the numerous smaller miniatures accompanying each cantiga served to recreate the narrative relatively faithfully.

⁶⁶ Keller and Kinkade, *Iconography in Medieval Spanish Literature*, 64. Donahue laments the same lack of serious interest in the images in his recent piece. Donahue, "Notes on the Illumination of Espagnol 36, BnF ("Libro del cavallero Cifar")."

reasons. First, although the Paris manuscript is in many ways superior to the Madrid copy – Charles Wagner actually referred to the scribe responsible for the Madrid manuscript as vexed by “old age, stupidity, [and] poor eyesight”—there is little convincing evidence that the Paris *Cifar* contains large portions of original contemporary content.⁶⁷ Thus, we can be relatively certain that the story as related in the Paris manuscript was not itself a product of the fifteenth century. Because this is the case, the imagery contained in the Paris manuscript is directly reflective of the artist’s perception of the story as written, and his subsequent attempt to illustrate that story using his own frame of reference to construct the images contained therein. Indeed, we know that this is the case because details of the images provide us with a wealth of information useful for dating it to the period of its creation, including clothing, armor, and architectural styles. Such details firmly root the representation to the mid fifteenth century, and thus we may rely upon the images as useful to teasing out cues to the perception of the larger world as presented therein. Secondly, because so much of the detail and overall structure of the images are products of the artists own imagination – that is, they are not informed by specific textual references – they can provide us with a very solid foundation for analyzing his perception of the subject under consideration at that given moment.⁶⁸ Thus, in both cases, the Paris *Cifar* provides fertile and useful ground to till in the pursuit of a medieval Castilian perception of the sea, one that subsequent chapters will push beyond the boundaries of the illustrators involved to include a much broader segment of Castilian society.

⁶⁷ Charles Philip Wagner, *El libro del Cavallero Zifar (El libro del Cauallero de Dios)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1929), xi.

⁶⁸ This is especially true with regard to the general reaction of individuals to events at sea, and to the appearance of sea and shore in relation to one another.

A Note on the Analysis

In the course of preparing this chapter, I have examined all of the illuminations from the original manuscripts of Escorial T.I.1 and Espagnol 36, as well as the facsimile edition of B.R.20. In the following analysis, images contained in the T.I.1 will appear by folio reference, while those from the B.R.20 will bear the prefix (F). Numbers from one to six will indicate the appropriate panel in each series, starting with upper left and moving left to right, top to bottom. Images from Espagnol 36 will be prefixed by *Cifar* followed by folio number.

Worlds Apart: Images of Land and Sea

One of the most fundamental characteristics evident in an analysis of the images under discussion in this chapter is what I shall refer to as *spatial differentiation*, or the relative depiction of land and sea within the context of individual panels or miniatures. The differences in presentation of the two settings show that the distinction was a critical one, rendering the sea as entirely different from the land in many respects. The contrast is particularly evident in the miniatures of the *Cantigas*, which I argue underscores a lack of familiarity with the environment and a deep foreboding about the dangers it presented to those who braved the deep. The striking differences in the imagery created to represent these two environments amount to a deliberate attempt to accentuate the “otherness” of the sea, and the use of specific artistic techniques enhanced this “otherness”. Contrasting devices such as a distinct lack of detail in imagery showing the sea, an emphasis on enclosure and isolation there, and a tendency to portray humans as lacking any significant agency when in danger there; all distinctly differentiate the sea from land. In effect,

miniatures focusing on the sea tend to isolate human subjects from the larger environment, accentuating their dependence on vessels, somewhat dwarfing them in an otherwise completely hostile environment. One of the effects of this tendency is to victimize human beings, for they are either in immediate peril or presented in such a way as to accentuate the tenuous nature of their predicament at sea. Ultimately, simply being at sea is sufficient to create the dynamic tension in the imagery necessary to evoke these qualities of “otherness”, a function of the use of identifiable patterns of image construction that I shall now discuss.

In assessing the perception of the sea as “other”, we must begin by analyzing the structural differences between land and sea as they appear in the miniature panels of several *Cantigas*. Here some important and consistent differences offer solid evidence concerning the artists’ level of familiarity and comfort with the subject as well as their general approach to the portrayal of various environments. The framing of panels addressing land or sea settings is a basic consideration in making comparisons. Framing, as I will be using it within the context of this discussion, refers specifically to the use of elements intended to set the stage of a particular panel as a means of enclosing the image for contemplation by the viewer as part of the experience of the individual *cantiga*. I shall begin with a comparison of miniatures drawn from Escorial T.I.1, *cantigas* 112 and 9, (panels 159v (2) and 17r (2), respectively), two excellent panels for illustrating the contrast I have introduced here. Panel 17r (2) is a compound image, relating two different stages in the unfolding story involving a monk accosted by robbers; one can see what amounts to a mid-panel “frame” by noting the transition represented by the lion’s haunch and the second appearance of the monk’s horse. One should immediately note the use of

trees and hills to create a frame for the image, each element drawing the eye upward and creating the sense of height relative to the human subjects of the painting. The effect draws the viewer to the image of the angel speaking in the upper right of the frame, though this is only apparent to the monk in the second portion of the miniature. In addition, the image is literally teeming with detail in the form of various flowers, plants, and grasses – and of different species, as with the pair of trees (or shrubs) in the upper right, framing the appearing angel. Note how the monk and his horse comfortably blend into the structure of the landscape, with portions of the horse hidden behind hills. This placement has an added function of reinforcing the sense of height in the miniature accentuated by the contrast offered by the shrub in the bottom right foreground and the trees reaching to the top of the frame above the riders. A lion -- in this case, non-threatening -- and robbers also appear in the image, both somewhat benign presences diffused by the effect of cushioning provided by the lush landscape and embracing hills.⁶⁹

The contrast between the above and 159v (2) is forceful. Here, the sea forms the foundation of the panel and, as with the use of the hills in 17r (2), acts as a device for establishing some sense of depth in the image.⁷⁰ However, the roiling clouds, appearing as they do in a uniform band across the top of the frame, do little to add to either height or depth and accentuate the vacant backdrop to the sinking vessel and its lifeboats. The vacant background also serves to heighten a sense of vast or indeterminate distance. The

⁶⁹ The image is an excellent example of the hierarchical presentation argued by Kleinschmidt, as the illustrator has purposely established a spatial relationship between all elements in the image based on relative importance. Kleinschmidt, *Perception and Action*, 27.

⁷⁰ The use of the sea as a device for enhancing depth appears here earlier than in French manuscripts according to Gathercole, who provides examples of similar uses there only after the mid fifteenth-century. Gathercole, *The Landscape of Nature in Medieval French Manuscript Illumination*, 49.

lifeboats themselves form an isolating frame for their occupants, distinctly separating them from the sea, a strong contrast to the integration of humans and nature as seen in 17r (B); this is a function of vessels generally in the *Cantigas*. The lack of background accentuates the prow and masts, contributing to an overall tone of desolation, a tone emphasized by the sparing use of detail, so ubiquitous in the preceding example. The ornamentation of the vessel (particularly the prow and the wales, showing Mudéjar influence in design and color), and, to a lesser degree, the clothing of the pilgrims fleeing the sinking vessel, generally uniform in style and hue, provide what little detail the image contains.⁷¹ Perhaps most notably, the sea itself is simply a swirling mass of varied shades of blue, lacking any sign of life at all, but given energy and power by strong undulations employed by the artist to indicate the power of wave energy.⁷²

159v (5), the penultimate panel in the Cantiga 112 miniature series, relating the arrival of both the lifeboats and the stricken vessel to port, further emphasizes the strong contrast between the land and sea as represented in these images. Note the beckoning slope of the shore, festooned in flowers, crowned by the multi-colored buildings of the port city of Acre. The land offers height and sanctuary above the vessel and is particularly inviting in contrast with the cold blues of the sea. The supplication of the

⁷¹ It is my opinion that at least two different artists participated in the creation of the vessels seen in both T.I.1 and F, one of whom I would regard as a master. Those done by the artist with the greater skill exhibit much greater detail in both planking, ornamentation, and especially rigging –pulleys, for example, appear in only a few of the images from either manuscript, but are always associated with a generally much more detailed rendering of the vessel. Those done by the less-skilled artist lack any detail of rigging at all – often omitting rigging entirely. This suggests that one of the artists was only marginally familiar with vessels and rendered them from models in a highly stylized manner, while the other shows evidence of having observed them closely as they actually appeared in life. This may be a clue to the origins of the artists themselves, but there is insufficient evidence upon which to base a claim.

⁷² The appearance of the wave undulation and coloration appear consistent with contemporary French presentation of a turbulent sea. Gathercole, *The Landscape of Nature in Medieval French Manuscript Illumination*, 48.

passengers underscores their relief to be within sight of land again, emphasizing the peril in which they found themselves and their genuine relief at arriving safely to shore. Detail virtually leaps into view as the vessels move from left to right in the panel, accentuating a transition from desolation to vibrancy and life. An interesting variation of such contrast reveals itself in 17(f), the final panel of *Cantiga* 9, where a vessel (saved by elevating the image of the Virgin to the heavens) arrives at a less vibrant shore. In this example, the junction of land and sea nearly splits the frame in two, creating an especially strong contrasting vertical line, accentuating the separation of land and sea. Again, there is the standard presentation of the sea on the one hand, typified by a stark blank background to the vessel, and the beckoning shoreline.⁷³ Though in this case lacking significant plant life,⁷⁴ it does offer contrast and shadow absent from the scenes at sea, especially evident in the two archways along the right edge of the panel, both containing partially hidden columns. In this case, the movement from left to right is from desolation *and* violence, illustrated by the chaotic waveforms present, to the placidity and shelter of the shoreline. Both examples serve to reinforce the idea that the artists had distinctly different frames of reference in mind with regard to land and sea, and drew upon those different perspectives in the creation of images taking place in the two different environments. Yet, they both show a strongly differentiated view of land and sea, and both illustrate profoundly

⁷³ The use of white space, or simple blank parchment, is one of the criteria closely related to the *Cantigas* style. See Domínguez Rodríguez, "Texto, imagen, y diseño de la página en los códices de Alfonso X el Sabio (1252-1284)."

⁷⁴ With regard to the absence of flora on the shore, it should be noted that the miracle tale relates that the pilgrims are arriving in Acre, depicted properly here as a semi-desert area (note also here the very high walls and main gate to the city). Such details are, however, inconsistent – other *cantigas* may show a more florid environment even with the same destination. Overall, the tendency is strongly in favor of a clearly differentiated presentation favoring life over a barren sea.

different expectations with regard to each – the former, a haven of civilization and life -- the latter, a virtual desert where the environment itself was the greatest enemy.

Embracing the Deep

If there is a clearly defined spatial differentiation present in the *Cantigas*, one assigning specific distinctions between two conceptually irreconcilable places, one sees something entirely different in the images of the *Libro del Cavallero Cifar*, where integration of land and sea dominates images containing both environments. The examples I will present here provide ample evidence for a distinctly new way of visualizing and presenting that relationship. Let us begin with an examination of *Cifar* 34v, which illustrates the moment that Cifar has left his wife Grima aboard a vessel bound for a distant city and is in the process of departure. (Figure 1) The sea receding to a distant horizon above and the green earth below frame the image, in which Cifar stands as the focal point. Below and to his right, three vessels in a harbor, the largest of which bears Grima, appear in different sizes in a fine early effort at the creation of perspective. The inclusion of two castles, one on a hilltop silhouetted against the sea, the other in left center, accentuate this perspective, together lending a further sense of distance and size to the overall background. The rotunda of a building we might recognize as a cathedral appears to the left of the larger castle, perhaps evoking the notion of a port city.⁷⁵ The most significant element of the composition, however, is the way that it integrates the seascape into the larger land foreground of the image. The expansive horizon of the image with its variations of blues occupies the entire upper portion of the image,

⁷⁵ The formulaic presentation of castles and towns as part of fifteenth-century manuscripts is one of Donahue's supporting arguments for claiming a minimal relationship between text and image production in Donahue, "Notes on the Illumination of Espagnol 36, BnF ("Libro del cavallero Cifar")," 10.

suggesting the distance and vastness of the open sea. At the same time, the harbor extends into the midframe from the upper right downward and is itself almost fully enclosed by the land. The vessels themselves appear in the midst of the landed area surrounding the port, as opposed to framing against an empty expansive horizon. Even at the intersection of land and sea at the top of the image, the land extends into the sea at points, including several small islands. The effect is a *gradual* introduction of transition from land to sea, as opposed to the abrupt and often sharp distinction we find in the *Cantigas*, and ultimately to integrate both land and sea into a harmonious image. Indeed, there is a familiar tenor to the image as the sea melts into the warm, comforting embrace of the land.



Figure 1. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 34v. Cifar Overlooks the Shore as the Vessel Leaves.

Cifar 40v offers yet another example of this integrative approach to the presentation of land and sea subjects. (Figure 2) Grima is underway to her destination in the image, and the text reveals that a highly skilled crew, one of whom appears in the image at work, accompanies her. The text reveals that the tiller is hopelessly stuck, and it is only the intervention of the Christ-child that keeps the vessel on its proper course; Grima kneels in supplication at the foot of the mast, surrounded by other crewmembers. We see both vessel and passengers in a somewhat more familiar position here, in terms of both situation and image construction. The vessel appears here at sea and occupying the center of the frame, just as many examples we encounter in the *Cantigas*. However, there are substantial differences in the presentation of the relationship between the vessel, land and sea, beginning with the appearance of an island surmounted by a castle to the immediate left of the vessel, which creates the appearance that the vessel is a considerable distance from the island and shore; we find no such reference points in *Cantigas* images.⁷⁶ Most notably, land occupies the entire upper portion of the image, and two distant castles on each side of the frame serve as cues to the distant horizon. Overall, the image focuses the viewer's attention on the vessel, but as the strong vertical centerline of the mast draws the eye upwards to the figure of the Christ child in the crow's nest, it is also draws that attention to the distant horizon that hints at an expanse of land extending far beyond the immediate foreground. Thus, although the image does not minimize the peril of the occupants of the vessel (as underscored by the presence of Christ as a necessary element in their safe travel), it does offer a context within which the

⁷⁶ This presentation of perspective and integration is much more common in fifteenth century examples of land and sea imagery than in any earlier. See the example and brief analysis of Fol.8r, British Library MS. 24189, in De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, 152. Also see Kleinschmidt, *Perception and Action*, 34.

sea is merely part of a comfortable union with the nearby and much more expansive landscape of the familiar shore. The use of land as a background, the island in close proximity, and a horizon dominated by the familiar shore and not a vast emptiness all combine to unite the two environments in something of a sustained embrace, and even render the sea tame.



Figure 2. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 40v. Vessel Steered by Christ.

One of the most striking examples of integration appearing in the *Cifar* manuscript is that found in Folio 37r, which shows Grima aboard a small vessel which she had initially boarded at Cifar's request – only to find that the crew had evil intentions. (Figure 3) She appears dumping the corpses of the crew overboard, following a harrowing battle in which they fought among themselves seeking to win her as a prize. We see the prominent figure of Christ in the crow's nest, just as in the later Folio 40v, but Grima is unaware of his presence at this time. In this image, efforts at integration combine with many details intended to offer perspective to create an image that situates an event occurring on the high seas within the more familiar confines of land and civilization.⁷⁷ The vessel fills the center of the image, with the Christ child actually leaving the frame at the top; his finger indicates the direction of travel, and the vessel will actually sail for nearly two months before reaching its destination despite the fact that the sails are slack. Land surrounds the vessel that is supposed to be on the high seas. The artist provides cues in order to suggest the distance to land; note the very tiny two-manned fishing vessel to the right center of the image, as well as the sentry standing on a promontory in the lower right-hand corner. Two cities appear in the lower and upper left of the image and their diminutive size relative to the vessel serves to accentuate the distance between them. A large stone bridge in the Roman style appears in the lower right-hand corner of the image, rounding out the visual markers meant to provide the viewer with sense of scale and depth. By accentuating the size of the vessel, the artist accomplishes the sense of great distance and even isolation, for given the size of the few human figures available in the

⁷⁷ The image is an excellent example of what Kleinschmidt describes as he shift from hierarchical visual presentation to one allowing orientation of subjects within the space of the image, eliminating the preference for granting particular place in images based on prioritization or preference of subject worth. Kleinschmidt, *Perception and Action*, 36.

image, it is quite plain that Grima is utterly alone at sea. Yet, despite her isolation, the image includes an inviting shore on every side, not to mention the presence of Christ as a guiding and protecting figure. Another example of an idealized embracing of land and sea appears folio 36v, which shows the crew fighting over Grima. (Figure 4) In this case, a bowl of earth literally frames the vessel, though the text relates that it is sailing on the high seas. As with the other such examples found in *Cifar*, the most noteworthy effect of this style of image construction is to ameliorate the dangers of the sea with constant reference to the proximity to the shore and familiar landmarks. Overall, the image creates an impression that blends land and sea in an effortless embrace, as opposed to the accentuation of their differences we find in the *Cantigas*.



Figure3. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 37r. Grima Alone Aboard the Vessel.



Figure 4. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 36v. Grima at the Mercy of a Treacherous Crew.

Integration, as a defining characteristic of *Cifar* maritime imagery, extends beyond an embrace between land and sea. Human subjects also enter into the harmony of the imagery in a manner substantially different from similar situations in the *Cantigas*. Consider *Cifar* 35v, which shows a group of burghers in discussion. (Figure 5) The comfortable marriage of land and sea elements is especially strong in this image, with a vessel at near center serving to suggest scale and otherwise define the space as a harbor. The framing provided by the burghers themselves, who stand on either side of the harbor and vessel, adds a dramatic and expressive element. Unlike imagery present in the *Cantigas*, they do not stand in opposition to the sea. Instead, they appear to welcome it into their midst, and there is an element of the commonplace in the casual way that the vessel and sea appear in the image. The water is still and non-threatening, though the

pennant atop the vessel's mast unfurls briskly in an obviously strong easterly breeze. The atmospheric effect of the image is to suggest a link between the port, vessel, and the wealthy burgher to the right of the vessel, referred to in the text as "one of the greatest, richest, and most powerful townsmen."⁷⁸ By combining the merchant and vessel in close harmony with the blending of land and sea, the artist created an image that evokes a positive, even opportunistic feeling toward the sea and its potential rewards, manifested in the appearance of the merchants themselves.⁷⁹



Figure 5. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 35v. Burghers in Discussion at Port.

⁷⁸ Charles L. Nelson, *The book of the knight Zifar: A Translation of El Libro del cavallero Zifar* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 57.

⁷⁹ The framing of the port city as a gateway to possibilities is one of the perceptual changes documented by Kleinschmidt. In particular, he notes that framing a port as a gateway to possibility became increasingly common from the late fifteenth-century forward. Kleinschmidt, *Perception and Action*, 35.

The contrast presented by the starkly differentiated view of land and sea present in the *Cantigas* and the familiarly comfortable enclosure of sea by land in *Cifar* reveals a great deal about the perception reflected in each work. First, the absence of any life other than the human subjects in the marine imagery of the *Cantigas* suggests that the artists were striving to emphasize a general perception of the isolation and desolation they so convincingly wrought in their panels. Regardless of their origins or experience, any one of them would have known that fish lived in the sea in great abundance; they may have even heard tales of monsters or other anomalies.⁸⁰ Indeed, one of the most critical development in medieval fishing was a shift from freshwater to ocean fishing as stocks dwindled for freshwater or migratory species, and evidence for an increase in royal proclamations restricting fishing activities in France and Iberia, such as those imposed by Philip IV (1268-1314) in 1289, which included banning of certain netting and trapping strategies and seasonal restrictions intended to prevent further destruction of the fishery stock, illustrate the extent of the problem.⁸¹ The records of the *Cortes* offer evidence for an earlier concern for the same issue in 1258, when Alfonso X issued two proclamations restricting the trout season and forbidding the taking of young salmon.⁸² Modern studies

⁸⁰ Presentation of monsters and a profusion of other forms of life is common in fifteenth-century and later French manuscripts. Gathercole, *The Landscape of Nature in Medieval French Manuscript Illumination*, 49-50.

⁸¹ Modern studies conducted to measure the effects of overfishing on coastal fisheries indicate that reductions of up to 80% are possible in less than fifteen years. Callum Roberts, *The Unnatural History of the Sea* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2007), 25, Ransom A. Myers and Boris Worm, "Rapid Worldwide Depletion of Predatory Fish Communities," *Nature*, no. 423 (2003).

⁸² The two proclamations state that "no one shall dare to fish for trout nor take them in any way from All Saint's Day to the first day of March," and that "no one shall throw herbs or calcium into the waters, nor any other things in order to kill the fish," a practice which would certainly reap large rewards but was also indiscriminate. He also orders that where there are little salmon called *gorgones* in the realm, they shall not be taken," demonstrating an awareness of the dependence of solid freshwater salmon runs in ensuring later ocean harvest. Colmeiro, *Cuadernos de los Cortes*, 73.

conducted to measure the effects of overfishing on coastal fisheries indicate that reductions of up to 80% are possible in less than fifteen years.⁸³ While medieval fishing communities had much less capacity for harvest, they were capable of overfishing stocks and the evidence shows that this indeed occurred in northern coastal fisheries.⁸⁴

Extant studies on medieval fisheries are few and largely concentrated on the northern Atlantic, especially so concerning the importance of the trade in cod so well documented by historians.⁸⁵ However, Richard Hoffman's work on freshwater fishing and its influence on developing medieval economies, especially regarding nascent industrial fishing efforts, is an important contribution to a wider look at the evidence and

⁸³ Myers and Worm, "Rapid Worldwide Depletion of Predatory Fish Communities," 281.

⁸⁴ Hoffman demonstrates, for example, that as early as 1415, English fishers complained that failure of local coastal fisheries was driving them into long-distance voyages to and from Iceland. Richard C. Hoffmann, "Carp, Cods, Connections: New Fisheries in the Medieval Economy and Environment," in *Animals in Human Histories: the Mirror of Nature and Culture*, ed. Mary J. Henninger-Voss (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 4.

⁸⁵ One may find an excellent history of cod fishing from medieval times to the present in Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: a Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (New York: Walker and Co., 1997). Kurlansky argues convincingly for a Viking pursuit of cod along its Atlantic range as having been responsible for their maritime "exploration", and that even royal arranged marriages were a response to its economic importance as a food source. He also points out that Columbus was almost certainly aware of the fisheries of the Grand Banks, and claims that reports of the teeming cod stocks found because of the sponsored voyages to discover a shorter Asian route pleased the Spanish monarchs almost as much as that prospect because of already depleted European fisheries. An analysis of the decline of medieval European fisheries is the subject of James H. Barrett, Alison M. Locker, and Callum M. Roberts, "The Origins of Intensive Marine Fishing in Medieval Europe: The English Evidence," *Proceedings: Biological Sciences* 271, no. 1556 (2004). Barrett, et.al. argue that an analysis of the size and quantity of fish remains from their English study show a significant rise in fishing rates coinciding with the medieval warm period beginning roughly around the year 1000, when fish stocks would have been lower due to a rise in water temperature. Thus, they argue that the fishing during that period contributed to a longer-term decline in fish stocks due to overfishing during a period of stress. Barrett and a large team of researchers have also recently tracked the trade of cod in medieval Europe using an analysis of bone collagen to identify origin of individual remains. See J. Barrett et al., "Detecting the Medieval Cod Trade: a New Method and First Results," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35, no. 4 (2008).

its application.⁸⁶ For example, he provides evidence for the excellent fisheries ascribed to the northern Iberian coasts in the medieval period thus far revealed in this chapter.

Hoffman reveals that tax records in Seville between 1450 and 1490 show an enormous quantity of hake, conger, and sardines arriving from Galician ports, valued at nearly five million *maravedis* in 1450 and nearly doubled by 1490.⁸⁷ The Northern Atlantic fisheries were the most important in Europe, as evidenced by similar records showing the quantities imported into Italy and other parts of Europe as well. When considering that no such trade in cod or hake appears in the historical record of southern Mediterranean coastal communities prior to 1200, the facts support the perception of Castilians regarding the relative paucity of resources in the southern coastal communities versus those of the North that will address later.⁸⁸

Thus, that the illustrators chose not to include any hint of life in their images is evidence for a conscious effort to create and support a perception of the sea as desolate. Indeed, focus on detail, or its absence elsewhere, is an expression of their intention to create a particular mood. Second, the framing of human subjects in land and sea environments is fundamentally different with regard to their integration with the surrounding environment. On land, the humans blend into the fabric of the panel; they appear that they are *supposed* to be there. At sea, humans appear cocooned by the vessels

⁸⁶ Richard C. Hoffmann, "Economic Development and Aquatic Ecosystems in Medieval Europe," *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (1996). Hoffman's work is an especially detailed look at the biological systems involved in the creation and maintenance of effective fish habitat for freshwater biological diversity.

⁸⁷ Hoffmann, "Carp, Cods, Connections: New Fisheries in the Medieval Economy and Environment," 4.

⁸⁸ Naturally, this fact is not applicable as supporting evidence in the case of Castile, as the southern territories were not conquered before 1248. However, the figure is an important one when considering Italian communities, as it points to a fundamental shift in the importance of imported northern fish from the late twelfth century forward; this is essentially Hoffman's primary thesis in

that serve as their sole salvation from the perils of the deep. Both they and their vessels seem out of place in the frames they occupy, and the sea appears in such a way as to convey immensity and desolation. The lack of background detail in the images lends this sense of immensity to these panels, despite the fact that the proportional elements remain relatively constant with regard to human versus frame size. Both of these major constructional elements argue for a perception of the sea as a place where humans were simply out of context, underscored by the relative value and comfort assigned to land versus sea imagery.

The relationship between land and sea presented in *Cifar*, by contrast, offers a familiar, even welcoming place to humans at sea. The most important difference between the two approaches is in the lack of sharp delineation between land and sea present in the miniatures containing both environments, suggesting a more cohesive view of the place of the sea relative to the land. Land and sea seem to embrace in the *Cifar* imagery, rendering the sea nearly tame; indeed, there are no real examples of serious storms or even strenuous wave action in the manuscript. Even in an example such as that present in Figure 7 showing a vessel on the high seas, there is a framing element of land removing any real sense of danger. Overall, the images of *Cifar* display confidence in the ability of humans to operate at sea, and continually remind the viewer that land is always at hand. If the imagery of the *Cantigas* offered an image of land and sea as worlds apart, that of *Cifar* suggested a comfortable embrace between the two.

Loss of Agency

If the relationship between land and sea underwent a significant change in the marine art of late medieval Castile, the concern for the potential loss of agency at sea remained a relative constant. Agency, as I will be discussing it throughout this dissertation, is the ability of individuals to exercise some degree of physical control over the outcome of a given situation on land or sea. The isolating qualities of the sea emphasize the loss of agency there dramatically, and an excellent summary of sentiment regarding the great isolation encountered by those who ventured to go to sea in late medieval Castile appears in the sections of maritime law contained in the *Siete Partidas*. The *Partidas* warns that those who go to sea may encounter “great hardships...because they are in a place where they cannot obtain anything except from the hands of their lord,” and that they do not have “the power to protect themselves whenever they desire to do so, nor can [they] avoid falling from the conveyances in which they are transported.”⁸⁹ The message is unambiguous; going to sea isolates an individual to the confines of the vessel, subjecting him to the caprices of weather and the mercies of his companions. Castilians were certainly familiar with the dangers associated with living in areas under the tenuous control of a local garrison, or even with their security entirely in their own hands, as a local militia formed for mutual protection against any enemy attack.⁹⁰ As

⁸⁹ Alfonso X, *Las siete partidas del rey don Alfonso el Sabio*, ed. Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid: Editorial Atlas, 1972), II.XXIV.I, II.XXIV.III.

⁹⁰ The interaction between Castilians and the dangers of the frontier has been the subject of many important studies; among the most important of them include James W. Brodman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain: the Order of Merced on the Christian-Islamic Frontier* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), Angus MacKay, "Religion, Culture, and Ideology on the Late Medieval Castilian-Granadan Frontier," in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Angus MacKay and Robert Bartlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Mark D Meyerson and Edward D English, eds., *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change* (South Bend: University of Notre

James Powers has shown, the dependence of individuals upon one another for the mutual defense of the frontier community was one of the most critical factors in the ability of Castilians to survive in the harsh and frequently violent forward areas of the *Reconquista*. Yet, it was precisely the necessity of individuals to rely upon one another for mutual support that made the dangers of the sea seem so entirely removed from those of the land frontier. On land, one could flee danger if necessary; indeed, such was the need to do so at a moment's notice that the economy of southern Castile was largely dependent on animal husbandry, as it was impossible to move crops in the field.⁹¹ At sea, however, options for flight or avoidance of danger were limited. Thus, to go to sea was to greatly narrow the scope of relationships and obligations; all became subject to the same struggle against the elements, with no real way out in the case of disaster. For Castilians on the frontier, where greater opportunities for individuals and a sense of localized control over one's destiny was one of the major attractions, the prospect of relinquishing one's agency to the caprices of the sea must have been frightening indeed.⁹²

Dame Press, 1999), Eduardo Manzano Moreno, "Christian-Muslim Frontier in Al-Andalus: Idea and Reality," in *The Arab Influence in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dionisius A. Agius and Richard Hitchcock (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1996), James F. Powers, *A society Organized for War: The Iberian Municipal Militias in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1284* (Berkeley University of California Press, 1987), Teofilo F. Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity: Land and Town in Late Medieval Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

⁹¹ Teo Ruiz addresses this issue in some detail in *Crisis and Continuity*; one may also find a solid treatment of the origins of the *Mesta* under Alfonso X and the need for "movable wealth" in Angus MacKay's *Society, Economy, and Religion*. Angus MacKay, *Society, Economy and Religion in Late Medieval Castile* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*.

⁹² From the late twelfth century forward, settling of the southern frontier necessitated the extension of increasingly liberal *Fueros* intended to provide for as much local control and autonomy of action possible. This was both an administrative and practical necessity, as settlers were often unwilling to commit themselves to settling dangerous frontier towns in the full knowledge that they would be called upon to defend them without the assurances that they would enjoy a better status than they had held in the northern areas, where social stratification was much more rigid and economic opportunity was limited. By granting the local communities a large degree of autonomy, the kings of Castile essentially provided them with the incentive necessary to defend their own territories in their own interests. For an excellent summary, see the

Throughout the imagery of the *Cantigas*, we find visual representations of the desolation, isolation, and utter helplessness associated with voyages at sea as well as the terror associated with such situations. The risk of storm and shipwreck was a particularly frightening manifestation of the dangers faced by the isolation of travel at sea, and many examples of such concerns appear in the *Cantigas* miniatures. The prospect of finding oneself adrift in a vessel with a broken mast or ruptured hull, such as the situation illustrated here in the miniature series illustrating the sinking of a vessel in *Cantiga* 112, was one of the most dramatic reminders of the isolation one experienced at sea. In the first panel, the vessel lists severely in a heaving sea, indicated by the strong vertical swirling of the waves. The mast appears here precisely at the moment of snapping, with the broken top section shown falling toward the prow of the vessel. Angry clouds roll across the top of the frame, and the vacant background provides no reference point for scale, adding to the sense of isolation and despair at this critical moment. All the occupants beseech the Virgin Mary for aid, apparently seeing no alternative to her intervention. In panel two, they move into lifeboats, and in the next panel, the vessel nearly sinks below the waves. Panel four offers a stark glimpse of the surviving mariners, now adrift in small boats upon the same raging sea that only moments before had sunk their larger vessel. Again, all actively pray for the support of the Virgin; the first man in the lead vessel bears an expression of genuine fear. In panel five, we see the miraculous arrival of both lifeboats and the vessel itself to port, and all give thanks to the Virgin in panel six.

Panels one through four vividly demonstrate the isolation of those at sea, as well as underscoring the razor thin line between life and death at sea, where complete dependence on the vessel itself was a given regardless of skill. The fact that the *Cantigas* generally offer some technical explanation for the foundering of vessels, whereby we may glimpse an assumption that such occurrences were not without precedent or understanding, is an important reminder of the limitation of agency to overcome some of these predicaments at sea. In this case, the text does not reveal the reason for the mast shattering, though it does relate that the hull was also broken and that the cargo of wheat in the hold had mixed with sand, indicating that the vessel had run aground.⁹³ However, there are other examples of sinkings in the *Cantigas* which occur solely because of the severity of a storm, such as the tale related in *cantiga* 33, which tells of the sinking of a pilgrimage vessel en route to Acre with over 800 aboard. The miniatures show a vessel at an extreme list, and while the text explains that the rigging has torn, the damage is not immediately apparent in the image itself.⁹⁴ The rendering of the vessel is especially keen in this series, the work of an individual to whom I refer as the “vessel master” for his detailed depictions of tackle and rigging, details omitted from the majority of vessels represented in either E or F. We can see a sailor working with the rigging immediately behind the prow in panel one; unfortunately, a rare hole in the manuscript obscures the object of his attention, which may well be the damage to which the text refers. The sea appears with the same strongly vertical waves seen in *cantiga* 112. As the occupants of the sinking vessel flee in panel two, we see a man tumbling headlong from the vessel into

⁹³ Mettmann, ed., *Cantigas*, 112.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

the churning sea; he disappears from sight as the lifeboat pulls away bearing the survivors in panel four.

Panel three is an excellent example of the isolation stressed by a sinking at sea, accentuated by the completely vacant background. The image offers no points of reference, and in this case, the lack of clouds further emphasizes the vulnerability of the survivors as they toss upon the open sea, surrounded by nothingness on all sides. A man actually falling into the sea itself underscores their desperate situation in this series, and he has disappeared from view in this panel. As the bishop in the lifeboat leads a supplication to the Virgin in panel four, a favoring wind fills the sail, and the waves noticeably change from narrow, violently curving upward swells to broader forms with more understated edges, indicating a transition as the Virgin comes to the aid of the afflicted. Most importantly, the man who had fallen overboard now makes an appearance to the extreme right of the image, completely submerged but in an attitude of prayer. As the lifeboat reaches shore in Panel 5, the survivors find the man they had thought drowned safe ashore awaiting them. It is worth noting that although all were amazed at the survival of the man who arrived ashore, and they asked if he had managed it by swimming; we can thus conclude that at least some of those who went to sea could do so.⁹⁵ This would likely have included only the mariners aboard (although the man is not identified by occupation in this instance), as other examples suggest it was far from a ubiquitous skill or expectation. In any case, the fact that a miracle was required to save

⁹⁵ Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María: edición facsímil del códice B.R.20 de la Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale de Florencia, siglo XIII.*

his life, and that *only* such an event could have explained it to those aboard the vessel upon their arrival, is testament to the great dread of falling overboard at sea.

Cantiga 172 provides another example of a catastrophic equipment failure at sea, but this time illustrating in the first two panels an interesting blend of human agency and divine intervention. The image series also contains several elements not seen elsewhere in any other miniatures. The text relates that a merchant was traveling aboard a vessel headed for Acre and that the vessel encountered a fierce storm. The image captures the precise moment at which the damage to both masts occurs in panel one. The detail of the rendering in these panels is clearly the work of the Vessel Master, as we can see the individual lashings tying the sails to the mast, as well as the tackle on the rigging lines leading to the masthead. The violence of the moment is captured beautifully by the broken yard of the mainmast shown striking the foremast, which has snapped at the same moment. The delicately rendered folds of the sail, together with the trailing line at the end of the broken yard that curves into the vessel as the sail drapes over the wale into the sea, accentuates an overall effect of the fragility of the vessel before the power of the wind and sea, roiling at the base of the image. It is in this context in panel one that the crew beseeches the Virgin for aid, and we can see the result in panel two; the sea has calmed, and most remarkably, repairs to both the mainmast yard and the foremast are visible; the foremast yard has been lashed horizontally, visible to the immediate right of the mast, and the foremast shows a long splint repair along its length near the original break. A sailor pulls in the lines on the foresail. In a departure from any other vessel image, the sail breaks the frame and extends nearly to the edge of the decorative border, emphasizing the strength of the wind catching the sails and pulling the yard out of frame.

This is the only such series in the *Cantigas* in which human agency is illustrated with regard to a disaster at sea, an example illustrating the effective use of agency in overcoming significant damage to a vessel by storm. Yet even in this case, only the intervention of the Virgin calms the seas sufficiently to allow the repairs to proceed.

Two of the greatest fears associated with sea travel as presented in the *Cantigas* -- shipwreck, and the fear of drowning, often closely associated with the former -- occur in the previous two series: The loss of agency inherent to such an event unfolds in the panel through representations of the utter helplessness of those at the mercy of the wind and waves, and their dependence on divine intervention to bring them safely out of what seem to be truly hopeless situations. We can see a more graphic depiction of this fear evidenced in the panel series taken from *Cantiga* 313 (F), which shows a group of travelers in peril on very rough seas.⁹⁶ Panel one shows a vessel beginning to founder in heavy seas, in this case indicated by a strong undulating line moving up and down, indicative of the violence and height of the swells. Note the man in the center of the vessel whose face bears a look of abject terror; another man to the immediate left of the rearmost mast looks at the sea in apprehension, as does a man nearest to the rear of the vessel. All beseech the Virgin for aid in panel two as the undulation of the waves increases and the vessel begins plowing into the sea prow first. Here, the text relates that the vessel has begun to take on water and that she was becoming increasingly difficult to

⁹⁶ Image series such as this one from the BR20 are often incomplete. Some of the folios are lined for the frames of the miniatures but contain nothing else. Others, such as this one, are substantially complete in some respects but lack captioning. An interesting point to note in these images is that the rigging or lines have been faintly penciled in – they are nearly invisible in the frames. This would suggest that the artist responsible for that portion of the imagery was different than the one drawing the bodies of the vessels and the ornamentation of the prows and wales, for example. Line work may have been associated with the calligraphers responsible for the captioning.

handle. The text relates that they have beseeched the aid of all of the saints most commonly associated with aid to travelers at sea, including God, St. Peter, St. James, St. Nicholas, and St. Mateo, but receive no assistance until a priest in panel three encourages them all to call upon the Virgin for aid at the moment of greatest peril. At this point three of the men in the prow of the vessel are wide-eyed, their gaze fixed upon the waves.⁹⁷ The effect of the plea is evident in panel four, where the waves are now appear as gently undulating ripples in comparison to the three preceding panels. The Virgin does not appear in this unfinished manuscript, though she appears in the text. Adding to the urgency and danger of the predicament is a textual detail indicating that the incident occurred in complete darkness; they arrived at port only at dawn in panel five.⁹⁸ As with the previous example, the power of the uncontrolled sea was awe-inspiring to those who sailed upon her, requiring the intervention of the supernatural in order to navigate safely.

The perils of the sea were an assumed risk for merchants, fishermen, and those seeking passage on pilgrimage vessels, but they could also occasionally befall the unwitting as well. For example, a pregnant woman nearly drowns during an attempt to visit a hermitage devoted to St. Michael in Folio 127r, a miniature series depicting *Cantiga* 86.⁹⁹ This panel series also illustrates an unusual merging of land and sea, in this

⁹⁷ Mettmann, ed., *Cantigas*, 313. The theme of this *Cantiga*, which grants Mary, savior of those in danger on the sea, with virtual preeminence over all the other saints, including Saint Nicholas, patron of mariners, is common throughout the Alfonsine *Cantigas*.

⁹⁸ Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María: edición facsímil del códice B.R.20 de la Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale de Florencia, siglo XIII*, 17v.

⁹⁹ This may refer to Mont-Saint-Michel in France, as Mettmann suggests, but the text actually refers only to “Bretanna Menor”, which would simply be Brittany. Scarborough considers it more likely to be the shrine of St. Michael located in Cornwall, as it is cut off from land at high tide. Gonzalo de Berceo and Brian Dutton, *Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora: estudio y edición crítica por Brian Dutton* (London: Tamesis,

case as a means of expressing the occurrence of high tide. We begin with a group of pilgrims approaching the shrine in panel one. A solitary pregnant figure appears from the left of the frame in panel two, still some distance from the hill and the shrine. Note that the sea occupies the entire horizontal portion of the frame in both panels, and that it is nearly twice as tall in panel two as in the first panel; this is the artist's rendering of the textual information we will receive in panel three, when we are told that the pregnant woman is overcome by the rising tide because she could not walk fast enough to escape.¹⁰⁰ In panel three, the horror of the event is evident as the rising tide all but submerges her. She gestures for help, but those ashore are powerless to help her; note how they appear to huddle nervously in the hermitage that now no longer appears to sit on a sloping hill, but rather to crown a small island with the sea virtually lapping at the stair to the shrine. The Virgin appears in panel four, where she not only saves the woman from drowning but also assists in the birth of her child, who appears in her lap. Note the protective cocoon of "air" – white space around the victim intended to suggest a bubble of sorts, shielding the helpless woman from the killing sea. In this case, the use of an obviously vulnerable woman carrying new life, in many ways an allegorical reference to the Virgin herself, heightens the sense of dread. The image speaks clearly to the fate of anyone caught in such a situation – drowning was literally a certainty unless a miracle occurred to save the victim.

1971), Connie L. Scarborough, "The Virgin as Midwife: Verbalization and Visualization in Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," *Michigan Academician* 15 (1982).

¹⁰⁰ Mettmann, ed., *Cantigas*, 86.

Unwilling Travelers. If the irresistible power of the sea could challenge and strike fear into the hearts of those who would brave her willingly, she offered truly terrible prospects to those taken there against their wills. We find two such examples in the *Cantigas*, both arguably present as a means of providing some sense of comfort to southern-bound settlers fearful of life near the open sea, where the reach of the Castilian king was limited at best.¹⁰¹ In the mid thirteenth century, Alfonso X had only begun to construct the *ataranzas* (arsenal) at Seville with a view to constructing galleys he intended to use in an invasion of Africa. Before this, the Castilians had used only a motley assortment of merchant vessels, cobbled together by Ramon Bónifaz at the behest of Alfonso's father, Fernando III (1217-52), in an attempt at exercising military power at sea.¹⁰² While the southern territories were nominally subject to the suzerainty of the Castilian monarch, the reality was that most of Andalusia remained settled by a Muslim majority through the greater part of the fourteenth century. This was particularly true of the coastal areas, where only repeated military excursions provided some measure of

¹⁰¹ On the Castilian monarchs and their efforts to colonize the southern territories following Seville, see Antonio Ballesteros Beretta, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 1 ed. (Barcelona: Salvat, 1963), Americo Castro, *España en su historia. The structure of Spanish history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), Manuel González Jiménez, "Frontier and Settlement in the Kingdom of Castile (1085-1350)," in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Angus MacKay and Robert Bartlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*. Of these studies, Ruiz' study of the gradual transfer of labor from north to south is the best source for a discussion of royal efforts to entice settlement.

¹⁰² The story of Bonifaz' role in the breaking of resistance at the siege of Seville in 1248 grew in stature until it assumed a nearly legendary quality in the centuries following the conquest. The actual description of the event in the *Primera Cronica*, however, is decidedly reserved and grants the appropriate credit to the action for having aided in the final victory. Teofilo Ruiz' study of the Bonifaz family revealed the so-called "fleet" and Bonifaz' subsequent appointment as the "Primer Almirante de Castilla" as essentially regionally supported bombast. There is little evidence of any subsequent action on the part of the merchant vessels assembled for the action, and scant evidence for Bonifaz' subsequent role as an Admiral in any capacity. See Alfonso X and Sancho IV, *Primera crónica general de España que mandó componer Alfonso el Sabio y se continuaba bajo Sancho IV en 1289*, ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1955), Teofilo F. Ruiz, "Los Sarracín y los Bonifaz: Dos linajes patricios de Burgos, 1248-1350," in *Sociedad y poder real en Castilla: Burgos en la baja Edad Media* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1981).

control over ports such as Cadiz and Jerez de la Frontera.¹⁰³ Thus, attempts to entice settlers to the southernmost port cities of Andalusia were initially unsuccessful, because the ever-present danger of Muslim counterattack now included the possibility that enemies could suddenly appear by sea as well. For these reasons, the imagery of *cantigas* chosen to underscore the preeminence of the Virgin at sea are important examples of an attempt to assuage the fears of both the king himself and Castilians more generally about the relative lack of Castilian sea power.¹⁰⁴

The case of a hermit kidnapped from his hermitage, as related in *cantiga* 95, reveals several important clues to Castilian expectations with regard to such threats from the sea. Panels one through three show the site of the hermitage on the Portuguese coast.

¹⁰³ Cadiz, for example, had been conquered by Fernando III, but granted independence after the fact, largely owing to the impossibility of holding the port which was a great distance from the seat of Castilian southern power in Seville. It took Alfonso X nearly two months to retake it in 1262, at least partly owing to the ability of the residents of Cadiz to resupply by sea and the inability of the Castilians to establish an effective naval blockade. The *mudejar* revolt of 1264 was, in large measure, a concerted Muslim response to the insistent attempts of the Castilians to control port access in southern Andalusia, which was now threatening the Straits of Gibraltar. For the general overview, see O'Callaghan's *History*; for more a more specific analysis of Muslim population patterns in southern Andalusia, see Juan Abellan Perez, *Cádiz en el siglo XIII*, González Jiménez, "Frontier and Settlement in the Kingdom of Castile (1085-1350).", Carlos Ayllón Gutiérrez, *La orden de predicadores en el sureste de Castilla: Las fundaciones medievales de Murcia, Chinchilla y Alcaraz hasta el Concilio de Trento* (Albacete: Instituto de Estudios Albacetenses "Don Juan Manuel", 2003).

¹⁰⁴ As with the issue of piracy generally, the monarch's inability to control or account for actions at sea was a given throughout the majority of the late Middle Ages in Castile and elsewhere. Indeed, Lawrence Mott has argued that only the Crown of Aragon was capable of mounting a substantial naval force capable of protecting its own merchant fleets and projecting significant naval power if necessary on a regular basis. Castilian naval power was nearly non-existent in the mid-thirteenth century, and thus attempting to capitalize on the new port facilities at Seville was one of the first orders of business for Fernando III and his son Alfonso X. It was not until the early fifteenth century that Castilian monarchs moved aggressively to attempt to control predation upon merchant vessels in the Mediterranean and Northern Atlantic, a subject explored here in Chapter V. Lawrence Mott describes these limits in Mott, "Iberian Naval Power, 1000-1650." For his study on the Crown of Aragon's ability to project naval power, see Lawrence V. Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean: the Catalan-Aragonese Fleet in the War of the Sicilian Vespers* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2003). The increased focus of the importance of Castilian naval power in the struggle for the Straits of Gibraltar is part of the larger study of monarchy and military practice during the reign of Alfonso XI in the early fourteenth century in Nicolas Agrait, "Monarchy and Military Practice During the Reign of Alfonso XI of Castile (1312--1350)" (Doctoral Dissertation, Fordham University, 2003).

Visitors arrive to find the hermit at prayer, and he provides them food in panel three. The application of the blues of the relatively placid sea appearing in the bottom frame contextualizes the image as being on the seashore. In panel four, we witness the actual abduction of the hermit. At least three galleys move into view from the right of the frame, as two typically stylized black men lay hands on the hermit. Both the black men and the dress of the occupants of the galleys leave no doubt that this is a Muslim raid. A look of startled surprise is apparent in the hermit's eyes as they grasp his sleeve, and the fish he has just caught still hangs from the line.¹⁰⁵ Panel five brings the entire pirate fleet into view, and it is then that we can see that the pirates include Christians as well as Muslims, clearly distinguished one from another by their dress. The situation in this panel is grim; the visages of the Muslims to the immediate left of the hermit are mocking, even leering, and the eyes of the mailed Christians are intense and threatening. The hermit bears an expression of fear and uncertainty as his kidnappers push him into the midst of the oarsmen; the terror of the abduction becomes clear as the galleys pull away from the shore, leaving behind the hermitage with no witnesses to the event. The text explains that the Moorish raiders conducted a rampage by land and sea for some time, but were unable to pull away from shore no matter how hard they tried. Ultimately, they conclude that their inability to move represents the will of God and decide to release the hermit, at which time they are allowed to depart, presumably as a result of divine will.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps

¹⁰⁵ This is also the only panel in the *Cantigas* that actually shows a fish having come from the sea.

¹⁰⁶ Interestingly enough, there is no direct appeal to the Virgin in this *Cantiga*. The *cantiga* relates that “people from everywhere gathered to praise Holy Mary” for the miracle (*gentes de todas partes foron y juntadas, e a Santa Maria loores poren dadas*), but unlike the great majority of the *Cantigas* involving the sea, no direct appeal to her was made. It is apparent that there is an assumption she was ultimately responsible for his salvation – this suggests that Alfonso believed that any miracle associated with the sea was ultimately her responsibility, as we see in *Cantiga* 36, where the travelers are not saved after calling

most importantly, the *cantiga* relates that armed Moorish vessels continued to return at various times, but did not molest the hermit further. This last detail is an especially important one, underscoring the presumptive value of the *Cantigas* as a means of providing confidence to southern settlers regarding life near coastal areas. The inclusion of such a tale attests to concerns for a very real problem presented by pirates preying upon coastal settlements, particularly those far from the centers of power in the Christian kingdoms.

Cantiga 95 presents clear examples of several important concerns regarding coastal settlement. First, the story strongly emphasizes the element of surprise, underscoring the danger of enemies appearing quickly by sea and abducting the unwary. A life of slavery was a real possibility in the absence of family wealth sufficient to buy a ransom, and consequently, there was a steady market for abductions of the sort this *cantiga* depicts.¹⁰⁷ The imagery also lays bare the vulnerability represented by living near the shoreline, illustrating the ease with which such dangers could appear – and how quickly one could simply vanish without witnesses. Ultimately, as in so many of the other examples examined in this chapter, the fear of being placed into a vessel which represented the only safe haven in an otherwise potentially deadly environment is magnified by an inability to control one's own egress or exit from that vessel. In plain terms, sea travel could be frightening enough in its own right, to say nothing of having to accept that you were under the control of hostile pirates. Indeed, this fear of piracy

upon the customary patron saints of mariners (including Nicholas and Elmo), but only receive a response after beseeching Mary.

¹⁰⁷ See especially Brodman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain: the Order of Merced on the Christian-Islamic Frontier*.

reflects a fear of the unknown and an acknowledgement of the difficulty in determining friend and foe at sea, a subject explored throughout the following chapters. The relative lack of distinction between merchant and pirate in the modern sense of the word in the Middle Ages meant that one could easily become another very quickly, and for all manner of reasons, ranging from warfare to simple predation.¹⁰⁸ Medieval monarchs did not recognize a responsibility for the piratical actions of its subjects, a position that I shall demonstrate appears clearly in Castilian law.

Yet, for all the terror evoked by the possibility of being forcibly taken from one's home and whisked away to an uncertain fate, *cantiga* 95 involves someone being taken from shore and placed aboard a vessel – in effect, moved from one point of refuge to another, albeit a tenuous one at best. *Cantiga* 5, by contrast, presents exactly the opposite scenario, relating the story of the Empress Beatriz, facing drowning at the hands of a sailor. Panel one of this compound image conveys the desperation of the situation. At the far left, the Empress sits marooned atop a small rock. There is absolutely nothing in the

¹⁰⁸ Particularly important is the recent study by Bryan Dick concerning the late medieval concept of piracy. Though largely based on England and the North Atlantic, his findings regarding the lack of utility of the modern concept of piracy are particularly helpful. The work is a corrective to the earlier short piece by Edward Lewis, which privileged a role for the monarch as the sole arbiter of activities at sea, a position no longer tenable either regarding specific kingdoms or monarchs throughout the late Middle Ages. See Bryan Dick, "Framing Piracy: Restitution at Sea in the Later Middle Ages" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2010), Edward Lewis, "Responsibility for Piracy in the Middle Ages," *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law* 19, no. 1 (1937). Also see María Teresa Ferrer Mallol's excellent study of the activities of Castilian and Basque pirates in the Mediterranean throughout the fifteenth century, María Teresa Ferrer Mallol, *Corsarios castellanos y vascos en el Mediterráneo medieval* (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Institución Milá y Fontanals, Departamento de Estudios Medievales, 2000). The best single volume for piracy issues in Castile in the late Middle Ages remains Ferrer I Mallol's study, but for Iberia broadly, see Anna Unali, *Marineros, piratas y corsarios catalanes en la Baja Edad Media* (Spain: Renacimiento, 2007), Manuel Martínez López, *Piratas y corsarios en las costas de Alicante* (San Vicente del Raspeig Alicante: Club Universitario, 2006). A large part of the fear involved with piracy for Iberians generally involved the issue of slavery, as the trafficking on both sides was lucrative for both ransoming and the slave trade. See the following studies: José Hinojosa Montalvo, *Esclavos, nobles y corsarios en el Alicante medieval* (Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, 2000). For a view including the cultural interface between Aragonese Christians and Muslims via piracy activities, see Robert Ignatius Burns, "Piracy as an Islamic-Christian interface in the thirteenth century," (1980).

image with the exception of the rock, the Empress, and the waves of the sea, which at this point are not especially threatening to her bodily, though they swell violently in the lower portion of the frame. At mid-panel, the situation has worsened considerably as the waves begin to overtake the rock, and part of her garment is actually in the water. She looks wistfully to the right as the men whom she has abandoned her row away, their small boat the only hope for her ultimate rescue. The text reveals that she endures great suffering in this exposed position, turning black from the sun exposure and nearly succumbing to hunger and thirst, until the Virgin appears with a miraculous herb that removes her hunger and thoroughly revitalizes her. The left frame of Panel two illustrates this moment, once again revealing the terribly isolated and vulnerable position she now occupies. At the right of the image we can see the merchant vessels approaching, sent by the intervention of the Virgin; one of the sailors can be seen extending a rope or grapple from the foremost position of the lower boat, saving the Empress. Yet, the lesson is very clear: without the intervention of the Virgin, she would have surely died in the midst of the merciless sea.

The *Cifar* manuscript also offers an example that, while certainly appearing to acknowledge the great terror likely evoked by the prospect of being set adrift in the ocean in a small boat, greatly minimizes the suffering of the affected party in a way suggesting larger assumptions at work about the limits of protection offered by vessels at sea generally. In *Cifar* 170v, we encounter an image showing the exile of *Cifar*'s son Roboán by the Emperor of Tigridia. (Figure 6) The artist's construction of this image offers interesting points of comparison with the above *cantiga*. The framing of the image is consistent with what we have come to expect from such scenes in the *Cifar*, as a

distinctly integrated land and seascape unfolds from left to right in the frame. The seashore itself appears more like a river in the center of the image, flowing rather languidly. A grayish, somewhat somber sky hints at the possibility of a storm, heightening the solemnity of the event.¹⁰⁹ The Emperor stands in a building open to both sea and sky, a necessary stylistic element allowing the viewer to see him in the image. However, the proximity of the building to the water accentuates the drama of the moment as Roboán drifts away in a small boat with neither oars nor sail. The facial expressions of both the Emperor and Roboán betray a grim realization of the ultimate fate awaiting Roboán as the current pulls him towards the right of the frame and out to sea. Roboán's face displays something approaching resignation, underscoring the danger he now faces at the mercy of the sea itself. Overall, the image conveys a sense of doom in the viewer, as young Roboán drifts away. Although we later find that he arrived at landfall within a day, the predicament suggested an almost certain end to the hapless victim. Thus, in both cases, the idea of being abandoned at sea – whether in or out of a vessel – was a particularly chilling prospect.

Finally, the *Cifar* manuscript offers two important examples of a greatly enhanced sense of agency, reflected in the confident presentation of Grima and her entourage at sea. These particular images show Grima leaving her retinue to go ashore in Folio 64v&r, where we can see almost casual expressions on the faces of all involved as the two vessels part. (Figure 7) (Figure 8)

¹⁰⁹ Variation in sky colors of this kind are also present in late medieval French manuscripts; earlier illuminations tended to borrow the color of the sea for the sky or showed a great degree of similarity between the two. The use of white, or blank parchment, was rare. Gathercole, *The Landscape of Nature in Medieval French Manuscript Illumination*, 49.

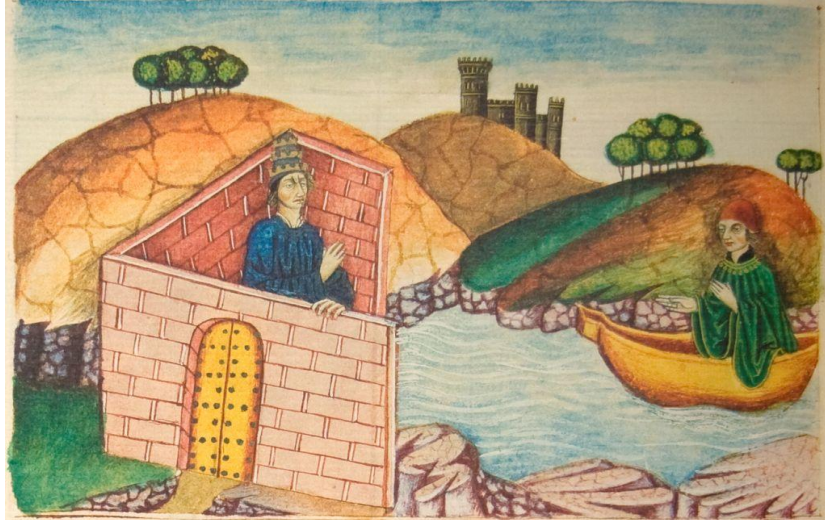


Figure 6. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 170v. Roboán is Set Adrift.

The tranquil look on Grima's face in both miniatures is noteworthy, and especially in 64v, when the vessel is under full sail, indicated by the swelling mainsail and streaming banner. The sea, though not particularly turbulent, shows gradual, undulating swells and appears consistent with other representations of ocean surface in *Cifar* – generally calm, but in any case never a source of significant concern for those sailing upon it. The casual, confident atmosphere continues in 64r, where Grima says her farewells to her friends and each vessel prepares to go its separate way; note Grima's hand casually gripping the wale, the very picture of relaxed confidence. Above all, these images illustrate a complete lack of concern for any potential danger, and given the absence of a crew aboard her vessel, do not even hint at the possibility of concern. In every sense, these two images reveal a decidedly more confident and comfortable approach to human agency at sea than anything appearing in the *Cantigas*, and reflect a generally more welcoming and inclusive attitude toward the sea generally.



Figure 7. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 64v. Grima Takes Leave of Her Entourage (a).



Figure 8. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 64r. Grima Takes Leave of Her Entourage (b).

Treachery. The fear of placing oneself into the hands of others charged with the safe operation of a vessel was such that frequent mentions of it appear in literature, art, and law; indeed, so great was the concern for treachery on the part of vessel pilots that the *Partidas* demanded the death penalty to a pilot found to have committed the offense.¹¹⁰ There was, of course, good reason to be concerned; as we have seen, the sea could present a formidable challenge and place even the best of mariners in a nearly hopeless situation. Compounding the environmental risks was the specter of piracy, always a concern in the waters of the late medieval Mediterranean and Atlantic, where opportunistic brigands roamed freely in the absence of a strong central naval power.¹¹¹ Indeed, so great was his concern for safe passage to and from the ports of the newly conquered southern areas that Alfonso X specifically requested the inclusion of several Marian miracles regarding her protection of those falling prey to such dangers at sea.¹¹² Despite the very real threat of piracy, however, the primary concern expressed in both the

¹¹⁰The specific statute may be found in Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, II.XXIV.V. The chronicles of the Castilian kings include many references to concern over the loyalties of mercenary crews and even Admirals at sea. A particularly good example is that of the suspicions raised concerning Jofre d' Tenorio, *Almirante de la mar y galeras*, who was the object of a whisper campaign in the court of Alfonso XI, including accusations that he willfully allowed a large Muslim fleet to cross the Straits of Gibraltar and harbor at Algeciras, setting into motion the events that would eventually lead to the battle of the Rio Salado. I shall relate the story and the issue of treachery as related to literature in some detail in the chapter addressing that general focus.

¹¹¹ Steinberg has argued that the absence of a central naval power is always related to an increase in piracy, eclipsing economic or other considerations. This was true in the waters surrounding the Iberian Peninsula despite the large area generally involved and the fact that small pirate vessels can operate clandestinely rather easily, such as in the Mediterranean, where numerous small islands and shallow waters made piracy particularly attractive. See the introduction to Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean*.

¹¹² Joseph Snow was the first to suggest that a series of miracles related to the sea were included specifically for the purpose of assuaging fears of travel to and from the Puerto de Santa Maria, one of the southern-most points in Andalusia on the Bay of Cadiz. The specific *Cantigas* he includes in his theory are 5 (concerning the abandonment at sea of the Empress Beatriz), 95 (the kidnapping of a hermit from his isolated hermitage by pirates), 112 (the foundering of a grain transport), and 193 (the attempted drowning of a merchant by his companions). Snow, "A Chapter in Alfonso's Personal Narrative: The Puerto de Santa Maria Poems in the *CSM*."

Cantigas and the later *Cifar* is the threat of treachery at sea, particularly betrayal by one's shipmates. Given the isolation and loss of agency associated with the sea travel in any sort of emergency, the prospect of suddenly discovering that one was sailing in the midst of others with evil intent would present a chilling prospect. Thus, the fact that we find the theme accentuated in these two manuscripts, coupled with its recurrence throughout the literature of the period, suggests a preoccupation with this particular fear that merits close analysis.¹¹³

No *cantiga* better illustrates the fear of treachery at sea than *Cantiga* 193, which relates the story of a merchant traveling with the crusading expedition of Louis IX (1214-70) en route to Tunisia. We begin in frame one, where the merchant, dressed in a rose-colored garment, sits near the prow of the vessel. His expression is particularly relaxed and he actually appears to be enjoying the journey now; the sea now appears in gentle rolling curves, and no clouds appear to suggest violent weather. He even grasps one of the rigging lines as he seems to be taking in the view, and one can almost sense the warmth of a beautiful day at sea. However, if we look to the rear of the merchant, we can see a group of individuals talking among themselves; one points toward the merchant, and the text reveals that they are aware he is carrying great wealth that they would like to steal from him to spend on the war effort.¹¹⁴ The entire panel summarizes the fear neatly; one could be in a confined space which represented the only safe haven in an otherwise

¹¹³ I shall discuss this issue in depth in the chapter on literature, but many such concerns are voiced in the chronicles of the kings of Castile, as well as the travel account of Pero Tafur, a fourteenth-century Castilian merchant, and the biographical account of Pero Nino, *El Vttorial*. Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*.

¹¹⁴ "...penssaron que o matassen | pera despender na Guerra" Mettmann, ed., *Cantigas*, 234.

deadly environment and simultaneously be completely unaware that their companions were plotting some kind of violence against them – violence that unfolds in the next panel. In panel two, the plotters seize the merchant, tie a rock to his neck, and throw him headlong into the sea. The direct intervention of the Virgin saves the merchant, evident in panel three, where she has created a bubble around him such that the sea “did not even touch him.” The consequences for the merchant in the absence of divine intervention are obvious.¹¹⁵ The text informs us that the vessel that appears in this panel is actually another vessel arriving nearly three days later. In panel four, a sailor lowered into the water on a line cuts the merchant free, and others hoist him onto the vessel. Upon arrival at port, the hanging of those responsible for the attempted murder vindicates the merchant.

Cantiga 193 represents an extreme example, of course, and it is the only one of its kind in the collection. However, we also encounter the theme of falling into the wrong company and thus exposing oneself to unknown peril in *Cifar*, where a series of two similar examples offer an interesting comparison. (Figure 9) In Folio 34r, Grima takes leave of *Cifar*, who stands on shore. The text informs us that the crew has informed *Cifar* that the boat is too small to accommodate them both, but that they will return for him after they make the short journey and take his wife to the kingdom of Orbín. In fact, they do not intend to return and have evil designs on Grima. As with the first panel of *Cantiga* 193, the image sets a mood of relaxed confidence on Grima’s part. Although she wears a

¹¹⁵ “...nada o mar nen chegou a ele” Ibid.

sorrowful expression, there is no trace of fear associated with the company she now shares on the vessel.



Figure 9. BNF Espagnol 36, Folio 34r. Grima and Cifar Part After the Lies of the Crew.

The vessel itself is supposed to be a very small one; the artist has distorted the proportions as a means of providing clear images of the occupants, but also to accentuate the close confines of the boat. The open, even friendly faces on the crewmembers as the vessel departs suggest the difficulty of judging the character of individuals at face value. The vessel moves out of frame to the right toward open sea, underscoring her hidden danger, as the familiar shoreline recedes to the left along with her husband and any hope

of quick rescue by land. Her predicament becomes clear in Folio 36v, when open fighting breaks out among the crew over Grima.¹¹⁶

Folio 36v explodes with violence, which the size of the vessel relative to the struggle tends to magnify. The artist has brilliantly drawn the viewer into the desperate nature of the situation, as long swords flash dangerously in the tight confines of the vessel. Grima is not visible in the scene, having hidden below before the fighting erupted. The vessel is now operating without a crew, for every man is involved in the melee, intent on winning Grima for himself; in short order all are dead as a result of the fighting, and the vessel drifts without direction. Grima is now aboard a derelict vessel; she has no hope of sailing it successfully to land, and disaster seems the only possible outcome. Indeed, the next image emphasizes her predicament, for it introduces an element already familiar from the *Cantigas* – divine intervention. Folio 37r shows us the scene as Grima returns to the deck to discover the corpses of the crew strewn about the deck. The Christ-child, who now appears in the crow's nest of the vessel in order to pilot it safely to shore, instructs her to clear the bodies from the deck. The artist masterfully illustrates her predicament by attempting to create depth and distance in this image. Cities appear on both southern and northern coastlines; their size indicates that the vessel is a great distance from shore. The shore itself frames the image and appears tantalizingly close, but it is in fact inaccessible without Christ's intervention. The image is a strong example of the complete loss of agency at the root of fears surrounding treachery at sea, for ultimately those who boarded a vessel were at the mercy of the crews who operated her.

¹¹⁶ See Figure 4.

If they failed to do their duty properly, or chose to take advantage of their passengers, there was very little recourse available to the luckless victim so far from shore.

Conclusion

The sea as represented in art provides significant evidence for both continuity and change in the perception of the place of the sea over the late medieval period in Castile. In the images of the *Cantigas*, the sea appears as a vast, barren expanse, dramatically juxtaposed with the vibrancy and plenitude of scenes depicting the land. Throughout the *Cantigas*, such images evoke a strong sense of the sea as outside the normal bounds of Castilian society. Land meets sea in a sharply abrupt manner in the majority of such images, underscoring the perception of going to sea as leaving behind the civilization so often represented by castles and towns that literally seem to teeter on the precipice between sea and shore. Scenes of great rejoicing are the norm as those at sea manage to make it home despite significant obstacles, and often only as a consequence of the intercession of the supernatural in the form of the Virgin Mary. For all of these reasons, the integration of land and sea by *Cifar's* artist represents the single most significant change observable over the late medieval period with regard to Castilian perception of the sea. The ease and fluidity of his blending of the two environments suggests that the artist did not imagine the two environments as mutually exclusive. Gone are the sharp vertical delineations between land and sea, replaced with fluid, harmonious images that contextualize the sea within the land itself. Castles and towns no longer serve a contextual purpose of beckoning the terrified traveler to shore, but instead add depth to an image that invites the reader to survey a land vista in addition to imagining the subject

under consideration at sea. Horizons do not simply reflect the emptiness, loneliness, and isolation of the sea of the *Cantigas*, but may now beckon with the symbols of civilization in the form of the pennant-bedecked towers of distant city walls. We find considerably more variation in the appearance of water in the *Cífar* images, with generally more realistic, nuanced presentation of surface water and its qualities. Overall, the seascapes in *Cífar* are considerably less stark, owing to the much stronger integration of land and sea environments, which often tends to envelop the sea in a lattice of land and structures. Such a framing technique lends a sense of vibrancy to the entire panel, tending to lessen the impact of the sterility of the sea, and effectively familiarizing the environment.

The sea itself, the supreme enemy of those who sailed in the *Cantigas*, seems far less challenging to the travelers of *Cífar*. Although many of the same concerns and fears represented in the *Cantigas* remained, by the fifteenth century, seascapes appear in a manner suggesting a much greater confidence and optimism about the possibilities travel there might hold. Advances in shipbuilding technology are at least partly responsible for this apparent shift. The *ñaos* of the *Cantigas* bore specific construction characteristics designed to meet the challenges of operation in the Atlantic, including high sides, a specific response to the much larger swells encountered in the coastal waters found there, and a reliance on sail power alone, as its prevailing winds were considerably more predictable than those found in the Mediterranean.¹¹⁷ The deep draught of the *nao*, however, made it a less useful vessel in the Mediterranean because of the myriad of shallows and islets found there. There, the galley, with its shallower draft and the

¹¹⁷ For sailing conditions in the Mediterranean vs. the Atlantic, see an excellent summary of the problems of conflicting winds and current in Rose, *The Medieval Sea*, 10-11.

superior mobility provided via oar power, reigned supreme for both war and trade. Great galleys became significantly more commonplace in the fifteenth century Mediterranean, employed by both the Genoese and Venetians as merchant vessels. Perfectly suited to the Mediterranean environment, they were also able to navigate in the Atlantic, at least in the summer months when the weather permitted. The advantage of the galley was its versatility, as it could employ both sail and oar power and thus did not suffer from the serious weakness of the *nao*.¹¹⁸ Beginning in the early fifteenth century, shipbuilders began to experiment with hybrids blending the best characteristics of the Northern (Atlantic) and Southern (Mediterranean) tradition. The Portuguese adopted the lateen sail of the Southern galleys for use on their *caravels*, small, fast vessels employing Southern tradition rigging while retaining the necessary construction style for operation in the Atlantic in all conditions. This merging of technologies made movement was particularly useful in their reconnaissance of the African coastline, though these smaller vessels did

¹¹⁸ For general studies on the development of vessels in the medieval period see the following: Robert Gardiner and Richard W Unger, *Cogs, Caravels and Galleons: The Sailing Ship, 1000-1650* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), Basil Greenhill, *The Evolution of the Sailing Ship, 1250-1580* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1995), Susan Rose, "Ships and Boats: Issues of Technology and Evidence: Documentary Sources and the Medieval Ship," in *Medieval Ships and Warfare*, ed. Susan Rose (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), Gillian Hutchinson, *Medieval Ships and Shipping* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994). For galley development in particular, see Robert Gardiner, *The Age of the Galley: Mediterranean Oared Vessels Since pre-Classical Times* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995), Frederic Chapin Lane, *Venetian Ships and Shipbuilders of the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1934). For a discussion of the critical issues surrounding the distinction between the Northern and Southern shipbuilding techniques, see Lewis, "Northern Sea Power and Gibraltar." For issues specifically related to Iberia see Eliseo Alvarez-Arenas, *El español ante el mar; ensayo de una incomprensión histórica* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1969), Eliseo Álvarez-Arenas, *Del mar en la historia de España* (Madrid: Editorial Naval, 1987), Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, *Viajes y descubrimientos en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 1994), Luis. Carrero Blanco, *España y el mar*, 3 ed. (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1964), José Cervera Pery, *El poder naval en los Reinos hispánicos: (la marina de la Edad Media)* (Madrid: San Martín, 1992), Fernández Duro, *Marina de Castilla*, F. Fernando de Bordeje y Morencos, *España, poder marítimo y estrategia naval*, 2d ed. (Madrid: Editorial Naval, 1985), Mott, "Iberian Naval Power, 1000-1650.", Rose, *The Medieval Sea*, Salas y Rodríguez, *Marina española de la edad media: bosquejo histórico de sus principales sucesos en relación con la historia de las coronas de Aragón y de Castilla*, Vilanova, *La mar en guerra*.

not have the cargo capacity of the larger great *ñao*. As the race for new routes to the Indies intensified, growing demand for a vessel capable of better performance in the open Atlantic led to the hybrid known as the *caravela redonda*, a three-masted vessel with both lateen and square-rigged sails; it was this type of vessel that made the voyages of exploration of the late fifteenth century, and which we see depicted in the *Cifar* miniatures.

Yet, despite an overall increase in confidence and familiarity evoked by the body of images contained in *Cifar*, we still find that serious reservations regarding certain aspects of travel by sea remain evident in fifteenth-century imagery. Chief among these reservations is a serious concern for the level of agency relinquished at sea associated with events beyond the control of passengers and crew alike, such as the treachery of one's sailing companions or structural failures aboard vessels. In both sources, such events resulted in a need for divine intervention at the moment of greatest crisis.¹¹⁹ One could also find oneself abandoned at sea, whether intentionally, as in the case of the Empress or Roboán, or through the loss of the crew for some reason, as in the case of Grima after the fighting over her left her drifting in a crewless vessel. Both sources present such prospects as equally grim, but the treatment of the subjects by the *Cifar* artist reveals a decidedly less fearful approach. The imagery of *Cifar* tends to reveal a diminished fear of the sea itself, a ubiquitous presence in the imagery of the *Cantigas*. Even the depiction of the sea itself is decidedly more sedate, for nowhere will you find

¹¹⁹ In both cases, it is the intervention of Mary that is the primary motivating factor. As we have seen, in the *Cantigas*, failing to call upon her results in failure to receive assistance, despite a call to other patron saints of mariners (*Cantiga* 36). In *Cifar*, the Christ-child intervenes only after a similar plea to the Virgin results in her making a request to her son to intervene on the victims' behalf.

the roiling hard lines representing frothing raging waters such as those encountered in the *Cantigas*. Instead, one finds relatively calm water, and the most dangerous situation that occurs at sea is the attempted assault of Grima by the sailors who have taken her aboard their vessel. That the danger should be a matter of human agency in that situation is noteworthy, as it underscores a fundamental difference between the *Cifar* artist's perception of the sea and that of those who labored on the *Cantigas*: The sea, a formidable enemy in its own right and arguably the greatest danger facing travelers there, is less a threat to the fifteenth-century artist than the humans one finds sailing upon her.

Thus, the isolation, desolation, and powerfully dangerous nature of the sea itself, so abundantly displayed in the thirteenth-century *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, gave way to a more muted presentation in the fifteenth-century illustrations of the *Libro del Cavallero Cifar*. Perhaps most importantly, the sea as an enemy in its own right appears to have lost much of its capacity to evoke a certain dread on its own merits. Fearful situations at sea in *Cifar* are more dependent on human activities than on the environment itself, a remarkable change that reflects an increasingly familiar Castilian experience with the sea, and particularly the benefits that might derive from activities there. Even in situations of great danger, we find humans moving confidently at sea, always less concerned about the sea itself than their own ability to have a significant impact on the outcome of their voyages. While it remained a dangerous and unpredictable place, it had become a destination in its own right, much more amenable to human agency, and offering positive, as well as purely disastrous, outcomes to those who ventured there.

CHAPTER III

FROM DIVINE TO DETERMINED: THE LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

The power of images to reflect the nature of the sea is also present in the written word, where language replaces the canvas in conveying the majesty, power, and potentially destructive nature of the sea. From the thirteenth through the fifteenth century, Castilian chronicle, romance, and travel narrative combine to provide us a glimpse of their perception of the sea that instantly rivals that afforded by the artistic evidence presented in the preceding chapter. These varied, rich descriptive texts illustrate that Castilian perception underwent fundamental changes in the depth and descriptive power employed in describing the interaction of Castilians and the sea over the two centuries under examination in this dissertation. Whether describing the terrifying effects of storms at sea, the ability of humans to meet the challenges of such perils, or the gradual elevation of the sea itself as a proper arena for honor and even adventure, the written word offers rich, fertile ground for the reconstruction of Castilian perception of the sea.

References to the sea and to the activities of Castilians there remain in the historical record from the fall of Seville in 1248 to the very dawn of the age of exploration in the late fifteenth century. The evidence is initially scanty, to be sure, and until the fifteenth century, rarely receives primary attention from authors. Instead, the references are often incidental or oblique; events occurring at sea amongst others granted much greater importance and primacy in the chronicler's narrative or the trajectory of the romance. Yet, the frequency and detail of those references grew in both number and

sophistication continuously throughout the late medieval period. This steady growth evolved along several different lines, beginning with the few Marian miracle tales taking place at sea in the thirteenth century *Cantigas* and the dependence of its authors on largely borrowed accounts to describe the sea and the dangers travelers faced in their voyages. Moving into the fourteenth century, elements of the chivalric begin to appear in chronicle accounts of events at sea, setting the stage there for the actions of warriors braving its depths. This trend toward a comfortable blending of the chivalric values of land warriors with those going to sea continues into the fifteenth century, when two important works, *El Victorial* and *Andanc del mundo avidos*, showcase the journeys of two knights and dramatically demonstrate a significant change in the perception and description of the place of the sea in the Castilian worldview.¹²⁰ These two sources – the former a chronicle with romance elements, the other a travel narrative -- reveal a remarkable change in the confidence, experience, and relative importance ascribed to the exercise of human agency when contrasted with thirteenth-century accounts and underscore the gradual integration of land and sea already addressed in art in the previous chapter.

As I have already shown in Chapter II, a strongly differentiated sense of land and sea existed in thirteenth-century Castilian art that gave way to a more integrated view by the fifteenth, and the literature of that period reveals the same trends. In some ways, such as in the description of storms, very similar themes and their treatment emerge with regard to familiarity, agency, and the role of the supernatural. Depictions of storms from

¹²⁰ Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*.

the thirteenth through the fifteenth century range from generally uniform accounts appearing in the text of the Marian miracles of the *Cantigas* to the highly detailed and emotionally evocative passages found in later treatments of tempests at sea. The difference in these nuanced examples is both linguistic and contextual, underscoring the growing familiarity with the sea itself and the appearance of first-person accounts in depicting them. The role of human agency, in particular, becomes a significant factor in stories describing the success or failure of endeavors at sea, a trend concurrent with a decline in the absolute belief in the necessity for divine intervention in any disastrous moment encountered far from shore. In addition, by the fifteenth century, literary examples emphasizing the expertise and experience of individual sailors at sea become more common, and the descriptions of their activities more elaborate.¹²¹ As the analysis of the literary evidence reveals, this increased detail is consistent with a movement away from thirteenth-century assumptions about the distinction between sea and land and the limitations imposed by the former on the ability of humans to exercise agency effectively there. While the increased detail contained in these works is not limited to descriptions of the sea, the evidence reveals both continuity and change in descriptions of that environment and human interaction there when compared with earlier material. For this reason, it is possible to discuss the change in perception outside of the broader literary trend toward a generally more descriptive prose style; and while increased detail is one of the elements of comparison employed in this chapter, it is not the only one. The examples that follow both flesh out and expand upon the visual perception of the sea examined in

¹²¹ The appearance of specifics associated with the use of skills by mariners is uncommon before the fifteenth century in Castile. Within the context of this dissertation, “expertise” refers to the relation of the collection of skills and their use by mariners in the Castilian literary record. I do not argue that such skills and their employment did not occur before that time, but only that they do not appear in the sources earlier.

Chapter II, and offer a new complementary basis for comparison that, taken with the visual evidence, provides further support for a pattern of Castilian attitudes toward the sea. In spite of the important consideration of individual contributors to each example – the illustrators in the case of the artwork and the writers in the case of the literary evidence – the weight of the support presented shows that there were underlying assumptions about the nature of the sea at work throughout the late Middle Ages. Thus, a strongly integrative trend emerges from the analysis of the literary evidence, consistent with the trend observed in the analysis of art presented in Chapter II.

However, the literary evidence reveals some distinctly different patterns of perception as well. By adapting the sea to serve as an appropriate setting of a chivalric tale, the integration of land and sea in concept emerges in literature at a considerably earlier date than in art. As my analysis will reveal, the influence of chivalric literature on non-fictional genres first appears in the *Partidas*,¹²² but the great struggle for the Straits of Gibraltar and the literary trajectory chosen by the chronicler of Alfonso XI (1311-1350) in relating his various exploits related to that struggle greatly enhanced that influence.¹²³ It is in his chronicle where we first find a chivalric cast to maritime events,

¹²² This was especially true in the creation of Partida II, Title XXI, governing knighthood. See the following analyses: Gladys Isabel Lizabe de Savastano, "El título XXI de la segunda partida de Alfonso X, patrón del tratado de caballería hispánico," in *Evolución narrativa e ideológica de la literatura caballeresca*, ed. Eukene Lacarra Lanz, Historia Universidad del País Vasco. Facultad de Filología y Geografía e, and Caballeresca Seminario sobre Literatura (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial, Universidad del País Vasco, 1991), Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, "De oficio a estado: La caballería entre el Espéculo y las Siete Partidas," *Cahiers de Linguistique Hispanique Médiévale* 18 (1993), Jesús Montoya Martínez, "La doctrina de la caballería," in *Partida segunda de Alfonso X el Sabio : manuscrito 12794 de la B.N.*, ed. X. Alfonso, Aurora Juárez Blanquer, and Antonio Rubio Flores (Granada: Impredisur, 1991), Georges Martin, "Control regio de la violencia nobiliaria: La caballería según Alfonso X de Castilla (comentario al título XXI de la segunda partida)," in *Lucha política: condena y legitimación en la España medieval*, ed. Isabel Alfonso Antón, et al. (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2004).

¹²³ See Salvador de Moxó, "La sociedad política castellana en la época de Alfonso XI," *Cuadernos de Historia* 6 (1975). For general studies, see Antonio Pérez Martín, "El estatuto jurídico de la caballería

reflecting their intense importance during the mid-fourteenth century and offering an excellent point of comparison with earlier accounts.¹²⁴ The adoption of the sea as a proper locus for the deeds of land warriors would find full flower in the later *El Victorial*. Unlike the rather dramatic integration seen in the later artistic renderings of land and sea described in Chapter II, the literary evidence presented in support of chivalric integration tends toward an immediate adaptation of the marine environment in service of the artistic needs of the authors involved.

Sources

The analysis in this chapter will include references to both first and third-person perspectives on the sea, gleaned from both romance and chronicle sources. With regard to chronicles in particular, many of the potential pitfalls already encountered with art resurface. In particular, using chronicles requires close attention to the influence of patronage in shaping the interpretation of both specific and broader interpretation of people, places, and events. Date of creation is also an important consideration in the literature under examination in this chapter. Some of these works represent relatively contemporaneous accounts of the events they describe, such as the *Primera Crónica*, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, *Crónica de Pedro*, *Crónica de Enrique III*, and *Crónica de Juan*

castellana," in *La chevalerie castillane á la fin du Moyen Age*, ed. Georges Martin (Paris: Ellipses, 2001), M. C. Quintanilla Raso, *Nobleza y caballería en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Arco Libros, 1996).

¹²⁴ Diego Catalán and Juan Núñez de Villaizán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977). Alfonso's preoccupation with chivalric culture was partly fashionably correct given the European preoccupation with chivalry generally in monarchial circles at that time. However, Alfonso had also established the *Ordeno de la Banda* in 1332, the second oldest secular order after Charles of Hungary's Order of the Jar. There is no question that his preoccupation with the proper conduct of his knights affected the writing and structure of the *Cronica*, and was, as I shall relate later, perhaps best exemplified in the story of Jofre Tenorio. For the history of the *Orden de la Banda*, see Alfonso de Caballos-Escalera y Gila Marqués de la Floresta, *La orden y divisa de la Banda Real de Castilla* (Madrid: Prensa y ed. iberoamericanas, 1993). Also see Jesús D. Rodríguez Velasco, *Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).

II, but others represent later attempts to reconstruct the histories they purport to offer.¹²⁵ My analysis in this chapter involves tracing distinctions in the articulation of differences in perception of the sea over time, as well as being dependent upon creating a comparative framework for referring to earlier and later sources throughout the remainder of the dissertation. Thus, for the sake of clarity in the presentation of these sources, I shall proceed by century.

Thirteenth Century

The thirteenth-century sources under consideration in this chapter include the *Primera Crónica*, the *Crónica de Alfonso X*, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, and *Libro del Cavallero Cifar*.¹²⁶ Collectively, this group of sources provides evidence that strongly supports the record of maritime perception revealed in my analysis of art from the same period. Overall, the evidence follows a trajectory similar to that revealed in Chapter II, where a strongly differentiated perception of land and sea reveals itself through a relatively consistent pattern of presentation and description of each of the environments. In this chapter, these thirteenth-century literary sources provide a solid baseline for comparison with the later evidence, where stark contrasts appear in both the scope and description of the experience of Castilians at sea.

¹²⁵ Alfonso X and Sancho IV, *Primera Crónica*, Catalán and Núñez de Villaizán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, Cayetano Rosell et al., *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla, desde don Alfonso el Sabio hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel; colección ordenada por d. Cayetano Rosell*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Madrid: Impr. de los sucesores de Hernando, 1919), Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II de Castilla*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo y Arroquia (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1982).

¹²⁶ Alfonso X and Sancho IV, *Primera Crónica*, Jofré de Loaysa, *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla: Fernando III, Alfonso X, Sancho IV y Fernando IV, 1248-1305* (Murcia: Patronato de Cultura de la Excm. Diputación de Murcia, 1961), Alfonso X, "MS. T.I. 1: Cantigas de Santa Maria (Códice Rico).", Wagner, *El cavallero Cifar*.

Alfonso X commissioned the *Primera crónica general (Estoria de España)* in 1260, shortly after his accession to the throne. The work came into being in two major editorial stages, one completed in 1274, and the other in 1289.¹²⁷ Monumental in scope, the work is an attempt to recreate the history of Spain from biblical times to the reign of his father, Fernando III. There is no single author or collective group of authors to whom we may ascribe the text, as work proceeded in a compartmentalized manner with different teams of writers working on the different sections of the project. The final product consisted of four major sections, the first of which covered the history of Rome, and included legendary references to the foundations of Seville by Hercules and later Caesar, all part of a larger tendency in medieval monarchy of seeking a direct link to Rome via the translation of the Empire. The second covers the age of barbarians and the coming of the Visigothic kings of Spain, from whom the medieval kings of Spain believed themselves descended. The third presents a history of the Asturian kingdoms and the initiation of the *Reconquista*, and the fourth the rise of both the Castilian and Leonese monarchies. The work bears more resemblance to an annal than a chronicle with respect to the fact that the authors made little attempt to analyze or explain the significance of the events it contains. Thus, even when they provide a detailed chronological sequence of events and actions such as those appearing near the very end of the work in the description of the siege and fall of Seville, we receive no real analysis of the relationship of those events to any larger historical trajectory.¹²⁸ Ramón Menéndez

¹²⁷ Alfonso X and Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, *Versión crítica de la Estoria de España: estudio y edición desde Pelayo hasta Ordoño II*, ed. Inés Fernández-Ordóñez (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1993).

¹²⁸ Nancy Jo Dyer analyzes the construction and structural choices made by Alfonso and his scribes in Nancy Jo Dyer, "Alfonso's Historiography: The Literary Narrative," in *Emperor of culture: Alfonso X the*

Pidal edited this large and expansive volume in 1906 as the *Primera Crónica General*, which begins with the start of the third section of the *Estoria* and covers only the reconquest era from the Asturian kingdoms forward. It is this version that I shall use in the analysis presented in this chapter.

Only the latter part of the fourth section of this expansive chronicle bears directly on the subject under examination in this chapter and then only slightly, underscoring its significance with regard to establishing a comparative starting point by illuminating perception of the sea in thirteenth-century Castile. Given the enormity of the chronicle's coverage – its final size reached a staggering 400 chapters by 1272 – the limited references to the sea, all appearing in the immediate preparations for the siege and eventual capture of Seville, accentuates the significance of the moment in Castilian history with regard to perception of the sea. Although the work includes a tremendous amount of borrowing from much older sources, and thus requires care in presuming thirteenth-century attitudes towards the events it purports to describe, it is the closest thing we have to a contemporary record of the perception of the sea in a mid-thirteenth

Learned of Castile and his thirteenth-century Renaissance, ed. Robert I. Burns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990). She argues that the work must be understood within the context of the struggle faced by the scope of the project, seeking as it did to write modern history into what was a compilation of a dizzying array of older sources. See Charles F. Fraker, *The Scope of History: Studies in the Historiography of Alfonso el Sabio* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996). The majority of Fraker's study is devoted to the Arabic, Latin, and Hebraic influences on the construction of the *Estoria*, and it remains a critical resource for understanding the varied sources used in its assembly. For a general study of the place of the *Estoria* in the Alfonsine literature, also see Inés Fernández-Ordóñez, *Las Estorias de Alfonso el Sabio* (Madrid: Istmo, 1992). For commentary on the PCG and its use by Alfonso, see Diego Catalán, *De Alfonso X al conde de Barcelos; cuatro estudios sobre el nacimiento de la historiografía romance en Castilla y Portugal* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1962). For the role of myth in the PCG, see Jose Antonio Caballero Lopez, "Presencia y función del relato mítico en la Primera Crónica General," *Romania*. 126, no. 1 (2008).

century chronicle and, together with the chronicle of Alfonso X, provides evidence sufficient to argue for some contemporary value.

Crónica de Alfonso X. It is indeed ironic that Alfonso X, the ultimate royal patron of learning and art during his lifetime, made no effort to begin a chronicle of his own reign. That task fell to his great-grandson, Alfonso XI (1312-50), who commissioned a group of three chronicles intended to complete the missing history of the royal house of Castile-Leon, a period covering 1252 to 1312, and three monarchs: Alfonso X (1252-84), Sancho IV (1284-95), and Fernando IV (1295-1312). This collective effort, often referred to as the *Crónica de tres reyes*, was also Alfonso's attempt at an official continuation of the *Primera Crónica*.¹²⁹ There remains some scholarly debate regarding the author of the work, but current consensus agrees that he was probably Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid (d. c. 1360), a member of the royal council (*Consejo real*), Chancellor of the Privy Seal (*Cancillor del sello de la poridad*), and Chief Notary (*Notario mayor*). One of the major reasons to believe he was indeed responsible is that he was almost certainly the author of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, as many details point to his authorship.¹³⁰ With regard to overall structure, current scholarship accepts the evaluation of Evelyn Procter that the work is divisible into three parts, each with its

¹²⁹ The *Crónica de tres reyes* still exists as a unified text in a critical edition which is a part of the *Autores Españoles* series, but all exist as separate texts as well. Loaysa, *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla: Fernando III, Alfonso X, Sancho IV y Fernando IV, 1248-1305*.

¹³⁰ Much of the material contained in the *Chronicle of Alfonso XI* is clearly the work of an eyewitness to the events described, especially the description of an ambassadorial trip to Rome known to have been undertaken by Sánchez, and which he describes at some length.

own degree of historical value.¹³¹ The first of these parts covers the period from 1252 to 1270, and constitutes the most confusing portion of the entire work. This may be the result of the use of oral accounts of many of the events related, for Sánchez was writing at a time when such testimony would have been available to him. Noteworthy in this section are frequently incorrect dates, very few sources, and little specific identification of individuals; consequently, the use of this section requires corroboration with other documents for verification. The second section, covering the revolt of the nobility from 1271-73, is considerably more specific, with more than half of the total volume of the chronicle devoted to this four-year period. O'Callaghan believes that Sanchez de Valladolid was working with a thirteenth-century text, and his incorporation of numerous documents from the chancery suggests that he had access to them, given that the chronology in this section is generally reliable, and identifications of individuals tend to be quite specific.¹³² Section three, covering 1274-84, is not as detailed as is the second, but much more reliable than the first, for the same reasons governing the second – greater use of archival material of some sort and a more carefully annotated attempt at reconstructing the events.

Sánchez completed the collection of chronicles sometime in the mid 1320's, and, although not contemporary, this is well within the window necessary for access to witnesses of actual events, particularly for the last period of Alfonso X's chronicle, and

¹³¹ Evelyn S. Procter, "The Castilian Chancery During the Reign of Alfonso X, 1252-84," in *Oxford Essays in Medieval History Presented to Herbert Edward Salter*, ed. Herbert Edward Salter (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1968).

¹³² Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

many scholars believe that Sanchez did indeed work with now-missing archival material from the royal chancery. Significant differences between the accounts of the sea appearing in the chronicle of Alfonso X and those of the subsequent monarchs he chronicles are intriguing, and my analysis will highlight these differences and establish that those attributed to the thirteenth century are indeed typical of Castilian representation of the sea at that time.

Las Cantigas de Santa Maria. Where Chapter II offers a strong argument for the value of the illuminations contained in the Cantigas, Chapter III focuses on an analysis of the literary content of the poetic tales themselves. Many of the same considerations presented for the use of the imagery of the Cantigas in chapter II remain valid in the literary analysis occurring here in Chapter III, chief among them being the need to create a believable context within which the supernatural qualities of the miracle might shine with greater effulgence.¹³³ Such context was a critical component in the utility of the imagery contained in the Cantigas as a reliable source for thirteenth-century Castilian perception generally, and the same remains true with regard to the textual evidence provided by the poetry itself. As the following analysis will show, the poetry demonstrates the same tendency to differentiate land and sea as did the imagery, and because the creation of several of the poems aimed to assuage specific fears of settlers

¹³³ For a discussion on this subject see Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000-1215* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 133. Ward not only analyzes the compilation of Marian tales throughout medieval Europe, but the causes behind their creation. She posits motivational forces at work including religious conversion and the strengthening of the faithful, who, she argues, unwaveringly believed in the truth of the miracles associated with her. Also see Jesús Montoya Martínez, *Las colecciones de milagros de la Virgen en la Edad Media (el milagro literario)* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1981). See especially chapter one, on Bereceo's *Milagros*, for the same topic in Julian Weiss, *The Mester De Clerecía: Intellectuals and Ideologies in Thirteenth-century Castile* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2006).

relative to the sea, their analysis will be especially important to the overall argument.¹³⁴

Finally, one of the critical elements for consideration in the use of the *Cantigas* is the issue of provenance. As the great majority of Marian tales included in the work are not of Castilian origin, the critical consideration must remain the significance of their selection and subject matter.

El Libro del Cavallero Cífar. *El Libro del Cavallero Cífar*, featuring stories of knights engaged in chivalrous acts of derring-do, is the story of the knight Cífar and his adventures with shipwreck, piracy, questing beasts, abduction by wild animals, and his ultimate reunion with his family.¹³⁵ It is an important source for evidence that tends to parallel that of the other sources under examination in this chapter for attitudes and perceptions regarding the sea. Only two original manuscripts of *Cífar* survive, the earliest of which dates from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, held at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, and a sumptuously illuminated manuscript housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, dated by María Elena de Arizmendi, based on her analysis of the artistic style, to be somewhere in the neighborhood of 1465.¹³⁶ We do not know much about the author, though the context of the work provides important clues to possible candidates. John Keller has argued that the author's mastery of the Castilian in

¹³⁴ Included among these poems are the cycle that O'Callaghan has argued reflect a direct attempt to entice settlement to the Puerto de Santa Maria, including cantigas 328, 356-359, 364, 366-368, 371-372, 374-375, 377-379, 381-382, 385, 390, 391-393, and 398. His article defining this argument appears as a chapter in his O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa Maria: a Poetic Biography*.

¹³⁵ An excellent introduction to the genre and the current state of scholarship surrounding golden-age chivalric literature may be found in Rafael Beltrán Llavador, *Literatura de caballerías y orígenes de la novela* (València: Universitat de València, 1998).

¹³⁶ The illuminations contained in this manuscript are analyzed in detail in Chapter II of this dissertation. Unknown, "MS 11-309.", Unknown, "Cavallero Cifar."

use at that time, combined with the unusual figural references to Jesus, might suggest an obviously erudite cleric, but the author's familiarity with warfare and chivalry strongly argue for a secular author. On the strength of a third-person parable in the prologue, Keller concludes that the author might have been Ferrand Martínez of Madrid, Archdeacon of the Church of Toledo; this remains the most likely theory.¹³⁷ In any event, the question remains unresolved. Yet, as my analysis will show, the manner in which the text deals with maritime matters is entirely consistent with that presented in the other examples of thirteenth-century literature under examination in this chapter.

Fourteenth Century

Crónica de Alfonso XI. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, written in 1344 and attributed to Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, was the last in the series of such works undertaken by this author. As I have indicated, he was also the author of the *Crónica de tres reyes*, three chronicles intended to fill the gap left by the end of the *Primera Crónica*, which stopped with the death of Fernando III in 1252 and the accession of his son Alfonso X to the Castilian throne.¹³⁸ This chronicle, indisputably panegyric in its narrative, was clearly an ode by Sánchez de Valladolid to a monarch he felt was genuinely worthy of praise, particularly for his standing as a chivalric king who revitalized southern expansion and personally led his troops in major battles, especially at

¹³⁷The major opposition to any agreement on this theory is the fact that the prologue in question was unquestionably a later addition to the manuscript. Keller and Kinkade, *Iconography in Medieval Spanish Literature*, 61, Unknown, "Cavallero Cifar." The "persistent" use of Christ as a device is argued by James Burke, particularly in his James F. Burke, *History and Vision: the Figural Structure of the "Libro del Cavallero Zifar."* (London: Tamesis Books, 1972).

¹³⁸ Catalán and Núñez de Villaizán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*.

the battle of the Rio Salado, an event which occupies an extended and detailed portion of the work.¹³⁹

There is general agreement that the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* is the most interesting and lively of all the works attributed to Valladolid, and this is likely a consequence of the first-hand information that he used in writing the work. As an important member of Alfonso XI's court, he had firsthand knowledge of many of the incidents he describes, either by virtue of having witnessed them himself, or hearing directly from others at court with whom he was intimate. He was particularly keen to distinguish between events witnessed firsthand and those gleaned through such secondary sources, using statements such as “él que escribió esta estoria oyó decir” (he who wrote this history heard it said), or “el Estoriador oyó decir” (the historian heard it said). His stated purpose, “contar de las cosas que acaescieron en los regnos de Castiella et de León en el tiempo deste Rey Don Alfonso,” (to relate the events that occurred in the kingdom of Castile-Leon in the time of King Alfonso) was not entirely exclusive, for many events in the chronicle occur outside the kingdom. Overall, however, the work is firmly focused on the king and his exploits, which Valladolid frames within a chivalric context at nearly every turn; the king always appears in a positive light as a just and determined monarch and exemplary knight in his own right.

One of the more curious elements regarding the chronicle is its abrupt termination in 1344, fully six years before the death of the king at the siege of Algeciras, despite the fact that Valladolid outlived the king by nearly ten years. There is no immediately

¹³⁹ Often referred to in older manuscripts as “batalla de Tarifa o del Salado,” often interchanged. The battle itself actually occurred near Tarifa at the mouth of the Rio Salado on October 30, 1340.

apparent explanation for this sudden termination of the project, particularly given the prolific nature of the author and the sweeping contribution he had already made via the *Tres crónicas* to the continuation of royal Castilian chronicle tradition. In addition, the setting of the king's death at the siege of Gibraltar was certainly consistent with the heroic posture Sanchez had granted his patron.¹⁴⁰ The task of relating that event fell to the next chronicler, Pedro López de Ayala, who opens the *Crónica del rey don Pedro* with a moving account of the king's death at that siege.¹⁴¹

The great importance of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* to this chapter lies in the extraordinary detail with which Valladolid describes the events occurring at sea in support of the ultimate battle of the Rio Salado. He not only stages the events he describes at sea using details nearly absent from the thirteenth century accounts, but also suggests that he recognizes a much larger role for human agency than we find in those same accounts. This is especially true with regard to the actions of Joffre Tenorio, Alfonso XI's admiral and the main protagonist of that portion of the chronicle dealing with the sea. In addition to ushering in a trend toward increasingly detailed accounts of life at sea, a trend that would later find flower in the fifteenth century, he also engages in a decidedly integrative approach to his presentation of the sea. As I shall show, Valladolid's description of Tenorio's actions at sea constitute a deliberate staging of events occurring there in a manner intended to familiarize an environment otherwise at odds with a typically chivalric tale. In so doing, he frames the events there in terms meant

¹⁴⁰ Alfonso XI died of plague in his camp at Gibraltar in 1349, the only European monarch to die in the first outbreak of the Black Death.

¹⁴¹ Pedro López de Ayala, *Coronica del rey don Pedro*, ed. Constance L. Wilkins and Heanon M. Wilkins (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1985).

to evoke the imagery of a typical land battle, while at the same time gesturing to the dangers the sea itself presented to the combatants, a danger which demanded the extension of additional respect from the audience for the prowess displayed by those willing to undertake that danger. This trend toward the integration of the chivalric with the seemingly incompatible arena presented by the sea itself would continue throughout the fourteenth century and merge nearly seamlessly in the literature of the fifteenth. Thus, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* is a critical source for one of the most important arguments I seek to make in this chapter.

Crónica del rey don Pedro. The chronicle of Pedro, alternately known as “el cruel” or “el justiciero” depending on political perspective, was the first in a series of three royal chronicles by Pedro López de Ayala, arguably the most important Castilian literary source from the latter half of the fourteenth century.¹⁴² Ayala personally served Pedro in a variety of other capacities from 1353 to 1367, when he joined Enrique of Trastámara, who would later brutally murder Pedro and assume the throne in 1369.¹⁴³ It is widely believed that Ayala did not write the chronicles until his semi-retirement at his estate in Álava in the 1390s; thus, the exact date of the individual components is unknown.¹⁴⁴ Ayala was a capable military and political figure in his own right, serving as an ambassador to France under Juan I, as a member of the council of regents during the

¹⁴² Originally intended as a single edition, all of the chronicles have since appeared in critical editions covering each individual monarch: Pedro I (1350-69), Enrique II (1369-79), Juan I (1379-90), and Enrique III (1390-1406). ———, *Crónicas de los reyes Castilla: don Pedro, don Enrique II, don Juan I, don Enrique III*, ed. Eugenio Llaguno y Amirola, Jerónimo Zurita, and Antonio de Sancha (Madrid: Antonio de Sancha, 1779).

¹⁴³ López de Ayala often appears throughout the chronicles of the kings he served.

¹⁴⁴ Michel García, *Obra y personalidad del Canciller Ayala* (Madrid: Alhambra, 1983).

minority of Enrique III, and must be included with Juan Ruiz and Juan Manuel as one of the preeminent Castilian authors of the fourteenth century.

For the purposes of this chapter, the importance of Ayala's work lies in its truly contemporary character, providing solid source material for the argument I will be developing here. Ayala's account of Pedro's maritime adventures, most notably his attempt to engage Pedro of Aragon in a direct naval confrontation in the Mediterranean during the War of the Two Pedros, is remarkably consistent with Sánchez's presentation of Tenorio and his battle in the Straits of Gibraltar during the reign of Alfonso XI.¹⁴⁵

El Conde Lucanor. Written by Don Juan Manuel (1282-1348), nephew of Alfonso X, in 1335 as an enjoyably didactic book for fellow nobles, *El Conde Lucanor* addresses subjects of great importance to his audience, including military strategy, chivalric behavior, hunting, and the intricacies of managing estates against the machinations of local and even royal foes.¹⁴⁶ Though many of the tales have historical roots, Manuel freely manipulates them for the sake of entertainment value, and while others descend from a much older Arabic tradition, he clearly chose them for their

¹⁴⁵ The "War of the two Pedros" was the conflict between Castile and Aragon lasting from 1356-1366; Pedro of Castile's victory at Nájera on 13 April 1367 was essentially the end of Aragon's active involvement with what had become a civil war in Castile between Pedro I and his illegitimate half-brother, Enrique Trastámara, later Enrique II.

¹⁴⁶ Don Juan Manuel, *el Conde Lucanor*, ed. José Manuel Blecua (Madrid: Castalia, 1977; reprint, 11th). For information on Juan Manuel generally and his literary sources, particularly in *Lucanor*, see Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux, *El conde Lucanor: Materia tradicional y originalidad creadora* (Madrid: Ediciones J. Porrúa Turanzas, 1975), Ian Richard Macpherson, *Juan Manuel Studies* (London: Tamesis, 1977), David A. Flory, *El Conde Lucanor: Don Juan Manuel en su contexto histórico* (Madrid: Editorial Pliegos, 1995), Daniel Devoto, *Introducción al estudio de don Juan Manuel y en particular de el Conde Lucanor, una bibliografía* (Paris: Ediciones hispano-americanas, 1972).

relevance to the time and audience at hand.¹⁴⁷ Yet, out of the fifty stories contained in the *Lucanor*, only one has direct relevance to the subject matter of this chapter – the story of the “great leap” by Richard Lionheart during the Third Crusade.¹⁴⁸ The story, typical of Castilian attitudes toward the sea and particularly to the elevation of great prowess to anyone willing to face its dangers, is further evidence of a trend apparent in the chronicles of Sánchez and Ayala, both of whom adopted actions at sea as a means of assimilating them into the larger chivalric narratives they created. Thus, the example of Manuel’s work here illustrates a particularly important point in this chapter, for while it reinforces the larger pattern of assimilation of maritime activity present in fourteenth century chronicles, it also exemplifies the degree to which such activity was still something of a curiosity to the nobility generally. Given the later developments in literature in the fifteenth century, this is an especially noteworthy point to make.

Fifteenth Century

El Victorial. *El Victorial* is the work of Gutierre Díaz de Gámez (1379-1449), squire and standard-bearer of Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, intended as a chronicle of the deeds of his master. It is, without question, the first genuine Castilian maritime adventure

¹⁴⁷ For a close study of the degree to which non-Castilian frame tale narrative influenced much of Manuel’s writing generally, and the *Lucanor* specifically, see Chapter Four in David A. Wacks, *Framing Iberia: Maqamat and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain* (Boston: Brill, 2007).

¹⁴⁸ Richard leapt off vessels into the sea, first to the attack, off the coast of both Cypress and Jaffa. Neither story is a word-for-word version of that presented in *Lucanor*, but the reference to Richard and the French King engaged in a crusade obviously refers to the Third Crusade. These tales were likely the foundation for the version related by Juan Manuel: At Cypress: “Then, he leaped first from his barge into the sea and bravely set upon the Cypriots. Our other men imitated his steadfast attitude. Henceforth they accompanied the King and shot arrows at those who were resisting, in order to make the Cypriots take flight.” At Jaffa: “Still in his sailor’s deck shoes, Richard leaped recklessly into the sea and waded through the waves to reach the beach. Richard again showed his bravery and worth on the field, leading fifty-four knights and 2,000 Genoese and Pisan crossbowmen into battle.” *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*. Richard I King of England and William Stubbs, *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi* (Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1964), 170.

story, historically accurate, though undoubtedly panegyric in its treatment of Niño.¹⁴⁹ The protagonist, Don Pero Niño, was a contemporary of Enrique III; indeed, Díaz hints early in the work that they shared a common wetnurse, and that the future Count of Buelna was thus bound to the king in an especially profound manner. The story of Niño's life is one of an exemplary knight, though his behavior is never entirely consistent with a chivalric ideal; indeed, Díaz' portrayal of his master is striking in the degree to which he provides glimpses of his foibles. Yet, despite the similarities to the chivalric themes so prominent in all late-medieval Castilian literature, *Victorial* differs from all other material presented in this chapter in the sheer volume of lines devoted to activities at sea. Indeed, it is no overstatement to say that the work is, at least for a third of its length, a genuine adventure at sea. This section of the work, recorded in diary fashion and covering both a campaign against piracy in the Mediterranean and a joint effort with French warships against the English coastline, will figure prominently in the analysis that follows.¹⁵⁰

El Victorial is in many ways the culmination of a long journey from the borrowed maritime stories of the thirteenth century to a rollicking adventure featuring significant

¹⁴⁹ Beltrán notes that it is recognizable as a synthesis of fifteenth-century chivalric values, and it does indeed closely follow the sort of values enunciated by Geoffrey de Charny in his treatise on the same subject from the late fourteenth century. See his introduction in Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*. See also Richard W. Kaeuper, Elspeth Kennedy, and Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny : text, context, and translation*, Middle Ages series. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). Also see Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths, "Arthurian Matter and Chivalric Ideal in the Victorial," in *Models in Medieval Iberian Literature and their Modern Reflections: Convivencia as Structural, Cultural, and Sexual Ideal*, ed. Juan Espadas and Judy B. McInnis (Newark, Del.: Juan de la Cuesta, 2002).

¹⁵⁰ The fine line articulated by Díaz between corsair and crusader is artfully examined by María Teresa Ferrer Mallol in *Corsarios castellanos*, where she describes the ambiguity of maritime activities in the Mediterranean and the difficulty of arriving at clear notions of who was and was not a corsair in a given moment. Much of the confusion she describes is present in the traveler's account of Pero Tafur, which will also be part of the analysis presented in this chapter. Ferrer Mallol, *Corsarios castellanos y vascos en el Mediterráneo medieval*, Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*.

maritime activities with a native-born Castilian nobleman as the chief protagonist.¹⁵¹ The level of detail provided by Díaz in the telling of the tale provides some of the most dramatic testimony available as to the assimilative way in which Castilians were now dealing with the sea in the early fifteenth century. *Victorial* contains ample mention of nautical practice, actually grants names and reputations to seaman simply referred to as *marineros* in the past, and offers many important insights to maritime culture generally. We hear a good deal about conditions at sea, prevailing currents, descriptions of the English Channel, and many other navigational details not appearing in earlier accounts. In short, there is an explosion of detail in Díaz' account, made all the more striking by the casual way in which he refers to some of it in his remarks, suggesting that while he does not really understand some of what he relates, he knows that others aboard do and trusts to their expertise.

Perhaps the most important difference between this work and those of earlier centuries is that the *Victorial* offers the genuinely optimistic impression that Castilians may achieve glory *at sea*, and in that respect, it closely mirrors the same optimism for opportunity so prominently suggested in the imagery of *Cífar* analyzed in the previous chapter. As Díaz moves his master from land to sea, he does not attempt to differentiate the valor he shows or the reputation he gains from his actions in either case; rather, he accepts the two environments as compatible with the activities of a knight in pursuit of

¹⁵¹ The *caballería* or chivalric tale genre was particularly important from the late fifteenth through the sixteenth century; and the *Libro del Cavallero Zifar*, though undoubtedly containing chivalric elements, is not considered a progenitor of the genre by Daniel Eisenberg. The *Victorial* bears much closer resemblance to the later *Amadís de Gaula*, considered the first of the genre proper. See Daniel Eisenberg, *Romances of Chivalry in the Spanish Golden Age* (Newark, Del.: Juan de la Cuesta, 1982), 28. Manuel Rodrigues Lapa, *Amadís de Gaula*, 4. ed. (Lisboa: Gráfica Santelmo, 1962).

reputation and glory in a very comfortable way. In that respect, the work strongly supports the integrative trend so prominent in the imagery of the *Cifar*, and, by extension, offers a critical component in the argument I am advancing throughout the dissertation generally.

Pero Tafur. The travel narrative of Pero Tafur (ca. 1410 – ca. 1487), a courtier to the court of Juan II (1405-1454), offers an important contrast to the adventurous tale of Don Pero Niño.¹⁵² Tafur, a knight himself, chronicled his nearly two-year pilgrimage to the Holy Land from 1437 to 1439, the only extant manuscript of which is an early eighteenth century copy of the original probably completed circa 1457.¹⁵³ In form and content as a traveler's tale, it is comparable to both Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville, particularly with regard to the interweaving of fact and fiction in the narrative.¹⁵⁴ Yet, despite the marvelous and sometimes wildly exaggerated nature of certain accounts, there are parts of the chronicle that provide solid support for the argument I am making in this chapter, especially those moments dealing with sea travel generally. Tafur vividly describes the nebulous nature of identity at sea in his accounts of warring Italian factions

¹⁵² Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*. For biographical studies of Tafur, consult Rafael Ramírez de Arellano, "Estudios biográficos: Pero Tafur," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 41 (1902). For Tafur's place in the broader context of travel narrative, see Francisco López Estrada, *Libros de viajeros hispánicos medievales* (Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto, 2003).

¹⁵³ Given the absence of an original manuscript or specific reference to that manuscript elsewhere, the issue remains unresolved.

¹⁵⁴ John Mandeville and Tamarah Kohanski, *The book of John Mandeville: an edition of the Pynson text* (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), Marco Polo, Henry Yule, and Henri Cordier, *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition: Including the Unabridged Third Edition (1903) of Henry Yule's annotated translation, as revised by Henri Cordier, Together with Cordier's Later Volume of Notes and Addenda (1920)*, 2 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1993). On the question of the historical use of Tafur's journey as source material, also see José Ochoa Anadón, "El valor de los viajeros medievales como fuente histórica," *Revista de Literatura Medieval* (1990). Also see Juan Luis Calbarro, "Pero Tafur: un caballero andaluz en Tierra Santa," *Historia* 16, no. 222 (1994).

seizing one another's ships, the nearly impossible task of knowing friend from foe at sea, and the terror of storm and shipwreck. In these moments, never the sole focus of his overall narrative, Tafur offers a narrative consistent with the account from *Victorial* in its rendering of detail. Such moments offer solid support for its use as source material in the present chapter, as it corroborates an overall pattern of increased familiarity and assimilation of the sea in the larger Castilian worldview. This pattern of integration is even more apparent in the depiction of actions by the crews and Tafur himself during storms or in the face of battle. In both cases, human agency often serves as the determining factor in ultimate success, rather than an almost immediate reliance on the supernatural for aid at the first sign of trouble at sea, a pattern quite familiar in the thirteenth century. In addition, Tafur's account reveals a less individually-centered perspective on travel by sea, accentuating the role of collective effort against both the sea itself and the humans one may encounter while there. Overall, as a counter to the traditionally chivalric tale presented in *Victorial*, Tafur's account is remarkable in the manner in which he embraces his travels at sea as simply part of the overall journey he undertakes, rather than a dramatic departure into a nearly alien environment that was the typical approach of thirteenth-century sources. By any measure, his account is a startling example of the degree to which Castilian attitudes toward the sea had transformed by the mid-fifteenth century.

Crónica de Juan II. The *Crónica de Juan II* is a patchwork accounting of the life of Juan II (1405-54), the majority of which we may attribute to Alvar García de Santa María, the official historian of his court, though the text probably owed its genesis to the work of the author of the chronicles of four earlier kings, Pero López de Ayala. The

scholarly consensus is that he likely began work on the project sometime in 1406 and continued until 1420; there followed additions by two other unknown authors, and the work was finally edited by Fernán Perez de Guzmán. In keeping with the style of earlier Castilian chronicles, authors remain largely anonymous, and there is solid evidence that the writer relied upon written records at various points in the work. Given that histories of Juan focus on his role as the somewhat hapless pawn of his favorite, Álvaro de Luna y Jarana (c.1388 –1453), their relationship, and his relative ineffectiveness as a king features as a primary theme through the majority of the account.¹⁵⁵ Maritime topics appear infrequently, but their characteristics mirror those of the other fifteenth century documents under examination in this chapter, and hence the source is important as supportive evidence.

This broad collection of source material, the product of different authors, purposes, and centuries, reveals a remarkably consistent pattern of gradual change with regard to Castilian perception of the sea, its dangers, and ultimately its promise. Indeed, the sheer variety and weight of the evidence they reveal about those changing perceptions points to a steady growth of acceptance of the sea as a destination in its own right and even a gateway to adventure. While many aspects of the thirteenth-century concerns regarding the sea remain consistent in the fifteenth, others break new ground and herald the assumption of much greater comfort and confidence with the sea itself. From third-

¹⁵⁵ The “age of favorites” in Castile and later Spain is often attributed to the manipulative actions of Luna and the fact that he essentially held royal power for the majority of his relationship with the king; the subsequent backlash from the nobility, perennially at odds with the kings of Castile, eventually resulted in Luna’s execution. An excellent sketch of the relationship appears in Luis Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía, puntos de vista sobre la historia castellana del siglo XV* (Valladolid: 1959). See also J. N Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms, 1250-1516*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

person to first-hand accounts of actions at sea, they take us beyond the deductions possible through image analysis to direct reflections of personal insights, biases, and direct observation of the events they describe. Thus, the sources appearing in this chapter each contribute substantially to the broader conclusions possible through their comparison and contrast by the end of this chapter.

In the analysis that follows, all translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Wind and Wave

Throughout the late medieval Castilian literary record from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, accounts of the power of storms to smash vessels, drown passengers, or simply strike them dumb with terror, serve as the single most common reference to the sea. For that reason alone, an analysis of their use, structure, and purpose is essential to an understanding of late medieval Castilian perception of the sea. The most important element under consideration in this section of the chapter is the detail lacking in early account of conditions at sea generally, a lack later remedied by accounts vividly detailed in a manner intended to evoke the genuine terror of the moment. In addition, thirteenth-century sources reveal an almost reflexive association between the onset of storm and disaster, something later accounts greatly complicate as references to the importance and efficacy of agency in dealing with them becomes increasingly common. In general, the disparity in specificity demonstrates both the early lack of Castilian experience at sea and fundamental assumptions about the nature of the sea itself, assumptions that changed dramatically over the course of the late Middle Ages.

In this case, a chronologically oriented approach to the analysis is best, as it offers the clearest contrast in terms of the comparisons I wish to make: therefore, I will begin with the *Cantigas*, where storms arise suddenly and without any discussion of the weather and its potential influence on their creation. An examination of *cantiga* 33 offers an excellent example of the typical relationship between storm and disaster as offered in the work as a whole. It tells the tale of a group of pilgrims en route to the Holy Land, relating that the vessel was “sailing the sea, planning to land in Acre, but a storm (*tormenta*) sprang up which tore the rigging. The ship began to sink.”¹⁵⁶ Shortly afterward, a bishop aboard the vessel noted that “the sea [had] become turbulent,” and “his only thought was to escape, so he got into the lifeboat with two hundred people.”¹⁵⁷ The description is typical in two major respects. First, the onset of storm is sudden; it simply “sprang up,” an event which, as I shall show, was a typical way of describing a storm at sea in these Marian miracles. Secondly, after noting that the storm “tore the rigging,” the vessel immediately began to sink. The noteworthy point here is the fact that there is little detail regarding the storm itself, the severity of the damages that would actually result in sinking, or any description of activities on the part of the crew to forestall the disaster. Ultimately, there is simply a direct connection between the onset of the storm and disaster, a connection assumed through the majority of the Marian tales. In the end, this relationship between storm and disaster reveals an essential element of

¹⁵⁶ “Húa nav’ ya por mar, / cuidand’ en Acre portar; / mas tormenta levantar / se foi, que os bastimentos / da nave ouv’ a britar, / e comecou-ss’ a fondar /...” Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettmann, 3 vols., vol. 1, Acta Universitatis Conimbrigensis. (Coimbra: Por ordem de Universidade, 1959), 97.

¹⁵⁷ “e pois torvar / o mar viú, seus pensamentos / foron dali escapar; / e poren se foi cambiar / no batel ben [con] duzentos.” Ibid., 97-8.

Castilian perception of the sea in the thirteenth century – the nuances of travel at sea had yet to appear in the literary context, and a broad assumption that the onset of severe weather was essentially tantamount to a guarantee of disaster.

In *cantiga* 36, for example, we hear of a similar situation that befell a ship sailing off the coast of England: “such was their luck that a great storm sprang up, and the night grew very dark. Their wisdom and good sense availed them nothing. They all thought they would die, you may be sure.”¹⁵⁸ Once again, the storm simply “sprang up,” implying that one could expect to encounter sudden, capricious changes at sea which might result in a terrific storm. By linking the occurrence to “their luck (*atal foi ssa ventura*),” the connection between the storm and chance becomes certain; when one goes to sea, one takes the chance of having something of this nature occur. In other respects, events unfold in a predictable manner; the storm arises suddenly, the danger is immediately apparent, and the only possible outcome offered is disastrous. Accentuating the hopelessness of the moment in this case is the addition of the observation that “their wisdom and good sense availed them nothing,” acknowledging that even their attempts to take measures in their own interest were of no benefit. Ultimately, they “all thought they would die,” evoking an image of doomed men resigned to their fates. However, no clear link exists in the story between the onset of the storm and any event aboard the vessel that would cause them to believe that they were so doomed, and this again reveals one of the fundamental assumptions underlying the accounts – that it was unnecessary to explain or elaborate their conclusion once such a set of facts appeared. In other words, to the

¹⁵⁸“E u singravan pelo mar, atal foi ssa ventura / que sse levou mui gran tormenta, e a noit’ escura / se fez, que ren non lles valia siso nen cordura, / e todos cuidaron morrer, de certo o sabiades.” *Ibid.*, 107.

Castilian audience hearing these tales, the mere mention of a storm at sea was sufficient to bring disaster immediately to mind – and in this particular case, the “wisdom and good sense” of those aboard was worth virtually nothing before the power of the sea.

There are moments, however, where descriptive text provides solid connections between the storm and shipwreck in both *cantiga 112* and *313*. *Cantiga 112* relates the tale of a vessel laden with wheat bound for Colliure, describing the storm in this manner:¹⁵⁹

There had been a great storm, and the ship had traveled seventy or eighty sea miles in great peril of sinking. The mast was broken and the rudder shattered. Those on board reluctantly debarked with great difficulty to escape in the lifeboats, for they saw that the ship was full of water mixed with sand and the grain was completely soaked. This was certain, for the ship was split open.¹⁶⁰

Although the passage begins in a typical fashion with a simple statement that “there had been a great storm,” as it continues it provides a much clearer relationship between cause and effect than we can find anywhere else in the *Cantigas*. The vessel travels a significant distance with both a useless mast and rudder, though the author may simply be trying to

¹⁵⁹ A town today located in the department of Pyrénées-Orientales, France.

¹⁶⁰ “Ca ouvera tal tormenta/ que de millas setaenta/correra ou o taenta, / querendo-ss’ a nav’ afondar...Ca o masto foi britado / e o temon pecejado/e os da nave sen grado / sayron en por escapar/enos batees a gran pëa, / caviron a nave chëa/d’agua volta con arëa / e aquel pan todo mollar / Esto foy cousa muy certa, / ca a nav’ era aberta.” Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettmann, 3 vols., vol. 2, Acta Universitatis Conimbrigensis. (Coimbra: Por ordem de Universidade, 1959), 31-2. Filgueira Valverde notes that the tale is likely a product of oral tradition, particularly the invocation to the “Virgen, estrela do mar,” in the refrain. See Alfonso X, *El "Codice rico" de las Cantigas de Alfonso X el Sabio: ms. T.I.1 de la Biblioteca de El Escorial; Volumen complementario de la edición facsímil.*, ed. M. López Serrano, et al., 2 vols., vol. 1 (Madrid: Edilán, 1979).

convey that the damages caused by the storm occurred during the length of that journey. The occupants reluctantly disembark, but only after the text informs us that the vessel was “split open,” leaving no doubt as to the effects of the storm. It is important to note, however, that the decision to leave the vessel hinged on the actual witnessing of “water mixed with sand” in the hold, an indication to all aboard that there was no choice but to abandon the vessel. However dangerous the sea might be, it was clearly safer to remain aboard if possible, and this detail suggests that the author realized that it was necessary to provide some rationale for their departure. Thus, although this example offers more solid details as to the events tying the storm to the disaster, the result is the same – a sudden storm occurred and damaged the vessel to the point that escape was imperative.

Cantiga 313 offers another example of a vague relationship between storm and disaster, relating the tale of a vessel at the point of foundering:

A ship was in peril, as I learned, in a great storm at sea, and all the people on it were in grave danger. As I heard it, the ship was already broken. Then the sea began to rise rapidly and swell more and more, churning up the sand, and the night became very dark because of the storm, black as pitch. Furthermore, they saw many people on the ship dying all around them.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ “Húa nave periguada / andava, com’ aprendi, / pelo mar en gran tormenta, / e quanta gent’ era y estaban en mui gran coita; / e, assi com’ eu oý, / a nav’ era ja quebrada. / Des i o mar a crecer / Comecou tan feramente / e engrossar cada vez / e volvendo-s’ as arêas; / des a noite sse fez / cona tormenta mui forte, / negra ben come o pez / demais viian da nave / muitos a ollo morrer.” Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettmann, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Coimbra: Por ordem de Universidade, 1959), 155-57. The first of the seven cantigas of Villasirga conserved in the Florence Codex, from a total of 40 collected in the Alfonsine song collection. José Filgueira Valverde argues that this relatively elevated number allows the suspicion of the existence of some elaborated Marian center in Santa Maria de Villasirga, an ancient encomienda of the

The arrival of the storm remains a simple statement without elaboration, though we find even more detail here regarding subsequent events. In this instance, the description of the vessel as “already broken” leads directly into a description of rapidly rising and turbulent water. It is unclear from the description whether the “sea began to rise rapidly,” refers to swells or to water within the vessel itself; when we hear that of “many people on the ship dying all around them,” we cannot be certain of the cause. As with the other accounts I have cited, the tale does not provide any detailed link between the storm and damage to the vessel, relying on the aforementioned assumption that storm inevitably leads to disaster at sea. Yet, the attempt at evoking the terror of the moment is indeed noteworthy, and stands out from the majority of *cantigas* in that respect.

Finally, *Cantiga 267* provides the closest thing to a clear description of the onset of a storm and its connection to the ultimate disaster described thereafter:

Near the coast of the Great Sea of Spain,¹⁶² while that ship was traveling with many people on board, the sea rose that day with a great storm and became very rough. It struck the ship so fiercely with its powerful waves

Templars and an important nucleus of Marian devotion and the site of a pilgrimage shrine in the province of Palencia – *preto de Carrion*, according to *Cantiga XXXI*. Valverde asserts that Alfonso must have had access to this vanished codex and to have used it as the inspiration for some odd *cantigas* and some in series (such as CCXVII-CCXVIII, for example). The theme of this *cantiga*, 16a of the Florentine Codex – Mary, savior of those in danger on the sea, with virtual preeminence over all the other saints, including Saint Nicholas, patron of mariners – is very recurrent in conjunction of the Alfonsine collection and has an immediate antecedent in *cantiga XXXVI*, located in Brittany. For a recent study on the Templars and the Marian center, see Francisco A. Mata Hernández, *Conspiración: El paratge cátaro y el honor templario, del cónclave de Villasirga en 1262 a 1307* (Sevilla: Ituci Siglo XXI, 2005).; for Valverde’s view on the connection between Alfonso X and the center at Villasirga, see his commentary in the companion volume of the *Édilan* facsimile. Alfonso X, *El "Codice rico" de las Cantigas de Alfonso X el Sabio: ms. T.I.1 de la Biblioteca de El Escorial; Volumen complementario de la edición facsímil.*, 340.

¹⁶² “Mais pela costeira do gran mar d’Espanna,” this refers to the Atlantic Ocean, as opposed to the “gran mar d’Espanna,” which would refer to the Bay of Biscay. Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 43-6.

that those people thought they would surely die there...The merchant¹⁶³ was then at the side of the ship on top of a boom, and a heavy, powerful wave came and struck him in the chest, and he was thrown into the sea.¹⁶⁴

The attention to the power of the waves and the fact that the author links that power to both the fear evoked in the passengers and the ultimate disaster that befalls the merchant is noteworthy. We can visualize the towering nature of the swells in the specific language used to describe the wave that struck the merchant as “heavy, powerful,”¹⁶⁵ and the fact that it struck him while he was “at the side of the ship on top of a boom.”¹⁶⁶ The description of the actual physical conditions of the sea during a storm in this *cantiga* is a unique moment in a set of tales devoid of such descriptions, relying on the terror invoked by the mere mention of the word *tormenta* at sea to provide the audience with sufficient information to make the connection between that event and the disaster described.

Overall, the *Cantigas* offered a relatively limited view of the physical nature of the sea, characterizing it in essentially one of two states, calm and stormy, the latter being nearly automatically lethal to humans. Its capricious nature was a fixture of the fourteenth

¹⁶³ The subject of this *cantiga*, on his way to Rocamadour on pilgrimage in order to place a gift for the Virgin on the altar there.

¹⁶⁴ Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 44.

¹⁶⁵ “fort’ e mui grave.” Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ “estava enton encima dũa trave,” Ibid. The text does not provide any reason for the merchant’s position on the boom, a dangerous and precarious situation at best; it may suggest a communal action in progress by all able-bodied passengers, as that would explain his presence there, possibly in the process of attempting to assist in hauling in the sheets. Such communal effort by those not described as *marineros* is entirely absent from the *Cantigas*, but a good deal more common in the fifteenth-century literature I shall address later in this chapter.

century Castilian attitudes as well, most notably represented by Don Juan Manuel in his 1326 *Libro del cavallero et del escudero*:¹⁶⁷

My son, all men say that the sea is always in one of two states: it is either calm or violent. And this calm and violence always happens at sea according to what the wind does: for if the wind is very big and strong, so is the fury of the sea big and strong; and when the wind is less so, its force is weaker; and when there is no wind whatsoever, the sea is not violent, but calm and more dependable.¹⁶⁸

Manuel does associate a causal relationship between wind and the state of the sea, but his view is consistent with the relatively limited portrayal of the sea present in the *Cantigas*. He goes on to add that the “reason that I hold that our Lord God made it is to show in it his great power,” emphasizing the nearly limitless power displayed by the sea, particularly when during a storm. Yet, it is his description of the *tierra* that makes this statement noteworthy, for he describes the land as nearly limitless in complexity by comparison:

¹⁶⁷ See the following for background and analysis of the *Book of the Knight and Squire*: Ángel Gómez Moreno, "La caballería como tema en la literatura medieval española: tratados teóricos," in *Homenaje a Pedro Sáinz Rodríguez*, ed. Pedro Sáinz Rodríguez (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1986), Gladys Isabel Lizabe de Savastano, "Don Juan Manuel y la tradición de los tratados de caballería: el *Libro del Cavallero et del escudero* en su contexto" (Doctoral Thesis, Syracuse, 1988).

¹⁶⁸ “Fijo, todos los omnes dizen que la mar sienpre está en una de dos maneras: o está en calma, o está brava (o) [et] sannuda. Et esta calma et esta braveza siempre acaesce en la mar segund el viento que en ella faze: ca si el viento es muy grande et muy fuerte, es la braveza de la mar muy grande et muy fuerte; et quanto el viento es menor, es la su ferca más pequenna; eet en quanto ningún viento non faze, non es la mar sannuda, ante está en calma et más asegurada.” Don Juan Manuel, *Cinco tratados*, ed. Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1989), 64.

As to what you have asked me about what sort of thing is the earth and why it was made, son, to this question, a man of the world may not respond fully. For the land is such a thing, and there are so many things in it, that nobody could relate all of them. For God made in it such things and strange that, even though a man may see many of them, they are very difficult to understand.¹⁶⁹

In the comparison between these two views we can see precisely the same kind of differentiation between land and sea I have shown existed in the art of late medieval Castile. The sea, reduced to only one of two states at any given time, exists solely for the purpose of displaying God's power in the world and providing sustenance through fish.¹⁷⁰ By contrast, the land is a place of such complexity that "nobody could relate" all of the things it contains.¹⁷¹ Indeed, the land is critical to the existence of the world itself, for "even though there are many things that fill and enrich the world, there are some of them that, although they are needed, would not cause the world not to expire if gone; but the land is one of the things that, if it were not exist, the world could not exist."¹⁷² There could be no clearer example of differentiation between land and sea than these two statements, and it is solid evidence for an explanation for the sparse descriptions of the

¹⁶⁹ "A lo que me preguntastes qué cosa es la tierra et para qué fue hecha, fijo, a esta pregunta omne del mundo non podría responder conplidamente. Que tal cosa es la tierra et tantas cosas é en ella, que ninguno non las podría nin contar todas. Ca Dios fizoen ella tales cosas et tan estrannas que, aun muchas dellas que omne vee et parescen, son muy graves de entender." Ibid., 65.

¹⁷⁰ "por que los omnes se sirvan et se aprovechen de los pescados et de las cosas provechsas que en ella son." Ibid.

¹⁷¹ "ninguno non las podría nin contar todas." Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., 67.

sea present in both thirteenth and fourteenth-century literature generally. It was not so much the lack of experience or eyewitness accounts as the essential perception that the sea was *different* from the land – it was fundamentally dangerous and very unpredictable, and for those reasons, there was little need to be particularly specific about events occurring there. All of this changed rather dramatically in the fifteenth century, and the descriptions of storms are an excellent means of illustrating this transformation.

Unlike the black and white accounts of earlier centuries, storms in the fifteenth century appear in vividly colorful detail. Even the language used to describe them includes greater variety. In addition to the *tormenta*, a ubiquitous term in most accounts up through the fifteenth century to describe storms on both land and sea, a new phrase, *grant fortuna del mar*, or “the great fortune of the sea,” appears often in the accounts of both Pero Tafur and Díaz de Gámez.¹⁷³ As the following analysis will show, the increased variety in these references reflects a greater nuance in the presentation of maritime accounts generally, as storms take on a much more varied character more in keeping with the complexity of weather at sea. In addition, the connection between storms and their effect on vessels and occupants becomes much more specific in this period, and a clearly integrative pattern emerges with regard to the basic attitudes toward the sea presented by Castilians. In general, these accounts demonstrate that while the sea might remain a terrifically dangerous place, Castilians can nevertheless negotiate it, and

¹⁷³ “*Tormenta*” is used in all the *cantigas* referenced in this chapter. Covarrubias defines it as “La tempestad en la mar, cuando es combatida de recios vientos, *latine tempestas*.” The RAE, by contrast, defines such a storm in a generic way, not even mentioning the sea: “Perturbación atmosférica violent acompañada de aparato eléctrico y viento fuerte, lluvia, nieve, o granizo.” Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, 926, Española Real Academia, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 22nd ed., 2 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Espasa Calpe, 2001), 2196. Tafur and Díaz’ accounts also use the word, but not consistently. Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*.

they do so both for profit and to enhance their reputations. In that respect, the differentiation of storms in terms of their description and importance relative to the matter under discussion in these narratives serves to underscore the larger integration of the sea into the Castilian worldview.

One of the best sources for descriptive narration of storms is the travel narrative of Pero Tafur, which chronicles his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the early fifteenth century. As I shall show, Tafur's reference to storms at sea throughout his account is noteworthy for the variety of ways he describes them. He can be remarkably casual in his references, apparently resigned to the fact that such is the lot of those who travel by sea; on the other hand, some of his descriptions are detailed and intense, bringing to life the terror of a serious storm at sea. Tafur never attempts to minimize the dangers presented by sea travel, but it is precisely because of the variation in his descriptions of those dangers that we can see a much more comfortable and confident attitude toward sea travel in general. This does not mean that he did not fear the sea; the dangers he describes are real and immediate, including a near drowning after an actual shipwreck. What is significantly different, however, is the differentiation of the dangers he describes. Tafur does not fear the sea simply because it *is* the sea; instead, he offers specific examples of moments where danger exists and provides us with a good deal of detail by way of expressing significant degrees of that danger.

We can see this tendency to differentiate between storms by examining the way that Tafur describes situations similar to those presented in the earlier accounts. One of the more striking aspects in his description of storms is the apparent lack of urgency

revealed in his description, even when mentioning an apparently significant storm, as in this case:

We departed and put out to sea, and a great tempest arose which damaged the ship, but the sailors, being very skilled in that art, repaired the damage as best they could, and, leaving on the left hand the island of Mytilene, which also belongs to the Genoese, we doubled the Cape of S. Maria and came to the island of Tenedos, where we anchored and disembarked.¹⁷⁴

Tafur describes this storm as a “*grant tormenta*,” as opposed to his use of the generic “*tormenta*” elsewhere, which, together with the damage described to the vessel, would certainly indicate a significant storm. His understatement is remarkable, particularly given the fact that the vessel “*abrió*,” (opened) suggesting a hull breach, although he adds that the crew, having repaired it as best they could, continued on until they could later disembark for further repairs. As an example of contrast with earlier accounts, this one is remarkable in several respects. First, it reveals no clear assumption of a direct connection between a storm – even a large one, as his language here implies – and subsequent disaster; rather, it provides evidence that crews could handle such storms and face even the gravest dangers, such as the opening of the hull, without sinking. Second, Tafur’s language does not suggest great concern on his part, or on the part of the crew, for the situation in which they found themselves at that moment; instead, he emphasizes their expertise in ship repair, describing them as being “very skilled in that art,” implying that

¹⁷⁴ “Partimos, é metidos en la mar, ovimos tan gran tormenta que se abrió nuestro navío, é ellos, como desta arte son discretos, reparáronlo lo mejor que pudieron; é dexando á la mano derecha la isla de Metellin, que es, así mesmo de un ginovés, doblamos el cabo de Santa María é fuemos á la isla del Téndedon é allí surgimos é decendimos en tierra.” Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, 135.

the damage represented little challenge for them. Lastly, there is no association at all with the idea that the event was precipitous enough to warrant a plea to the supernatural for deliverance.

Yet, Tafur's accounts of storm defy immediate categorization in the neat manner of thirteenth-century accounts, and that lack of consistency provides the most convincing evidence for a genuine change in Castilian maritime perception. While the preceding tale suggests a certain confidence about the ability of his crew to meet the challenges faced by a tempestuous sea, other accounts provide ample evidence of the limits of that confidence. In such moments, some of the older fixtures of Castilian accounts return, as in this case involving a "*grant fortuna en el mar*":

At midnight a great storm arose in the sea so that we all but despaired of our lives, and there was much vowing of pilgrimages East and West. At one time our ship was full of birds which perched upon our shoulders. These were flying from the storm, and sought the ship to escape drowning. They were mostly hoopoes. This, they say, happens seldom, and only during great storms.¹⁷⁵

The description of the birds, alighting upon the vessel and the sailors themselves as they sought refuge from the storm, is an exciting innovation in such accounts. This is a

¹⁷⁵ "É á la media noche metióse tan grant fortuna en la mar, que yvamos quasi desesperados de la vida, é allí se fazían pelegrinajes al Levante é al Poniente; é fue ora quel navío estaba todo lleno de aves, que posaban encima de los onbros, de las que venían fuyendo de la fortuna, é por non se anegar en la mar, recogieronse al navío; é las más dellas eran abubillas; é esto dizen que acaesce pocas veces, salvo quando l fortun es ya tan grande." Ibid., 190. Covarrubias describes *abubillas*, detailing plumage and song, but does not mention the reference to their appearance during storms related by Tafur. Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, 8.

phenomenon known to occur, but it is the only description of such an event in the Castilian literature I have examined. The hoopoe is a medium-sized bird native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa; they are insect eaters who spend most of their time ground feeding, where they search for insects and worms. They are solidly land birds who do not go to sea, and only an unusual event such as a major storm would explain their presence there. This fact tends to support the claim of the source providing Tafur with the idea that such an occurrence was rare.¹⁷⁶ The detail is a testament to the nuanced, multi-faceted perception of the sea now possible to Castilians, whether personally or via the writings of someone like Tafur.

Following landfall, Tafur describes meeting a hermit who had been watching the vessel struggle ashore under bare poles, and who describes his surprise at their having survived given the “fierceness of the storm,” and his fears that his own hermitage would be “carried away by the wind,” during the night – a reminder of the power of great storms to wreak havoc on coastal communities as well as vessels at sea. Tafur and his men, together with the hermit, repair their sails – a common event throughout his narrative, which often describes stops for various repairs -- but his candor reveals anything but confidence when he says: “As for me, I had experienced such terrors that had I been on the mainland I would never have put to sea again.”¹⁷⁷ Thus, between the description of

¹⁷⁶ David Sibley et al., *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

¹⁷⁷“É llegamos á ora de viespras las velas rompidas á ojo de la isla de Candía, é el viento nos llevaba fázia la tierra en aquella pate que es la ciudat que dizen laCaea; é andovimos, fasta quel viento nos llegó, así árbol seco cerca la tierra, é allí surgíos é estovimos eso que quedaba deldia é la noche é otr dia siuiente fasta más de medio dia; é un hermitaño, quel dia ánts nos avíe visto venir á árbol eco, é vido llegar el navío allí, é non salíe ninguno en tierra nin ménos parescíe en la nao, entró en un barco sy é vino á nuestra nao, é fallónos durmieno á todos desde eldia de ántes; é maravillóse mucho de la fortuna tan grande como avía fecho la noche pasada, que pensaba qu su hermita le levara el viento; é que bien nos vido venir desde

the event at sea and the aftermath as described ashore, we have several important innovations in the manner by which an account of a great storm appeared in a fifteenth century literary account. Little is left to the imagination; instead, the account takes pains to stress the severity of the storm it describes, even going so far as to do so from both land and sea perspectives. In that respect, the account emphasizes the same pattern of weaving land and sea together in a narrative form as that already described for art in Chapter II, where the land and sea seem to embrace in a manner suggesting that Castilians could move between one and the other with greater confidence.

It is important to notice, however, that a very familiar element appears in the first line, when the crews swear pilgrimages to both East and West, a testament to the continued respect for the role of the supernatural in forestalling disaster at sea. Indeed, the storm is of such magnitude that there was an *immediate* concern on the part of all aboard about their ability to survive the event. Yet, the pains taken to distinguish this particular storm from others described elsewhere in relating the events of his journey shows that Tafur meant to grant special significance to the size and danger it presented, one meriting the immediate concern for the immortal souls of the vessel's occupants. Most notably, he does not leave the story there awaiting resolution by any supernatural intervention; instead, he quickly returns to a narrative focused on the agency of the crew in averting catastrophe. In so doing, his account makes no direct correlation between the invocation of divine assistance and the ultimate deliverance of the vessel. As in all other

enamanesciendo como viníe el navío, é que rogva á Dios por nosotros. É el patron con sus marineros quedó en la nave por adovar las velas, é yo é los míos decendímos en tierra é fuimos con el hermitaño á su casa...É si yo en tierra firme estuviera, segunt el miedo que avía pasado, para siempre nunca tornara á la mar." Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, 191. "É si yo en tierra firme estuviera, segunt el miedo que avía pasado, para siempre nunca tornara á la mar."

cases in his work, it accords with a grueling pattern of hard work and near misses on the part of the crews themselves. Thus, while there is a continued recognition of the vast power of the sea – a power so great that it was capable of placing humans in immediate mortal danger – there was also no shortage of confidence in the ability of humans to meet those challenges and, with a little luck, to overcome even those impossible odds.

Tafur does not dwell on the great power and danger of the sea in his account of his travels upon it, although he certainly provides many examples of the old fears of its apparently limitless power. Indeed, the ability to survive the dangers of the sea is one of the fixtures of his account. We can see this clearly in another account describing a storm encountered in the Gulf of Lyons:

One day at Vespers such a violent storm arose that we ran before it all that night, and the next day we were far away. The two large carracks were driven under bare poles towards Sardinia, and it was two months before we had news of them, but our ship, which still had its main-sail, although but little of it remained, kept close to the island of Titan, as they call it, off the coast of Provence. This day and the following night we were in constant peril and had much labour, but we ran on and the next day we came to Nice. It was Christmas Eve, and we anchored there and repaired our sails. We then departed and came to Savona, a pleasant city, belonging to Genoa, and remained there for Christmas Day.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ É un dia á ora de viespras metióse tan gran fortuna en la mar, que toda aquella noche corrimos con ella, é otro dia fue muy más fuerte, en manera que las dos caracas mayores Duero árbol seco la vía de Cerdeña, que turó dos mese que non sopieron dellas, é la nuestra sostuvo la vela maestra, aunque poco della, é

The critical element in this passage occurs in the first line, where the phrase “such a violent storm arose that we ran before it” indicates the expertise of the crews of the fleet with which Tafur was sailing. “Running before” a storm is a tactic used by all mariners if caught in a situation where it is impossible to reach a sheltered harbor, involving keeping the wind at the stern of the vessel, in order to run with the general direction of the wind and waves.¹⁷⁹ It is a practice that we might well assume mariners used for many centuries preceding Tafur’s account. Once again, we have a violent storm of sufficient magnitude to drive two large vessels to Sardinia by virtue of the fury of the wind and waves alone, and to cause significant damage to Tafur’s vessel; yet, in this case, there is no mention of an appeal for divine intervention, in spite of it being Christmas. Instead, the account emphasizes the degree to which the crew and vessel acted to co-exist with the danger represented by the storm, rather than seeking a means of immediately distancing themselves from the sea, the approach typical of earlier accounts. Indeed, Tafur focuses on the ability of the crew to survive the storm through proactive measures, and most importantly of all, the journey continues uninterrupted for the most part. Tafur’s matter-of-fact relation of the entire event does not contain any reference to fear for his life, as in the earlier account; indeed, fear as an issue does not appear at all in this particular instance, which is all the more noteworthy considering that he describes the multi-day storm as putting them “in constant peril.” Overall, this account illustrates the degree to

todavía teniéndose á la parte de Tab, que llaman, cerca de Prohencia. É este dia con la noche siguiente pasamos muy grandíssimo peligro é trabajo é corrimos tanto, que otro dia fuemos sobre Nica de Prohencia, é era viespra de pascua de Navidat; é allí surgimos é reparamos las velas. É partimos de allí, é fuemos á Saona, una gentil ciudad de Génova, é estovimos el dia de pascua.” Ibid., 10-11.

¹⁷⁹ The technique is actually safer in a sailing vessel than in a powered one, largely owing to the structural design differences which grant sailing vessels greater buoyancy and survivability in storms generally. Richard Henderson and William E. Brooks, *Sail and Power: the Official Textbook at the U.S. Naval Academy*, 4th ed. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991).

which Tafur accepted such occurrences as a fact of travel at sea, as well as underscoring his departure from the solidly differentiated view of land and sea so prevalent in centuries past.

In turning to similar accounts contained in *El Victorial*, we find all of the above tendencies, as well as even more detail regarding such events. Díaz is much more specific about the general idea of the “sea” than any other medieval Castilian writer, particularly in noting the difference between the “western” sea and the Mediterranean, which he describes as having “neither ebb nor flow nor great currents, if one excepts one which is called the Faro current.”¹⁸⁰ Díaz adds “there are many shoals, but if a galley wants to anchor for the night, she has only to find a rock to shelter her from the wind; she can be there without fear of the sea.” His descriptions directly claim a much more placid nature for the Mediterranean, particularly when he describes the Western sea as “most evil, especially for galleys...for galleys, if it were possible, it would be best never to have wind at all.” The following account constitutes the most thorough and descriptive example of all of the fifteenth-century accounts I have examined of a storm, and refers to one encountered in the English Channel:

The wind freshened, and blew so hard and so fierce and raised such a sea, that the waves came aboard over the prow up to the middle of the galleys and forced them round. The waves were mountain high and the sea all hollowed...All this night the captain’s galley hugged the wind, until the gale mastered it and then they had to run before it and send all the crew

¹⁸⁰ Located in the Straits of Messina.

below decks and batten down all the hatches. There was no sail hoisted higher than a man. The waves were so strong that as they struck the ship's quarter they threatened to break her and made her sides ring again. And such high seas came over the poop that some came right into the galley. Such waves are the most dangerous; they carried off the long boat from the place where she was lashed and cast her into the sea. All the crew despaired of their lives and prayed God to have pity on their souls. So passed the whole night in a great gale; and moreover it rained, which is a thing which is very troublesome to sailors.¹⁸¹

This passage is terrifically important for the innovations it offers with regard to the Castilian representation of the sea. To begin with, the physical description of the conditions at sea is sufficient to evoke a feeling of immediacy and presence. Rather than relying on a reflexive reaction to the mere mention of a tempest at sea, Díaz describes these conditions in detail, as events he has personally witnessed, and in so doing is able to convey the truly terrifying experience of tossing in a vessel at the mercy of a force far beyond the ability of human words to convey. His description of the sea is far more vivid than anything found in earlier accounts, particularly the variety of appearance he attributes to the waves, which he describes as “mountain high”; in referring to the sea as

¹⁸¹ “El aquerdo avido, arreció el viento tan fuerte e tan bravo, e se levantó la mar tanto, que enbestían las olas por proa fasta media galera, e fizo girar las galeras por fuerza. Benían las olas tan altas como sierras, la mar cavada. . . La galera del capitán toda aquella noche túbose a la orza, fasta que el viento la forzó, e ovo a correr de luengo, e toda la gente so sota. Lanzaron las excotillas a todas las centinas; non avia más alta bela que quanto un estado de hombre. Las olas heran tan fuertes, que daban en el costado de la galera qu la querían fazer pedazos, e toda la facia sonar; e venían las olas muy grandes por popa, que algunas dellas entravan por la galera. Estas son muy peligrosas, e arrebataron el copano donde yba albergado, e levólo a la mar. Ya toda la gente desesperaban de la vida, e rogaban a Dios que les ubiese merced a las almas. Toda la noche pasaron así en grand tormenta; e todavía llubía, que es una cosa que atormenta mucho los marineros.” Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 112.

“all hollowed,” we can visualize the troughs of the waves as the vessel rose upon one crest, then fell into the trough between waves. We also experience the auditory shock of the thundering impact of waves on the sides of the vessel, striking so hard that they caused her to “ring,” and beyond the frightening boom this must have made in the hollow vessel, it was sufficient to concern Díaz that she might actually rupture from the force of their impact. Díaz even differentiates among the waves themselves, noting that those that breach the vessel sufficiently to “carry off the longboat,” were the “most dangerous,” presumably because they would be equally capable of carrying away crew members caught unawares on deck. The appeal to the divine emphasizes a situation already described as grim, and its inclusion suggests punctuation to the desperation of the moment, rather than the reflexive response found in earlier accounts. Finally, by describing the violation of the galley by breaching waves, one can almost gain a tactile sense of the peril and feel the cold seawater pouring into any available opening. The collective effect is genuinely terrifying, even more so because it is *not* dependent on assumptions about what such an event may be like, but instead provides an eyewitness account of what the reality actually consists of.

Yet another important point of contrast remains. Niño’s vessel survives this storm, as it survives many others during the course of this long voyage. In that respect alone it stands as remarkable in comparison with earlier accounts, for once again, the inevitability of disaster at sea was no longer a given. The sea remained dangerous, unpredictable, and terrifying in its power and capacity for destruction, but it was now survivable, due in no small part to human agency acting in its own interest. In that respect, the transformation in perception of storms at sea is part of the larger integration

of the sea into the Castilian worldview generally, as the same resourcefulness and ability that was so critical to success on land appears in use by those at sea as well in stories such as this one. Nowhere is this more evident than in the changing nature of the role of human agency at sea, a change which involves a transformation from an assumption of the near certainty of resort to divine intervention in an emergency to the frequent demonstration of the ability of human beings to overcome such situations on their own merits. Just as the description of storms grew in complexity over the late medieval period, so too did the role of human agency in negotiating those dangers.

Agency

Thirteenth-century sources provide sparse details regarding the physical nature of sea travel and its dangers in Castile. The first navigational charts and sailing directions in written form do not appear earlier than the late thirteenth century via *portolanos*, early attempts at coastal feature drawing combined with compass headings. No Castilian examples of these aids survive, but Genoese and Venetian mariners certainly had access to them and it is likely that they were in use by them in the first fifty years of Castilian presence in southern Iberia.¹⁸² There remains, however, some question about the rapidity of the spread of the use of the compass and older methods known to have been in use in Classical times appear to have, in some cases, been at least as important if not more so in navigation throughout the late medieval period.¹⁸³ Navigation by observing the stars,

¹⁸² Indeed, the present assumption is that a “paper-based” navigational model, if acceptable at all, was more a Southern than Northern phenomena. The system would require not only literacy, but some form of mathematical training necessary to calculate courses. For a translation of the earliest such document used by the Pisans, see Patrick Gautier Dalché, *Carte marine et portulan au XIIIe siècle: le Liber de existencia riveriarum et forma maris nostri Mediterranei (Pise, circa 1200)* (Rome: Diff. de Boccard, 1995).

¹⁸³ The limits of the spread of the compass appear first in G.L. Marcus, "The Mariner's Compass: Its Influence upon Navigation in the Later Middle Ages," *History* 41 (1956). Rose argues that the casual

knowledge of cloud formations, an understanding of the movement pattern of frontal systems, and the ability to recognize bird behavior as an indication of proximity to land all served the medieval navigator. Though we do not have direct evidence, we can presume that sailor's songs and rhymes operated as mnemonic devices for many meteorological signs. The following quote from Chaucer's Shipman summarizes the nature of this much more ancient method of navigation.

But of his craft to rekene well his tides
His stremes and his daungers hym besides,
His heberwe, and his moone, his lodemenage,¹⁸⁴
Ther was noon such from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew alle the havens, as they were,
Fro Gootlond to the cape of Fynystre,
And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.
His barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.¹⁸⁵

mention of its use in manuscript references is one measure of its increasing influence and importance in practical use. Rose, *The Medieval Sea*, 47. Charles Frake argues for the formation of cognitive maps by medieval mariners, following the twelfth century arrival of the compass to Europe, describing the use of the compass rose as a mnemonic device. He concludes that this enabled mariners to accurately predict tidal conditions at ports, "a stratagem that enabled the medieval sailor to construct in his mind the information which the modern literate sailor must seek written down," and which by necessity required intimate, even generational familiarity with the waters in which they sailed. Such a system, however, would be possible for an illiterate sailor to use as well and would not require recourse to charts or navigational aids in writing. Charles O. Frake, "Cognitive Maps of Time and Tide Among Medieval Seafarers," *Man* 20, no. 2 (1985): 254.

¹⁸⁴ *Heberwe* (var. *herberwe*, harborage); *lodemenage* (coastal piloting). Hans Kurath, Sherman M. Kuhn, and Robert E. Lewis, *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press, 1952), 663,812.

The sounding lead, a heavy weight attached to a slender rope marked out at six-foot intervals using knots or other means of marking the length, was likely the most important tool available to the navigator up to the late fourteenth century. Thus, the Castilian mariner's dependence on his own personal knowledge of the landmarks, reference points, and surface conditions of the waters in which he sailed was likely the most important tool available to him until the late fourteenth century, when the widespread use of the *portolano* became common.¹⁸⁶

Yet, if Castilian records do not provide us with detail of the mariner's art in facing the challenges of the sea, they are remarkably strident and consistent in their description of the influence of human agency in facing those perils at sea. In all cases, humans are at the mercy of the sea itself, and should any significant danger arise, there is an almost immediate plea to the divine for assistance. In the case of the *Cantigas*, this comes as no surprise; it is, after all, a collection of Marian *miracles*, all chosen specifically *because* they illustrated the power of the Virgin to intervene when called upon appropriately by deserving Christians.¹⁸⁷ Yet, we find precisely the same pattern in the roughly

¹⁸⁵ Geoffrey Chaucer, V. A. Kolve, and Glending Olson, *The Canterbury Tales: Nine Tales and the General Prologue: Authoritative Text, Sources and Backgrounds, Criticism* (New York: Norton, 1989). Lines 401-410.

¹⁸⁶ See especially Chapter 6, "Mapping the Eastern Mediterranean," in Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 151. In Chapter 6, Professor Fernández-Armesto argues against the importance of maps such as the 'Catalan Atlas' as indicative of an expanding knowledge of the Atlantic, while acknowledging that they might provide us with insight into the 'mental image' of the world as understood by the map's creators. He does not, however, denigrate the efficacy or importance of maps as navigational devices, an importance which was burgeoning in from the early fourteenth century on.

¹⁸⁷ For a solid introduction to the selection and collection of the *Cantigas*, see Walter Mettmann, "Algunas observaciones sobre la genesis de la colección de las Cantigas de Santa Maria y sobre el problema del autor," in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Art, Music, and Poetry: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221-1284) in Commemoration of its 700th Anniversary Year--1981* (New York, November 19-21), ed. Israel J. Katz, et al.

contemporaneous *Cifar*, a chivalric romance with a very different focus and purpose. However, where we find examples of divine intervention at sea in *Cifar*, we do so within a larger narrative context not fixed on the actual miracle itself. For that reason, the appearance of the same kind of immediate association between emergency at sea and divine intervention is evidence of an underlying assumption about sea travel and the ability of humans to employ agency in engaging the dangers they find there.

Two of the most important hallmarks of thirteenth-century accounts touching upon the issue of human agency are the anonymity of sailors and the brevity of accounts given with regard to their actions in an emergency. Sailors never receive mention by name in either the *Cantigas* or *Cifar*, and, with the exception of the mention of admirals or those who would become admirals at some point, this is true until the fifteenth century.¹⁸⁸ We can find a typical example of the relationship between their actions and the unfolding disaster in *cantiga* 36, which relates the story of a merchant ship on its way to England when it encountered a storm.¹⁸⁹ Once they “saw that the danger was great,

(Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987). Mettman’s piece primarily addresses the problem of assigning authorship and the role that close analysis of selection should play in arriving at possible solutions.

¹⁸⁸ The mention of *almirantes* is a subject to which I shall return later in this chapter. The most critical element in considering their appearance is the fact that they were more military than naval commanders; while there were exceptions, such as the great Genoese mariner Egidio Bocanegra, for the most part the emphasis on these individuals and their appearance by name heralded their status as *ricos hombres*, or nobility of higher order generally. See the essential work by Florentino Pérez-Embid, *El Almirantazgo de Castilla hasta las capitulaciones de Santa Fe* (Sevilla: 1944). Also see Manuel de Castro’s study of the Enriquez line of the admiralty, which contains a good summary of the cultural and social context within which the admiralty functioned. Manuel de Castro y Castro, *Los almirantes de Castilla, llamados Enríquez* (Santiago de Compostela: Editorial El Eco Franciscano, 1999). Also see Manuel de Castro y Castro, José García Oro, and María José Portela Silva, *La nobleza española y la iglesia: dos ejemplos relevantes: los Almirantes de Castilla y los Condes de Altamira* (Santiago de Compostela: Convento de San Francisco, 2000).

¹⁸⁹ The *cantiga* does not specify the actual type of vessel. I conclude it is a merchant ship by the line, “u ya gran companna d’omees por sa prol buscar, no que todos punnades,” (a great company of men in search of fortune, for which you all strive).

with loud moaning and weeping they began to pray to all the saints, calling each by name, begging them to have mercy and come to save them.”¹⁹⁰No mention is made of any attempt to deal with the completely unspecified emergency; as I have already noted above with regard to storms, the storm alone seems sufficient to elicit an almost instantaneous plea for salvation, without explaining why any need for such a thing might exist. After an abbot on board admonishes them by reminding them that it was “folly to pray to other saints and not remember Holy Mary, who can deliver us from this,” the crew collectively said, “Lady, help us, for the ship is sinking,” as they turned and “gazed at the mast, as is the custom.”¹⁹¹ In this example, the direct relationship between the onset of perceived disaster and the immediate resort to divine intervention reveals the total absence of any significant function for the crew in the outcome. They acknowledge the emergency, immediately beseech the saints and the Virgin for their aid, and passively wait at the foot of the mast for salvation to arrive.

A similar example of such an appeal appears in *Cifar* when *Cifar*’s wife, *Grima*, finds herself stranded aboard a vessel after the crew has killed one another in a vicious brawl over her. After climbing back onto the deck and finding it littered with their corpses, she:

...lifted her eyes and saw the sail filled in the wind. The ship was sailing with the most favorable wind possible. There was no one on the ship to

¹⁹⁰ Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 107.

¹⁹¹ The cruciform nature of the mast was a natural focal point for Christian mariners in danger. In this particular case, the mariners see a great light appear atop the mast (*e viron en cima mui gran lume*); in the accompanying miniature, the artist represents this moment as the appearance of the Virgin atop the mast. Ibid. See also the illumination in the Escorial manuscript, Folio 54v. Alfonso X, "MS. T.I. 1: Cantigas de Santa Maria (Códice Rico)."

guide it, except a very fair and beautiful child that she saw above the sail... this was Jesus Christ, who had come to guide the ship at the request of his mother, Saint Mary.¹⁹²

As in the case of the *cantiga* above, there is an obvious absence of human agency on display in the situation as described. Grima is completely helpless, marooned at sea with a dead crew, and she owes her salvation to the intervention of the Virgin. There is an interesting variation in the *Cifar* use of the Christ-child as the pilot of Grima's vessel, though this only occurs after he receives a request from the Virgin to intervene on her behalf.¹⁹³ Yet, the critical element is the continuity of the relationship between emergency at sea and the immediate request for divine intervention.

These examples illustrate two different kinds of disasters, of course; one largely unnamed and related to a fierce storm, and the other the product of the literal disappearance of the crew in mid-journey. In either case, they represent truly nightmarish possibilities, and, at least in the case of Grima, situations where human agency might have served little use. Yet, the *Cantigas* offer other examples that provide evidence for an underlying assumption that agency was often not possible at sea, such as *cantiga* 33, which deals with the consequences of a shipwreck involving pilgrims on their way to Acre. As the occupants struggled into lifeboats to escape the vessel as it began to sink,

¹⁹² "Alco los oios e vio la vela tendida; que yva la nave con un viento el mas sabroso que podiese ser, e non yva ninguno en la nave que la guiase, salvo ende un niño que vio estar encima de la vela muy blanco e muy fermoso...E este era Iesu Cristo, que veniera a guiar la nave por ruego de su madre Santa Maria." Wagner, *El cavallero Cifar*, 97.

¹⁹³ In my view, the appearance of Christ in the *Cifar*, as I have noted in the chapter on art, is one of the best arguments against the patronage of *Cifar* by Alfonso X. While its date of completion in the late 1280s would make this a possibility, the content argues against Alfonso's influence as a patron, particularly in the secondary role it grants to the Virgin with regard to intercession at several key points in the work.

one of the pilgrims tripped over a line on deck and fell into the sea. While those in the lifeboats immediately rowed for shore, the intervention of the Virgin saved the life of the pilgrim, who was waiting for the lifeboat when it reached land. The *cantiga* provides no details about his salvation; the pilgrim simply claimed, “Holy Mary saved me,” though the mechanism of the salvation was not part of the actual *cantiga*. Interestingly enough, the artist painting the illuminations for this *cantiga* showed the pilgrim traveling near the lifeboat, beneath the waves, finally arriving on shore where he emerged completely dry.¹⁹⁴ The artist’s decision suggests an inability to imagine an alternate explanation, even though the text reports that those on the lifeboats asked the pilgrim to explain his deliverance, querying, “Had he saved himself by swimming?”¹⁹⁵ In any event, a basic assumption of helplessness in certain situations at sea is evident in this example; when humans entered the sea, there was little confidence in one’s own agency in meeting some perils.

The presumed helplessness of humans before the sea also appears in the work of Don Juan Manuel, without question the most influential fourteenth-century Castilian writer. As I have already noted, he articulated his position clearly in his *Libro del Cavallero et del Escudero*, where he drew a clear distinction between land and sea, granting virtually no agency at all to the actions of men at sea.¹⁹⁶ His position, reflective of earlier Castilian views, is more intriguing considering that he devoted only one other short piece dealing specifically with the sea in an otherwise terrifically prolific career: a

¹⁹⁴ See Fig.10. A similar example occurs in *cantiga* 193, where a very exaggerated cocoon appears to surround a merchant who has been cast overboard by other passengers; see Fig.17.

¹⁹⁵ Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 98.

¹⁹⁶ See this analysis in the “Storm” subsection above.

single episode in *El Conde Lucanor* on the “great leap of faith” of Richard I (Lionheart, 1157-99) the subject of which reveals much about those earlier assumptions. The scene is the third crusade, off an unnamed port, the shores teeming with Muslim warriors; Richard has mounted his horse when a messenger arrives from King Philip II (1165-1223) requesting that he join a council aboard his vessel. Richard refuses, and:

Having commended his body and soul to God, and praying for his Holy protection, made the sign of the Cross, and ordering his soldiers to follow him, struck his spurs into his horse and jumped into the sea facing the coast where the Moors were assembled; this being near the port, the sea was very deep, yet the king and his horse did not disappear.¹⁹⁷

Manuel tells us that God himself saved him from the “perils of the sea,” and that the rest of the English, seeing such an act of bravery performed by their king, leapt into the sea as well, followed quickly by the French, who feared a loss of honor if they failed to follow the example. The Moors, “admiring this brave contempt of danger,” fled the port, and the Christians enjoyed a great victory.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Richard leapt off vessels into the sea, first to the attack, off the coast of both Cypress and Jaffa. Neither story is a word-for-word version of that presented in *Lucanor*, but the reference to Richard and the French King engaged in a crusade obviously refers to the Third Crusade. These tales were likely the foundation for the version related by Juan Manuel: At Cypress: “Then, he leaped first from his barge into the sea and bravely set upon the Cypriots. Our other men imitated his steadfast attitude. Henceforth they accompanied the King and shot arrows at those who were resisting, in order to make the Cypriots take flight.” At Jaffa: “Still in his sailor’s deck shoes, Richard leaped recklessly into the sea and waded through the waves to reach the beach. Richard again showed his bravery and worth on the field, leading fifty-four knights and 2,000 Genoese and Pisan crossbowmen into battle.” Richard I, *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, ed. William Stubbs (Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1964), 170. Manuel, *el Conde Lucanor*, 71.

¹⁹⁸ Manuel, *el Conde Lucanor*, 72.

Manuel's telling of the story reveals a differentiated view of land and sea entirely consistent with his statements on the two environments from the *Libro del Cavallero*. In addition, by making Richard's survival entirely contingent on divine intervention, it follows the *Cantigas* model closely as well. Ultimately, Richard's display of prowess comes from his willingness to risk *certain death*, implied by the necessity of divine intervention, in leaping into the sea. The leap was an act so dangerous in its own right that it was sufficient to astonish not only the assembled French, English, and Moorish forces, but also *God himself*, who took Richard's display of great faith as sufficient to merit his pairing in heaven with a holy hermit. In short, from virtually every perspective described in the story, the act of leaping into the sea represented the most severe test of faith imaginable; in that respect, it speaks volumes about Manuel's perception of the place of the sea in his view of the Castilian world and closely accords with that of the *Cantigas*.

The primacy of divine assistance in the early Castilian record left only a limited place for human agency as a factor at sea. To enter the sea was to risk great disaster, and only the mercy of the divine stood between humans and death when calamity threatened. It is precisely for this reason that later examples resound so dramatically, for by the fifteenth century, agency was a given in Castilian accounts of maritime activities. If a nearly immediate recourse to divine intervention was the hallmark of thirteenth-century Castilian attitudes toward a disaster at sea, it was but one of an arsenal of weapons used by Castilians in the fifteenth in a similar situation. Consider the experience of a shipwreck as described by Pero Tafur, which occurred while his vessel was at anchor at midnight. At that time, a "*grant fortuna de la mar*" erupted, and due to poor anchoring,

she drifted and struck a submerged wreck, opening the hull sometime near dawn. The crew managed to save themselves despite the heavy seas “que la mar andava muy brava,” (for the seas were very violent) leaving Tafur clinging to a piece of wreckage tossing in the sea.¹⁹⁹ Despite orders from “Messer Nicolao de Meton, captain general, and some bishops and French gentlemen,” to rescue him, none dared to do so, a testament to the genuine likelihood of drowning; some Biscayans using a small skiff from a galley to reach him eventually rescued him. In this case, the absence of an appeal to the divine is especially noteworthy, for few occasions loom more perilous than being adrift in a serious storm with heaving seas amidst old wreckage with one’s own vessel in the process of foundering and only a piece of flotsam between yourself and drowning. That the crew actually had already managed to “save themselves,” and, having done so, made a successful concerted rescue effort despite the danger is another departure from the reflexive nature of the relationship between maritime disaster and divine intervention so typical of earlier accounts. In a seemingly incongruous addendum, although Tafur described himself as “almost exhausted by the water and the cold, for it was Christmas,” following the ordeal, he goes on to describe a battle between Genoese and Catalan

¹⁹⁹ É á la media noche, metióse de súbito tan grande fortuna en la mar, é como estábamos mal afferrados, nuestra áncora viníe garrando, é fue á dar en una carraca que esava de tiempo antiguo anegada en la mar, quando á la guerra de los venecianos con los ginoveses fue allí quemada, é estaba fuera del agua la barca della quanto un estado, é nuestra nao tocó allí é rompió, é fizo un grant agujero é ívase al fondon é ya era de dia, é los marineros aunque á grant peligro, que la mar andava muy brava, féronse en tierra como mejor pudieron, é yo abracéme con aquello que pareció de la carraca. Despues que nuestra nao fue anegada, estuve allí fasta que los señores micer Nicolao de Meton capitán general, é ciertos obispos que aí estaban, é muchos señores franceses mandaron que entrasen por mí, é ninguno non osava, é unos vizcaínos, que aí estaban, tomaron un esquife de una galea, é fueron por mí, é truxéronme en tierra asaz trabajado del agua é del frio que avie fecho, que era por Navidat.” Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, 131. Tafur relates the actual cause of the sinking to the fact that “our anchor broke away and caught a carack, which had been burnt and sunk in ancient times during the war between the Venetians and the Genoese, the bows of which remained above the water, and our ship struck it, and it stove us in and we sank, and it was then day,” an interesting point of detail regarding navigational hazards one which he repeats elsewhere in his account as especially troublesome for those sailing the Mediterranean.

galleys the next day as though nothing particularly noteworthy had occurred at all. The end of the event merely consists of one line: “Having dragged our ship ashore, we refitted it, but the bulk of the merchandise was lost, and I also lost many things which I had brought from the East.”²⁰⁰

The passage reveals several points of departure from earlier accounts, beginning with the nuanced and descriptive account of events leading to the shipwreck. Tafur does not simply rely on the “great fortune of the sea,” to serve as a sufficient explanation for the calamity that follows; instead, he provides physical reasons why the vessel foundered, including an improperly set anchor and a partially submerged shipwreck which had become a hazard to navigation. Secondly, all involved act in their own interests, with the crew managing to get ashore “with great difficulty,” despite the storm. Even Tafur saves himself by finding a piece of wreckage upon which to cling until his eventual rescue from shore. Third, his rescue underscores an important difference between early and late accounts, showing a communal effort, both in terms of collective action and in association, on the part of those stricken by maritime disaster to intervene successfully and save the life of someone in a situation that would have certainly appeared as hopeless without divine intervention in a thirteenth-century account. This is not to say that fear of the sea and its dangers is completely absent from the account, as the hesitation on the part of those ashore to go back out for Tafur attests. However, the importance of collective effort in meeting and even avoiding disaster became considerably more prominent in the fifteenth century accounts, heralding a new assumption about the ability of humans to

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

influence outcomes there. We can see this change in confidence at the end of this passage, where the crew drag the vessel ashore, repair it, and prepare to continue on their way. Tafur's only comment is to note that he "lost many things which I had brought from the East," but given the circumstances, his understatement makes the point neatly. Overall, this particular event demonstrates an important trait of these fifteenth-century accounts – a definite trend toward showing humans in the process of displaying the same sort of agency in their own interests they normally display on land. In this instance, the idea appears in a casual reference to the cause of the shipwreck – precipitated by a storm, but actually caused by a collision with a sunken vessel, and all because of a faultily set anchor. In other words, from beginning to end, the event as perceived by Tafur was an entirely *human* event, with the storm serving as a catalyst to a disaster and resolution entirely human in nature.

Reporting on the importance of actions like this on the part of the crew becomes more and more common as detailed accounts of collective action became more frequent in accounts of events at sea. Although such action was at times obliquely implied in even the earliest accounts,²⁰¹ reference to meetings and the collective solutions to problems they afforded becomes nearly routine in Díaz' description of the fleet operations in both the Mediterranean and Atlantic. Let us consider an example of such a meeting from *el Victorial*:

²⁰¹ Several *cantigas* use the words "collectively," or "as one," to describe a meeting of sorts among passengers, usually involving the invocation of the Virgin as opposed to other saints (36, 172, 313, 339); sometimes, such phrases imply assent to collective vows of pilgrimage to particular churches where offerings would be made following the Virgin's intervention (112, 271).

That night the captain summoned his sailors who were experienced in sea matters to a council. There came thither Micer Nicolaso Bonel, ship's captain of the captain's [Niño's] galley, a strong knight and a good mariner, who had often been at sea on great affairs and had been captain of galleys; Juan Bueno, who all his life had been going about in carracks, sailing ships and galleys, a proved mariner whose advice in sea councils was always surer than that of other mariners, and others, both masters of oarsmen and mariners, strong in body and skilled in their calling. Each gave his opinion.²⁰²

Several observations are immediately apparent. First, the description of Bonel as a knight places him squarely in a military command role aboard the galley, but the additional qualifier stating that he had “often been at sea on great affairs and had been captain of galleys,” reveals a desire on Díaz’ part to make his marine credentials plain as the master of the vessel as well. The emphasis is even more direct in the description of Juan Bueno, master of oarsmen aboard the galley, whom Díaz notes had sailed “all his life” in a variety of capacities, and whose “advice in sea councils was always surer than that of other mariners.”²⁰³ This comment is all the more noteworthy considering that it is the second time in the work where Díaz had stressed these qualities as associated with these two men. In the first instance, he refers to Bonel as the “*Patron*,” the chief naval officer

²⁰² “Esa noche ovo el capitán consejo con sus marents, sabidores del mar. Hera allí micer Nicolo Bonel, Patrón de la galera del capitán, un recio cavalleo e buen mareante, que se avía acaecido muchas vezes sobre mar en algunos grandes fechos, e avía seydo patrón de galeras. Hera allí Juan Bueno, marinero que toda su vida avía andado en carracas e en naos e en galeras. Here muy provado marinero: siempre fue en los consejos de la mar más cierto que ningún marineros heran. E otros cómitres e marineros, recios por sus personas, e muy buenos marineros.” Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 135.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 100.

on the vessel, and Bueno as the “*cómitre*”, or master of the oarsmen, “the best and surest officer of galleys in all Spain.”²⁰⁴ In both cases, the emphasis on their abilities at sea is foremost to Díaz, and this is an important change from earlier accounts, such as the story of Bónifaz contained in the *Primera Crónica*, where Bónifaz’ lineage was the primary concern for the chronicle authors. Thus, by the fifteenth century, competency and expertise at sea was valued highly enough to cause Diaz to emphasize the skills of someone other than his master.

The identification of individual mariners and specific accounts of their contribution to maritime situations is another important trait associated with fifteenth-century maritime accounts. Although we know nothing about Bueno and cannot historically verify the credentials attributed to him by Díaz, we can reasonably surmise that he did exist and was a man in high demand for a dangerous voyage such as this one, a royal commission from Enrique III to deal with Castilian pirates in the Mediterranean.²⁰⁵ Yet, for the purposes of this argument, his historical reality is actually a moot point. The important issue at hand is the fact that his name appears at all, and that

²⁰⁴ *Cómitre* is sometimes translated as boatswain on a galley; if referring to a mariner on a sailing vessel, it was generally understood to mean the master of the vessel. Covarrubias defines it in two ways, one as “ministro de la galera, a cuyo cargo está la orden y catigo de los remeros,” and the second as “Los cómitres antiguos más parece ser capitanes de las galeras que lo que hoy significan, según lo demuestra la ley 4, tít. 24, de la segunda partida.” Covarrubias assumes a more elevated application of the word in the Middle Ages than the sources support. The use was contextual, as many examples from the period attest. At times, the word did seem to refer to shipmasters, but at others it clearly referred to boatswains. Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, 338.

²⁰⁵ The historical authenticity of the protagonist is unquestioned, and most of the characters contained in Díaz’ account appear in the nobility archives in Spain. The mention of the book on Niño’s tomb, and his approval of the contents, certainly validates the historical existence of the characters. However, there is no direct evidence of the existence of a letter or charter by Enrique III authorizing Niño’s activities in the Mediterranean, though it is hardly unreasonable to imagine one did exist. Díaz himself notes that it was a “secret” mission. For an in-depth discussion on the historical accuracy and literary license employed by Díaz, see Rafael Beltrán Llavador, *Un estudio sobre la biografía medieval castellana: la realidad histórica de Pero Niño y la creación literaria de «El Victorial»*, (Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, 1987).

Díaz gives his accomplishments and expertise by way of solidifying the value of his counsel. Further, Díaz notes that his advice was “surer” than that given by most other mariners, an indication of a larger maritime community generally and recognition of the variety of skill and expertise found within that group. Finally, the fact that everyone present in the meeting “gave their opinion” provides an important piece of evidence for the degree to which proactive measures had taken center stage at sea.

Indeed, the importance of a collective effort in meeting the challenges of the sea is underscored repeatedly in fifteenth century accounts and, whether named or not, the skill and experience of mariners takes a prominent place in them. Here, Díaz describes the preparation of the vessel for traveling through the English Channel, known by the Castilians as the “race”:

They set up their compasses furnished with magnet stones, they opened their charts and began to prick and measure with the compass, for the course was long and the weather adverse. They observed the hourglass and entrusted it to a watchful man. They hoisted the storm try-sails, fixed the auxiliary rudders and shipped the oars.²⁰⁶

The account, remarkable for the window it provides us to the actual activities of the crew in preparation for sailing, is a stunning departure from that of earlier centuries. Never before did we encounter such a description, showing the importance of individual efforts and the numbers of tasks involved in the anticipation of a safe journey, despite the fact

²⁰⁶“Concertain las brujelas cebadas con la piedra yman; abrieron lascartas de navegar, e comencaron a puntar e a compasar, que la rota era larga e el tiempo contrario. Miraron el reloj: diéronlo a hombre bien atentado; guindaron los artimones, claron timones de caja, e dieron remos de luengo.” Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 136.

that we know such activities must have been ongoing for centuries. The very presence of such a description in Díaz' entry underscores the enormous change in the experience of Castilians at sea by the fifteenth century. Above all, his entries regarding the crew emphasize their activities as essential to the safe execution of the journey, often including details regarding the vessel and associated equipment. When the crew encounters a storm, for example, Díaz' description underscores their skill and ability to meet the challenge: "The wind freshened more and more; it tore the captain's sail and broke the galley sideways; and if the auxiliary rudders had come unfixed at that moment, the galley would have gone down. But there were at the helm men strong and skilled, who mastered them by great force."²⁰⁷ Thus, while the danger of immediate disaster loomed, the presence of experienced mariners meant the difference between life and death. In this regard, the divine has surrendered much of its power to determine outcomes to the ability of the mariners themselves, who are now able to intervene on their own merits.

Perhaps the best example of this new emphasis on skill and self-determination is this passage from *Victorial* describing a storm encountered in the English Channel: "...they found the wind and the storm so violent that they were near sinking; and they broke several lateen yards and other rigging. All this was but natural, for it was already winter; and they were forced, much against their will, to return to the port of Harfleur."²⁰⁸ Here we have a familiar situation; a vessel finds itself in the midst of a raging storm that bodes ill for the occupants. However, there is no immediate connection between that

²⁰⁷ "Todavía se metía el viento más fuerte, e con la grand fuerza de la olas trocáronse los timones de caja en la galera del capitán, e hera la galera apunto de se perder. E pusieron a los timones fuertes hombres que los boernasen y fuesen sabidores dellos." Ibid., 111.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 216.

event and an eventual disaster, for Díaz tells us that the crew actually replaces “several lateen yards,” a testament to the crew’s persistent efforts to keep the vessel afloat and on course throughout the storm. Their efforts forestall disaster, and the consequences described involved a diversion from their desired course, rather than a sinking and the loss of all lives aboard the vessel.

Turning to Pero Tafur’s account, we find an example that marries collective action and the elevation of skilled individuals. Here, he describes the moment the vessel upon which Tafur was traveling struggled away from a Turkish galley in earnest pursuit:

We strove with sail and oars, and they likewise, so that there was no flagging of the litany while our hands grew weary with rowing. I had with me a boatswain of a Catalan galley who had killed a nephew of the captain. He had been sentenced to be hanged from the yard-arm, but the rope had broken with his weight, and I besought the captain to give him to me, since God had done so much for him, and he consented, and this was the means of our escape, for he was a skilled navigator. He lightened the boat so that it could make better headway, but the other ship with the merchandise would not jettison the cargo, and when it was late and the sun was setting the Turks overtook it, and sank it, and drowned every man of the crew. In the confusion which ensued we had time to increase our distance a little, and when it began to grow dark we put on as much sail as we could, and all took to the oars, and labouring as best we could, when night fell, we reefed the sail and turned to the right hand, rowing quietly so

that there should be no sound from the oars, and the galley passed close to us without seeing us.²⁰⁹

Here we have a clear account of the role of collective effort in meeting a challenge at sea. Tafur speaks of the weariness of “our hands,” in response to the effort generated by all on board to evade the pursuing vessel; even Tafur is actively engaged in this activity. At this moment of peril, all recognized the talents of Tafur’s own servant as a “skilled navigator,” whose ability would later prove to be the salvation of the vessel. Tafur’s servant “lightened the boat” in order to improve their speed; the fact that an accompanying vessel did not mean doom for the entire crew when it was sunk by the pursuing Turkish vessel.²¹⁰ Tafur describes the specific actions taken thereafter in terms that continue to emphasize the communal effort, with the pronoun “we” present in each clause to indicate both the shared predicament and the steps taken to avoid the disaster that had overtaken the other vessel. Although unnamed, Tafur’s servant proves the hero of the hour by virtue of his skill and experience; that those aboard were willing to follow his instructions shows a distinct transference of reliance on the divine to skill aboard the vessel in an emergency. Taken together with the evidence presented elsewhere in the

²⁰⁹ “É nosotros á vela é á remos, é ellos así mesmo, tanto que allí non fallecía la letanía, las manos bien trabajadas de remar. Yva conmigo un cómitre de una galea de catalanes, que avie muerto á un sobrino del patrón, é mandólo aforcár del entena, é quebróse la sogá con él; é yo roguéle tanto que me lo diése, pues Dios avie fech tanto por él, é plgole, é por esto escapamos, que sabía mucho de navegar; fizo aliviar el peso que levava nuestro gripo para que mejor caminase, é el otro de mercaderías non quiso echarlo á la mar; é quando ya era tarde, quel sol se quería poner, los turcos le alcanzaron é anegéronlos á todos, é en el embaraco que fizieron con ellos, ovimos tiempo de alargarnos un poco, é quando quiso anochecer, guindamos la vela quanto podimos, é todos tomamos mano á los remos é trabajamos media ora quant en el mundo podimos, é quanto fue noche oscuro, calamos la vela é tomamos á la mano derecha, bogando muy quedo que non sonasen los remos, é la galea pasó bien cerca de nosotros que non nos vido.” Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, 123-24.

²¹⁰ Presumably by ramming, as Tafur provides no description of boarding or the use of other weaponry in the event.

fifteenth century record, this example provides solid evidence for such a shift in perception with regard to a much more secular attitude toward meeting emergencies at sea. Whether exercised individually or collectively, Castilians saw human agency as the first resort in such emergencies, as opposed to its nearly non-existent role in earlier accounts.

Thus, from the thirteenth through fifteen centuries, Castilian perception of the role of human agency at sea appears to have undergone a significant transformation. The dangers of the sea remained constant, if much less mysterious and better described; but at the same time, the ability of human beings to influence the outcome of their encounters with those dangers substantially increased. The Castilian accounts shown here provide evidence for the elevation of agency to an important and integral part of success in travel at sea, a stark contrast to the earlier primacy of divine intervention in similar situations. Individuals began to appear in these accounts, and, while they are few and often remain nameless, they offer a glimpse into the much wider community of experience and skill that Castilians began to value as essential in meeting maritime challenges. In place of the solidly differentiated attitudes between land and sea and the ability of men to influence events there, so well articulated by Don Juan Manuel, we have ample evidence of collective action in a manner consistent with that used to face challenges on shore. Ultimately, these accounts show that by the fifteenth century, Castilians met the challenges of the sea in an increasingly competent, confident manner, taking many of its dangers in stride.

The Chivalric Sea

If physical perception of the sea and human agency while operating there both experienced a dramatic transformation over the period under study in this dissertation, there remains one area where the literary record reveals a much more rapid integration of the sea into an existing Castilian worldview: the adoption of a chivalric model by the authors of these accounts in describing the actions of Castilians at sea. Dramatic differences developed over time between early and late accounts with regard to descriptions of the sea and agency, but a much faster process was at work in familiarizing the sea in terms of the use of language and settings needed to stage the scene properly for an audience accustomed to the themes and actions of a chivalric tale. The early adoption of a chivalric model for use in describing the actions of men at sea reveals that Castilians were unwilling to allow the differentiation between land and sea, so prevalent elsewhere in the contemporary record, to create a different set of expectations for the actions of important Castilian knights there. As I shall show, this desire to equate action on land and sea in order to grant the proper honor to the most important individuals involved led directly to the restaging of the sea in such a way as to create a solidly familiar environment where the “rules” of chivalry could prevail.

The roots of the creative process of overlaying chivalry onto the sea reveal themselves through a close examination of the pattern of thirteenth-century sources. The first noteworthy characteristic of that source material is the near total absence of knights engaged in any activity at sea at all. Only one example involving Iberian military forces at sea (*cantiga* 271) appears in the *Cantigas*, for example, and the emphasis in that account is on the helplessness of their situation: after “they had towed the ship into the

narrow river...it could not be got out by any means...therefore the Moors thought to capture it and came to attack it, but those who were on board defended themselves from them but *were in need of a great wind.*” As the last line reveals, their situation was grave and completely beyond their control in spite of their ability as military men, a predicament made even direr by their stranding “for three months... [They] could not come out of the river and thought they would surely die there.” Ultimately, they called upon the Virgin for salvation, a “good wind sprang up,” and they emerged from the river.²¹¹ In all respects, the story follows the familiar pattern I have described for thirteenth-century accounts of Castilians at sea, particularly the lack of agency in the face of a dangerous sea. However, the account is unique with respect to being the only story in which the stranding of a vessel is the subject of the disaster, resulting in a situation akin to a trap of sorts, where military prowess and skill stood worthless against the vagaries of wind and water. In that respect, it offers a glimpse at an essential assumption about the relationship between military action and the sea in the thirteenth century – Castilians simply did not imagine the sea as a proper arena for military action. In that sense, there was a solidly differentiated view of the two environments, entirely consistent with the evidence I have thus far presented.²¹²

²¹¹ “Aquela nav’ y meteran per cordas, com’ apredni./ no rio que estreit’ era, e non podio pois d’y/ sair per nulla maneira; porend’ estava assy/ que ata en Monpesler/ Mellor dela non avia. Porend’ os mouros aver/ todavia acuidavan e viynnana combater;/ mas los que na nave eran sabían sse defender/ mui ben deles, mas bon vento avian muito mester./ Assi jouveron tres meses que non poderon sayr/ pela foz daquele rio, e cuidaban y fiir...” Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 53-54.

²¹² The account involves a vessel that “*era del Rei sennor d’Alenquer*” (belonging to the king of Alenquer), which is a town in the district of Lisbon, Portugal; we may assume the mariners were Portuguese. There is another reference to the town in *cantiga* 316, involving the burning of a hermitage. *Ibid.*, 53-4,163-4.

This consistent differentiation of expectations on land versus sea is also evident in the example of Ramon Bónifaz, sometimes referred to as the first Admiral of Castile. Bónifaz, a successful merchant from the northern Castilian city of Burgos, received an order from Fernando III to assemble a “fleet” in order to complete the encirclement of Seville, which was continuing to resist the Castilian siege by virtue of a pontoon bridge linking Seville to the small town of Triana on the opposite side of the Guadalquivir River. He intended to have this fleet sail up the river and destroy or occupy the bridge, thus denying the city reinforcement. After assembling an odd assortment of merchant vessels in Burgos, Bónifaz sailed down the Atlantic coast, engaged a force of Muslim warships at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, and eventually succeeded in reaching the pontoon bridge; Seville fell within days following his arrival.²¹³ As a reward for his role in the successful conquest, Bónifaz received substantial lands in the repartition of Seville, and, according to some, the title of the first *Almirante* of Castile, purportedly bestowed by Fernando’s son, Alfonso X. His tale is a triumphant one, and, for those who accept that narrative, represents the roots of the eventual rise of the Spanish maritime empire of the *siglo de oro*.²¹⁴

²¹³ Bónifaz arrived with the fleet sometime in mid-November of 1248; the city fell on November 23rd, when Fernando III entered with his forces. The *Crónica* does not offer the exact date of Bónifaz’ arrival or the destruction of the pontoon bridge to Triana.

²¹⁴ The great majority of works purporting to address the creation of the Spanish navy credit Bónifaz with having served as its first admiral, largely on the strength of Fernández Duro’s 1894 *Marina de Castilla*, which included a chronological listing of admirals and their lineages. Indeed, until quite recently there was a consensus that the creation of the Castilian navy dated from 1248 and the siege of Seville, despite the fact that there is no evidence for a standing navy of any kind there before the late fourteenth century. Teófilo Ruiz’ study of the Bonifaz family revealed the so-called “fleet” and Bonifaz’ subsequent appointment as the “*Primer Almirante de Castilla*” as essentially regionally supported bombast. See Ruiz, “Los Sarracín y los Bónifaz.”, Fernández Duro, *Marina de Castilla*.

The story of Bónifaz' role in the breaking of resistance at the siege of Seville in 1248 grew until it assumed a nearly legendary quality in the centuries following the conquest. The actual description of the event in the *Primera Crónica*, however, is decidedly less expansive than those glowing later accounts about any of his actions. To begin with, Bónifaz himself receives little direct attention, and the description offered of the fleet's actions parallels the sole example found in the *Cantigas*, cantiga 271, presenting the prospect of battle at sea as something akin to a trap. The chronicler tells us that, "as the fleet arrived and encountered the Muslim fleet off the mouth of the Guadalquivir, The Christians saw them fearfully, but they steeled themselves in the service of God and the good fortune of King Fernando." While ultimately successful, there is nothing in the brief description of the battles that acknowledges the roles of individuals, Bónifaz included, in the actual successes. Indeed, the chronicler attributes their ultimate success – caused by a strong, sudden wind that propelled the large ships forward and enabled them to smash the pontoon bridge – to the hoisting of crosses at the tops of the masts of the vessels. In this manner, as in the calls for divine intervention made by those in peril on the sea shown in the *Cantigas*, we can see the same lack of agency and appeal for assistance, in this case for victory in battle as opposed to salvation from disaster.²¹⁵ Taken together with the scant personal description of the individuals involved and the lack of overall detail, the account stresses a feeling of discomfort and unfamiliarity with the sea as a proper environment for the conduct of warfare.

²¹⁵ "Et el rey don Fernando, en crencia verdadera, mando poner encima de lost mastes desas dos naves sendas cruces, commo aquel que firme se avia de toda crencia verdadera. Desi movieron las naves daquel logar o decendieran...quiso Dios et acorrió a ora con buen viento, muy mas rezio que el de comienco. Desi moverion sus naves, enderecadas sus velas, et comencaron a yr muy rezias." Alfonso X and Sancho IV, *Primera Crónica*, 761.

Another such example of a lack of agency granted to individual knights engaged in action at sea comes to us from the chronicle of Alfonso X regarding the siege of Algeciras in 1278.²¹⁶ Sanchez tells us: “those at sea who were with the fleet safeguarding the sea during all of winter spent many days in which they went unpaid,” a situation not shared by those on land. He notes that they “had no renewal of clothes or food then they needed them,” as a consequence of which many “became seriously ill...their teeth fell out, and they suffered very great hardships, and many other illnesses that forced them to leave the sea and forsake the galleys.”²¹⁷ As with the case of Bónifaz, the admiral in charge of the expedition, Pedro Martínez de Fe, receives little attention beyond the mention of his having commanded the fleet and, more importantly, that he was one of the few survivors of its destruction, having ordered the scuttling of those few ships still standing after an assault by the Moorish fleet. The account again emphasizes the lack of human agency by attributing the scuttling of the vessels to unfavorable winds that made moving them impossible. As if to add insult to injury, Martinez’ capture serves to underscore the lack of agency present, as he was imprisoned following a meeting with

²¹⁶ This siege of Algeciras began in 1278; the first was a blockade ordered by Sancho, the second-in-line of Alfonso’s sons, while Alfonso was away in France. The occasion was an alliance between Muhammad II, King of Granada, and Abu Yusuf, the Marinid emir. At the request of Muhammad II, Yusuf had sent cavalry to Granada and the two began actively scouring the Guadalquivir valley. Alfonso X had demanded both Algeciras and Gibraltar from Muhammad II, but he realized the danger relinquishing the ports on the Straits would mean in terms of obtaining reinforcements from Africa and repeatedly refused, ultimately deciding to take military action. For an excellent view of the Marinid side of the story, see Rachel Arié, *El reino Nasrí de Granada, 1232-1492* (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992). For the larger Castilian narrative, see O’Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile*.

²¹⁷ “É porque los de la flota avian estado en la guarda de la mar todo el invierno é non les avian fecho sus pagas commo devian, nin avia avido ningund refrexcamiento de vestidos nin de viandas, así commo lo avian menester, é el Rey les envió muy pequeño acorro de las pagas que les devian, por est los omes de la flota adolescieron de muy grandes dolencias. Ca á muchos dellos, estando en las galeas é non aviendo las viandas, cayéronseles los dientes é ovieron otras muchas dolencias que les recrescieron porque oviesen á salir de la mar é desamparar las galeas.” The crews dismantled many of the galleys and used them to both to build makeshift shelters and to burn as firewood. Rosell et al., *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla*, 55.

King Aben Yuzaf on the African coast owing to a large storm that forced his fleet to sail to Cartagena, abandoning him.²¹⁸ In both cases, the chronicle accounts reveal a fundamental lack of control or self-determination at sea, particularly stressing the blind luck that seemed to govern the fates of men and vessels operating there.

Yet, despite the obviously undesirable elements attributed to war at sea in the thirteenth century accounts I have presented, a significantly different tone emerges in the mid-fourteenth century with the Chronicle of Alfonso XI, which underscores the integration of chivalric values into the maritime narrative appearing in Castile. Here, we see the first direct accounts of Castilians at sea described in detail as a means of underscoring chivalric values of prowess and loyalty. This was particularly true in the case of Jofre de Tenorio (d.1337), a Castilian admiral whose death off the coast of Tarifa received a treatment by Sanchez equating it to the status of a chivalric duel that, though foolhardy in subsequent reflection, was a testament to both his loyalty and honor. The detail he provides us about Tenorio's exploits at sea, meant to establish his prowess as a knight in a chronicle firmly intended to elevate its patron Alfonso XI to the pinnacle of chivalric kingship, constituted an important attempt to integrate the activities of knights at sea with their counterparts on land.

Unlike Sanchez' treatment of either Bónifaz or Martinez in the *Crónica de Alfonso X*, Tenorio receives a generous amount of attention and he displays much greater agency and prowess at sea.²¹⁹ Sanchez gives several examples of his actions in battle that

²¹⁸ Ibid., 57.

²¹⁹ One of the more important aspects of the chivalric treatment Sánchez offers Tenorio, as opposed to earlier Admirals, is that it lends credence to the idea that he was using documents from Alfonso X's

are comparable to the accounts of agency seen in fifteenth-century accounts. In an example from 1327, Tenorio, with a small fleet of “six galleys, eight naos, and six small boats,” engaged a Granadan fleet consisting of “twenty-two galleys.” Upon learning that the Granadan fleet was on its way, Tenorio “moved farther out to sea, in order that he could find and fight them more easily,” and in the subsequent action captured three galleys and sunk another four, leaving more than 1200 dead or wounded from the Granadan fleet.²²⁰ The passage offers several important changes in perception introduced in Sanchez’ chronicle of Alfonso XI. First, there is an emphasis throughout the work on a numeric reckoning of vessels and types, something not present in earlier accounts offering only a general number when referring to collections of vessels. The indeterminate use of *nao* and *galera* stand as the limit of descriptive variation in earlier accounts of seagoing craft; here, Sanchez describes “*galeras, ñaos, y leños*,” and though the latter could refer to any number of small boats, there exists an assumption that the differentiation of types is important to the audience generally. The inclusion of this level of specificity demonstrates greater concern on Sanchez’ part for conveying that level of detail and reflects a greater concern for the acknowledgement of the variety of methods in travel and action at sea. Second, the theme of the outnumbered fleet is one that will

chancery to reconstruct the history he relates in his chronicle of that king. In my opinion, this is one of the best examples of his having done so. For the role of familial relationships and hereditary lines of transference for the Castilian admiralty stemming from Tenorio’s defeat, see especially Rafael Sánchez Saus, “El Almirantazgo de Castilla hasta don Alonso Jofré Tenorio: redes de parentesco y tradición familiar,” in *Cádiz en el siglo XIII: Actas de las Jornadas Conmemorativas del 7 Centenario de la muerte de Alfonso X el Sabio*, ed. Manuel González Jiménez and Isabel Montes Romero-Camacho (Camas-Sevilla: Pinelo Talleres Gráficos, 2003).

²²⁰ “don Alfonso Jufre Tenorio, almirante mayor de la mar, con seys galeras e ocho naos e seys leños...desque supo que la flota de los moros venia a pelear con el, salió a lo largo en la mar por que podiese pelear con ellos e los fallar mas ayra.” Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. Diego Catalán and Juan Núñez de Villaizán, 2 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977), 415.

replay itself several times throughout his chronicle, a trope that I believe bears directly upon his desire to emphasize the prowess of the admiral in his actions at sea. In this case, Sanchez' treatment of the event reveals a greater appreciation for the actions of these fighting men at sea and a desire to make their deeds known in substantially greater detail than found in the thirteenth century. This desire is emphasized by the casualty figures he gives at the end of the account; inflated or not, they stand as a testament to the merit and contribution of those at sea, and tangible evidence of their ability to inflict damage on the enemy in a manner consistent with land-based knights. Third, Tenorio actively seeks to engage the enemy, and takes steps to do so at sea. He is in command of his vessels, and they respond to that command; he directs their action and takes them where he wishes to go in order to confront the enemy. Finally, there is no concern about the vagaries of wind or weather in the account; indeed, were it not for the use of the nouns describing vessels, we might well imagine this to be an account of a land battle, particularly in comparison with the strongly contrasted descriptions of land and sea so typical of thirteenth-century source material. Above all, Tenorio displays agency in abundance, nowhere assuming that the sea is a place where his efforts might fail.

The use of the language and imagery of honorable single combat is another important element employed by Sanchez that moves toward integrating the actions of men on land and sea. The best way to illustrate this point is to present his description of the events leading up to the death of Tenorio off Tarifa, where he was blockading the port. Sánchez sets the stage for the moment by informing us that some “mischief-

makers,”²²¹ had begun spreading rumors at court suggesting that Tenorio had allowed the Moorish fleet to cross the straits for some personal gain. After receiving word from his wife of this insult to his honor, “he lost his head with fear and anger, and once the six galleys the king had sent arrived, he ordered the fleet to move to the port of Algeciras, where the Moorish fleet lay anchored, and they anchored there. And the Admiral sent a message to the Moors in the town asking them to do battle.²²²” The challenge was initially declined, with Sánchez noting that they “returned a message saying that they did not have the time, but that he should wait, and when he least suspected, they would engage him.” After a delay of three days, the Moorish fleet left harbor after “they assembled the fleet for a quick attack, with some light shallow-drafted galleys that they could row well there without anyone seeing,” in an attempt to take the Castilians by surprise. Tenorio sighted the fleet and immediately attacked them, leaving the majority of his fleet in disarray: “The Castilian ñaos raised their pennants and hoisted their sails to chase the admiral’s galley, and they did not have time to do anything; for which reason the admiral and the Christians were very scattered, as the Admiral had made nothing clear before he shouted ‘Santiago and Castile!’ and headed toward the Moorish fleet.”

²²¹ *Mescladores*; CATALAN has this as *maldizientes*. Muckrakers, as it implies someone stirring up trouble. No entry in Covarrubias; the RAE notes that in antique usage it was “Persona chismosa, cuentista, cizañera.” (Gossipy, troublemaker). Real Academia, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 1500.

²²² “Et el Almirante, desque vió las cartas que doña Elivra su mujer le envió, ovo muy grande pesar, e creyo todo lo que la carta dezia, e tomo rre celo que el rrey avie del saña, segund lo que le enbiava a decir doña Elvira; por lo qual venció su seso con miedo y saña, e luego que le llegaron aquellas seys galeas nevas que el rrey le enbio, mando mover de ally, e fue fincar las anoras en el puerto de Algezira do estaba la flota del rrey Alboacen, e enbio a decir a los moros que saliesen de la villa e le diesen batalla. E los moros le enviaron a decir que no tenían tiempo; e que el que atendiesse, e quando no cuydasse, que ellos le darien la batalla.”. Sánchez de Valladolid, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 314.

Consequently, Tenorio was quickly surrounded and in immediate danger.²²³ Sanchez' careful staging of his retelling suggest that Tenorio took precise steps in preparing a chivalric duel as a means of redeeming his besmirched honor: he has Tenorio issue a challenge to the Moorish fleet for combat, shows him awaiting them patiently, and has him attack immediately on sighting them, regardless of the tactical implications of his decision. In all of these respects, his actions were consistent with those of a knight defending his reputation, and the fact that the Moors behave cravenly only adds to the valor he will earn even should he go down in defeat to overwhelming odds.²²⁴ The detail and tone of the account is dramatically different from thirteenth century sources describing similar events, especially those penned by Sánchez himself.²²⁵

²²³ “E el almirante estuvo ally tres días...a gran priesa aguisaron la flota por una mestria sutil, que les hizieron a las galeas galafates de fondo la sota que por aquel lugar se podían muy bien rremar sin que ninguno no viese por do se rremase...E quando esto vio el almirante de Castilla mando apercebir todas las gentes que estvan en las galeas e en las naos e que se armasen todos, e mando tañer las tronpas e los añafiles, e los atabales, e movio la su galea con el estandarte contra do estaba la flota de los moros. E los naos de Castilla alcaron las velas por ir acorrer la galea del almirante, e non tenían tiempo con que pudiesen hazer ninguna cossa; por la qual rrazon el almirante e los christianos fueron muy quebrantados, como quiera que el almirante no lo dio a entender, antes mostro muy grande esfuerco llamando Sanctiago e Castilla.” Catalán and Núñez de Villaizán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 316-17.

²²⁴ Overwhelming odds were a fixture of nearly all chivalric epics and romances, a means of displaying great prowess and emphasizing the knight's bravery. Perhaps the most apparent example of such emphasis exists in *The Song of Roland*, although there are less exaggerated examples in nearly all of Troyes' tales, usually involving three-to-one odds at least within the imagination of the audience. For the critical role of violence in perpetuating the place of prowess as preeminent in chivalric discourse, see Richard W. Kaeuper, *Violence in Medieval Society* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2000), Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²²⁵ Indeed, it is my view that the fact that these accounts are so dramatically different constitutes some of the best evidence for Sánchez' access to chronicle records that have since disappeared in the construction of the *Tres Crónicas*. O'Callaghan's analysis of the construction of the chronicle, appearing in the introduction to Shelby Thacker's translation of the *Chronicle of Alfonso X*, argues for varying degrees of reliability and the possibility of his reliance on chancery documentation at some stages of the writing. In my opinion, the contextual difference regarding the presentation of nobles at sea is solid evidence for his having used period materials for the descriptions of events involving Bonifaz and Martinez, as it seems difficult to imagine that he would have failed to contextualize their efforts in a similar manner to his treatment of Tenorio had he an agenda to do so. See the Introduction to Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, *The Chronicle of Alfonso X*, trans. Shelby Thacker and José Escobar (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002).

As the Moorish fleet quickly overwhelmed the admiral's small escort, Sánchez begins to modify his narrative in such a way as to cast the battle as a land action. As Tenorio's situation became grave, he ordered, "four galleys tied to his, and they gave a great fight, for there were many companies of good knights and squires with him, his relatives and vassals, and other men who fought very bravely and showed great determination to defend the admiral and that galley."²²⁶ The wind had died to the point that the Castilian sailing vessels were unable to maneuver, and the crew of an especially large one that had been part of the small escort abandoned it to join the admiral's forces on the artificial island. In so doing, the vessel became a fatal liability, for the Moors exploited the situation by boarding the vessel, and given that the nao was "much higher than that vessel [the galley to which Tenorio had withdrawn], they did great damage to the Christians, and they killed many of them with iron spears and rocks and other weapons which they could throw." The fighting grew increasingly desperate until ultimately, Sánchez grants him a hero's death: "And thus they fought until all in front of him were killed, and the Admiral, clutching the standard, fought with sword in hand until they cut one of his legs and he had to fall; and those on the ñao threw an iron spear which gave him a blow to the head from which he died."²²⁷

²²⁶ "En tanto que los moros peleavan con las otras galeas, el almirante Alonso Jufre no estaba de vagar, ca luego aferraron quatro galeas con la suya e dvanle muy gran pelea; pero que estaban ay con el muchas beunas conpañias de caballeros e escuderos sus parientes e criados e otras gentes que peleavan muy fuertemente e avian muy gran voluntad de defender al almirante e aquella galea." Sánchez de Valladolid, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 317.

²²⁷ "e como era mas alta la nao que la galea fazian desde allí muy grande daño los moros en los christianos, e ferian e matavan muchos dellos con barras de hierro e con piedras e con saetas e con otras armas que les lancavan..." Catalán and Núñez de Villaizán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 317.

Sánchez de Valladolid's description of Tenorio's death is an important example of a significant change in the manner by which maritime events appeared in his work, consistent with the different way he viewed them in his own time, as opposed to the accounts he reconstructed for the *Tres Crónicas*. To begin with, the sea itself plays only a minimal role in the events he describes; only the lack of wind to power the *ñaos* draws the environment into what would become a disaster. Neither does Sánchez de Valladolid write of a battle between vessels, but of man-to-man combat on the decks of an artificial island, constructed by the lashing of vessels together. In a tremendously ironic twist, the vessels themselves become a *liability* at sea, rather than a refuge from the wind and waves so prevalent in his earlier work and the body of thirteenth-century sources.²²⁸ Unable to maneuver, the crew abandoning the *ñao* inadvertently sows the seeds of the ultimate demise of all on board the lashed galleys when the Moors occupy the high ground it offered and shower them with projectiles from above. Above all, the story creates a situation largely independent from the marine environment in which it takes place, a consistent quality in Sánchez' description of maritime events in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*.

Sánchez de Valladolid's treatment of Tenorio's story represents a significant shift in perception regarding the sea in fourteenth-century Castile. Its value in furthering our understanding of perceptual shifts in the fourteenth century lies not in its historical accuracy, but in the nature and content of its description of these events occurring at sea. Although there is little doubt that Sánchez held a position at the court of Alfonso XI that

²²⁸ Here I refer specifically to the account of Pedro Martínez da Fe's disastrous luck at the hands of the winds in the Straits which led to his capture and imprisonment, as well as the fate of his fleet off Algeciras in 1278.

would have granted him access to much of the detailed information he includes in the chronicle, we may still accept that a significant amount of the detail was a product of his own imaginative reconstruction of events.²²⁹ Yet, this does not detract from the fundamental change in perspective evidenced by his description of Tenorio, to whom he grants unheard-of agency with regard to his actions at sea. By constructing his tale to analogize Tenorio's actions at sea with those of knights on shore, he grants the same importance to those actions, thus making the sea amenable to acts of chivalry. Ultimately, the greatest change in his approach comes from removing the sense of helplessness before the unlimited power of the sea itself from the equation and elevating the ability of Castilians to earn great honor and reputation in the process. In that sense, his work brought the roles of knights on land and sea together, in the same process of integration so apparent in the artistic record of late-medieval Castile.

This trend toward accepting the sea as an arena appropriate for chivalric actions blossomed in the fifteenth century in the *Crónica de Juan II* and especially in *El Victorial*, where Díaz extols the chivalric virtues of his master on land and sea in equally glowing terms. In the case of the chronicle of Juan II, the best illustration of this idea is the description of an engagement between a Castilian fleet led by Juan Enriquez and a larger Muslim force off the coast of Gibraltar in April of 1407.²³⁰ As the fleets met in combat, the narrative takes on all of the qualities of a tournament description:

²²⁹ Sánchez held several important posts during his lifetime with Alfonso XI, including Majordomo and Chancellor of the Privy Seal. He was also an inaugural member of the *Orden de la Banda*. Julio Puyol, "El presunto cronista Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 77 (1920): 507.

²³⁰ Juan Enriquez was the son of the *Almirante del Mar*, Alfonso Enriquez; it was he who sent him to the Straits in his stead.

Pedro Barba de Campos led, and he attacked a Moorish galley; and from the left side, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca attacked also. And another of the Moors attacked Alvar Núñez, so that he was fighting with two. And Juan Enriquez saw this, and came to help Alvar Núñez, fighting with one of the two Moorish galleys. ... Bracamonte fought the great galley that the Moors had brought, and with the help of Diego Díaz de Aguirre and his galley, took the Moorish vessel. Alonso Arias de Crouellá took another galley, and García Gómez, master of Rodrigo Alvarez de Osorio's galley, attacked and took another.²³¹

Rather than the implied call to single combat displayed in Sánchez, ultimately describing the deeds of only one important figure, this example gives a narrative account on a par with nearly any battle description from Froissart or many Arthurian romances. The most specific point of comparison is the recognition of *individual* combat; the effect is, as in the case of Sánchez' account, to remove the sea as a significant element, focusing on the deeds of the knights involved and thus enhancing their reputations. The men described move freely when they wish to do so, using their vessels in the same manner as steeds on land, remaining unaffected by the caprices of wind and wave, and they are able to respond to changing situations quickly and effectively. Indeed, the sea plays no significant role in the battle; it is the realm of men, whose fate rests in their own abilities

²³¹ “E en esto adelantóse Pero Barba de Canpos, e enbestió con una galea de los moros; e de la siniestra parte enbestió Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca otra. E otra de los moros enbistió a la de Alvar Nuñez, así que estaban peleando con dos. E Juan Enrriques que esto vió, vino a ayudar a Alvar Nuñez, e enbistió con una galea destad dos de los mode Bracamonte en enbistió la gran galea que traían los moros, con la galea en que yba; e con la ayuda de la galea que traía Diego Díaz de Aguirre tomóla. E Alonso Arias de Corvellá tomó otra galea, e García Gómez, su patrón de Rodrigo Alvarez de Osorio, envistió e tomó otra galea.” Pérez de Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 114.

as warriors. As in the case of the description of Tenorio's demise, only the use of nouns describing the vessels involved indicates that the action is occurring at sea. Thus, by describing the events in a focused, individualized manner, extending the same role of individual agency to the outcome of a battle at sea as that occurring on land, the author removes any distinction between military deeds on land or sea. This is very different from the victimization present in the thirteenth-century accounts of men like Admiral Martinez, literally driven by the winds of fate into the hands of his captors.

At the dawn of the fifteenth century, a definite chivalric cast to the description of the actions of knights at sea provides ample evidence for a change in perception relative to their ability to practice their skills there and receive appropriate renown for such acts in return. Díaz de Gámez' tribute to Don Pero Niño in *el Victorial* is the crowning example of this change, granting nearly half of his account to Niño's actions at sea and the other to his deeds on land. The marriage of the two formerly incompatible environments as equally appropriate to chivalric deeds is made plain in a statement he makes in the preface to the work: "I tell you that the king, when he sends forth a good knight with an army and entrusts him with a great emprise, *on sea or land*, has in him a pledge of victory."²³² Indeed, Díaz often makes a point of including the sea as an appropriate arena for his master's actions, suggesting that there remained a need to convince those who had little or no experience there that such actions were indeed worthy of merit. The importance of emphasizing his master's valor in taking to the sea is evident

²³²"Digo vos que más seguro está el rey quando ynbia un buen caballero con una hueste, e le ecomienda un gran fecho, así por mar como por tierra." Emphasis mine. Gutierre Díaz de Gámez, ed., *El Victorial* (Salamanca, España: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 1997), 41.

in his emphasis on the dangers and hardships awaiting those knights willing to brave the deep as compared with those who battle on land:

Knights who are at the wars eat their bread in sorrow; their ease is weariness and sweat; they have one good day after many bad; they are forever swallowing their fear; they expose themselves to every peril; they give up their bodies to the adventure of life in death... Such is their calling; a life of great fatigues, bereft of all ease. *But there is no equal to the ill of those who make war upon the seas;* in a whole day should I not end my telling of their miseries and their labours.²³³

Thus, Díaz acknowledges that knights suffer on both land and sea in the performance of their duties, but asserts that those at sea face much greater danger and misery; in so doing, he grants exceptional prowess to those who take the risk. While he reveals a different set of assumptions about action in the two environments, he does not exclude the sea as appropriate for the actions of those seeking to serve the king – instead, he elevates it in stature by noting the exceptional hardships waiting those knights willing to brave its perils. The noble knight may now find glory by land *or* sea, but the sea remains a realm of a danger unequaled on land.

In addition to showing his subject at home on both land and sea, Díaz introduces a new element in the integration of maritime activity and chivalry by drawing a distinction

²³³ “Los caballeros, en la guerra, comen el pan con dolor; los vicios della son dolores e sudores: un buen día entre muchos malos. Pónense a todos los travaxos, tragan muchos miedos, pasan por muchos peligros, aventuran sus vidas a morir o vivir... Tal es su oficio, vida de grand trabajo, alongados de todo vicio. *Pues los de la mar, no ay igual de su mal: non acabaría en un día su lazería e grand trabajo.*” Emphasis mine. Ibid., 43.

between sailors and knights -- a distinction emphasizing the knight's superior bravery and prowess, even in the face of the dangers of the sea itself. His comparison is direct and uncompromising, as in an example taken from a moment off the coast of Toulon, where Niño's fleet was in hot pursuit of some Castilian corsairs. Upon learning that the corsairs had fled toward Sardinia, he ordered the fleet to pursue; but sailors aboard his flagship warned him against continuing, as night was falling and the galley was not well suited to travel in the open sea given the prevailing easterly winds.²³⁴ Díaz records that his reaction was to take "no account of any danger when it was a question of gaining honor," and that such was Niño's desire to catch the corsairs, he continued "against the will of the sailors and in spite of the bad weather."²³⁵ In short order, the fleet encountered a strong gale that freshened as the night fell, and Díaz describes an all-too-familiar Castilian scene of sailors "commending themselves to God," and even battening themselves below decks against the howling storm. Yet, Niño refused to confine himself in such a way: "on the contrary, he came out to see what was happening, and told the sailors that he marveled at their fear," despite a storm which grew in force until "all were at prayer, making vows to God and the saints for deliverance."²³⁶ With this example, Díaz breaks a centuries-long

²³⁴ "Dixéronle los marineros que los tiempos heran muy fuertes del Levante, que señorea mucho aquella partida; otrosí, que hera sobre noche, quando ningún navío non debe partir que a la mar larga aya de entrar, demás con mal semblante de tiempo." *Ibid.*, 110.

²³⁵ "Mas Pero Niño, que non temía peligro ninguno que venirle pudiese a respeto de la honor, tan gran cobdicia abía de alcanzar aquellos cosarios, que olvidava todos los peligros e trabajos que venirle pudiesen. Contra sabiduría de los marineros, e contra la fuerza del tiempo, mandó alzar ácoras e navegar la bía de las yslas. *Ibid.*

²³⁶ "E como las galeras fueron deabrazadas de la tierra, fallaron que facía en la mar grand tormenta, tanta que las galeras se veyan en grand priesa... Los marineros encomendáronse a Dios... El capitán nunca consintió que lo cerrasen a él, aunque es costumbre, por quanto la su centina es en el comienco de la galera, por donde entran las olas; ante salía a mirar e decir a los marineros que se maravillava de qué avían temor, que tan grandes fazía un rio quando faze buen viento. La tormenta hera cada bez más fuerte..E toda la gente

trend and presents an unambiguous example of a Castilian knight facing the physical dangers of the sea on the strength of his own courage, without the reflexive recourse to divine protection so typical of earlier accounts.

Having displayed Niño's greater courage before the physical danger of the sea, he makes the same point with regard to his approach to naval combat, where his master shows courage, prowess, and gains victories producing tangible spoils.²³⁷ As Díaz describes the Castilian fleet's stealthy entrance into the harbor of Tunis, he tells us that as Niño ordered the sailors to grapple a vessel they balked, worrying that "may hap that other galleys shall come upon us; and then we should wish to free ourselves and we could not," to which Niño replied, "grapple with her; then when the others come, if it please God, we shall have finished with this one."²³⁸ Within days of this encounter, Niño is leaping from his galley to another, inadvertently stranding himself on the Moorish vessel as the shock of the collision caused the Castilian vessel to bounce away. In the resultant struggle, Niño engages in single combat with the *Arraez* (The captain, or expedition commander of the galley), and eventually with nearly all of the crew. Finally, his own galley draws alongside and his men board, assisting in taking the vessel. Díaz then describes the spoils Niño gained, including "crossbows and arms and other things which pertain to the armament of a war galley...and two great banners of silk and gold, the

facían oraciones e voto a Dios a los santos que los librare, e hecharon romería para Santa María de Guadalupe." Ibid., 111.

²³⁷ This basic listing of the primary chivalric values is the subject of Guardiola-Griffiths, "Arthurian Matter and Chivalric Ideal in the Victorial."

²³⁸ "Vieron una galera surta sobre el áncora; e mandó el capitán que le enbestiesen e aferrasen con alla. E dixeron los cómitres: 'Señor, s aferramos con ella, por ventura bernán otras galeras sobre nos, e queremos desaferra e no podremos.' E dixo el capitán: 'Agora no beemos son ésta, aferrar con ella, que quando las otras vinieren, si a Dios pluguiere, Ternemos nos ya ésta.'" Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 115.

fairest in the world.”²³⁹ Niño’s aggressive pursuit of any Moorish vessel within reach resulted in still more spoils, including “stuffs of gold and silk, a quantity of Arab cloaks, dates, kegs of butter, corn, barley, and many other things.”²⁴⁰ Thus, Niño is not only victorious at every turn, but his activities are profitable, just as they had been for centuries for land warriors engaged in the reconquest effort. Niño emerges from Díaz’ account as the quintessential Castilian knight, equally at home on land or sea, ultimately victorious and successful no matter where he engaged his foes. In that respect, his account represents a genuinely transformative moment in the history of Castilian maritime perception.

Díaz’ elevation of his master to the level of chivalric hero notwithstanding, he certainly makes the point that Niño was willing to brave dangers that sailors were not and that his command was essential to the ultimate profitable victories they would enjoy, to say nothing of their very survival. He does all of these things at sea, but unlike Sanchez’ treatment of Tenorio, the sea is an *essential* part of Díaz’ narrative, a means of accentuating his ability to face the enemy in any environment. Through his presentation of Castilians successfully negotiating the formerly insurmountable obstacles presented by the sea itself, Díaz displays a distinctly new approach to the earlier assumptions that tended to differentiate land and sea so distinctly. This is not to say that some of those assumptions did not continue in his narrative. The sea was still a dangerous, hostile physical environment, and there were times when it appeared as though only divine

²³⁹ “E ovo allí buen despojo de muchas ballestas e armas e otras cosas muchas de fornición de galeras de guerra; e ovieron dos pendones en la galera grande, muy grandes, de oro e seda, los mejores que en el mundo podían ser.” Ibid., 118.

²⁴⁰ “Tomaron moros e paños de oro e seda, e muchos alquizeres, e dátiles, e tinajas de manteca, e trigo, e cebada, e otras muchas cosas.” Ibid., 120.

intervention would forestall disaster. Yet, as the example Díaz gives of Niño boldly defying a great storm at sea shows, the ability of Castilian men of quality to stand before such dangers and overcome them had become a reality.

Conclusion

The medieval Castilian literary record reveals that a distinctly differentiated view of land and sea in the thirteenth century gave way to a much more integrated view in the fifteenth, and thus in many ways shows a very similar pattern to the artistic evidence presented in Chapter II. Largely polarized views of the sea as either dangerously volatile or calm prevailed well into the late fourteenth century, giving way to the kinds of varied descriptions present in both *Tafur* and *Victorial*. However, integration of the sea began in the mid-fourteenth century with the adoption of a chivalric model by the chronicler Fernan Sanchez de Valladolid, dramatically demonstrated by the account of the death of Admiral Tenorio in his chronicle of Alfonso XI. Sanchez' desire to recognize military action in the absence of tangible territorial gains, and hence the award of reputation for great prowess, drove the rapid integration of the sea into the larger Castilian chivalric narrative. Adoption of this chivalric model began a process that shattered the polarized calm/wild model articulated by Manuel and implied by nearly all early accounts. A similar integration of land and sea occurred in the description of agency, following an identical trajectory – the abandonment of the polarized earlier model granting nearly no agency to humans in peril at sea in favor for one in which a variety of possible outcomes mark nearly any potentially disastrous situation.

The mid-fourteenth century ushered in an era in which the sea gradually received treatment in the sources consistent with an arena where one might seek adventure. As I have shown, however, it was an adventure fraught with great peril and an increasingly complex relationship between Castilians and the sea. Storms continued to rage as they had always done, but their descriptions became increasingly nuanced as Castilian experience with the sea increased, and the polarized early view of the sea as either calm or raging gave way to a recognition of the great variety of conditions one might experience there. The description of acts of agency on the part of Castilians grew as well, as the accounts reveal an increasingly important role for experience and skill in avoiding or mitigating maritime danger. As navigators, masters, and seaman, both anonymous and named, began to populate the literary accounts of Castilians at sea, one can sense a burgeoning confidence in their ability to meet its unique challenges and opportunities. The adoption of the sea as an arena appropriate for chivalric action began very early in the fourteenth century, offering a framework for the exercise of individual agency and prowess so essential to the acquisition of honor. Yet, it was not until Díaz de Gámez penned the tribute to the exploits of his master that the sea as reflected in Castilian literature became a place where opportunity for a Castilian seemed genuinely limitless.

CHAPTER IV

ISLANDS OF CASTILE: THE LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

While art and literature provide us many tantalizing glimpses of Castilian understanding of the sea, both require a good deal of manipulation in coaxing those underlying assumptions to the surface. The descriptions of the sea they contain are often as mercurial as the subject they treat, requiring careful marshaling of evidence in order to support conclusions regarding their interpretation. However, we do have another source for such insights available to us, one whose genre required an unflinching dedication to unambiguous definition of terms: the laws of the *Siete Partidas*, the final attempt at creation of a unified system of law commissioned by Alfonso X in the early 1260's.²⁴¹ It is here that we find, for the first time in Castilian history, written statutes meant to guide the activities of men relative to the sea, statutes that both define the sea in relation to the realm and the responsibilities and liabilities of men operating upon it. In so doing, they offer us the finest available evidence for analyzing perception of the sea at the very moment that the issue became an essential one to the kingdom of Castile. Yet, while the laws contained therein reveal the same strong spatial differentiation of land and sea so prevalent in the art and literature of the same period, they also contain entirely different approaches to the issue of human agency and evidence for a strong integration of land and sea. Thus, the law provides solid support for the argument thus far presented as well

²⁴¹ Hereafter referred to as *Partidas*. Alfonso X and Real Academia de la Historia, *Las siete partidas del rey don Alfonso el Sabio* (Madrid: Editorial Atlas, 1972).

as tantalizing evidence for a very early conceptual integration of land and sea, a development that I will argue was a product of the nature of the legal project itself.

As I shall show, there is little difference between the highly differentiated view of land and sea offered in both thirteenth-century art and literature and that articulated in the laws of the *Partidas*, but there is a world of difference present in the simultaneous conceptual integration of land and sea contained therein. This conceptual integration is striking in that it is immediate and well articulated, as opposed to the rather protracted and gradual integration I have already traced in art and literature. One of the most important elements of this integration was an underlying assumption that hierarchies, obligations, and responsibilities assumed of those on land would work equally well at sea, an assumption underscored in the creation of the fleet hierarchy, which I will analyze in some detail. In addition, the conceptual integration of seemingly incompatible elements, such as castles and other dwellings and sea-going vessels, reveals much about Castilian assumptions regarding property on either land or sea. Human agency, so nearly absent in contemporary literature and art, is in fact a central preoccupation of the law, particularly in its focus on responsibility and liability for those engaged in both military and mercantile pursuits. Indeed, the law focuses on responsibility in a manner at complete odds with the communal perception of shared danger and relative helplessness so evident in art and literature. Ultimately, the laws emphasize the rights and responsibilities of individuals, particularly where property ownership was concerned.

The *Partidas* contain the first appearance of marine law anywhere in Castile, including the earlier attempts at such consolidation, the *Fuero Real* and *Especulo de las*

leyes, the former begun under Fernando III, and both finished by Alfonso prior to the creation of the *Partidas*.²⁴² Indeed, before the thirteenth century, only one specific statute from the *Liber Iudicorum* of Visigothic law, (known to the Castilians as the *Libro de los Jueces* or *Fuero Juzgo*), requiring that resolution of disputes between foreign seafarers be decided by a tribunal composed of maritime traders – in effect, allowing foreign seafarers to regulate themselves via their own courts – existed as law in the kingdom.²⁴³ Thus, the 28 additional laws present in the *Partidas* represent entirely new law.²⁴⁴ The creation of both military and mercantile statutes in the *Partidas* offers fertile ground for comparative analysis of the assumptions underlying the expectations of those preparing the laws, both in terms of their distinction between mercantile and military needs at sea and the literal definition of the two environments themselves. This thirteenth-century foundation would serve the kingdom of Castile until the sixteenth century before any substantial changes to maritime law would occur, and thus serve as critical to our understanding of Castilian maritime perception in the late Middle Ages overall.

The laws of the *Partidas* reflect both strongly differentiated views of land and sea and a conceptual attempt at integrating the two. By contrast, the record of court decisions

²⁴² Alfonso X, *Especulo : Texto juridico atribuido al rey de Castilla don Alfonso X, el Sabio*, ed. Robert A MacDonald (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1990), Alfonso X el Sabio, *Fuero real*, ed. Azucena Palacios Alcaine (Barcelona: Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias, 1991).

²⁴³The specific statute is found in Book XI, Title III, Law II: “Si los mercaderos dultoportos an dalgun pleyto entre si, nengun juyz de nostra tierra non los debe judgar, mas deven responder segundo sos leyes, e ante sos juyzes.” (If merchants from other ports have complaints among them, no judge from our land should judge them, rather they should abide by their own laws before their own judges). The *Liber Iudicorum* was an essential part of the compilations of both the *Fuero Real* and the subsequent *Especulo*; both the *Fuero Real* and the *Especulo* retained this statute. Karl Zeumer and Albert Werminghoff, *Leges Visigothorum* (Hannoverae et Lipsiae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1902).

²⁴⁴ Laws specifically addressing maritime issues: Partida II, Title 24, Laws 1-10; Partida V, Title 9, Laws 1-14; Partida III, Title 18, Law 77; Partida V, Title 8, Laws 12, 26, and 27.

recorded in the volumes of the *Cortes* of Castile reveal a royal tendency toward differentiating land and sea, a view which would remain consistent until a striking change in attitude from the late fourteenth century forward, one mirroring the integrative trend revealed in the contemporary literary and artistic evidence. Comparison of these two sources reveals that practical considerations often forced a re-examination of the broadly conceptual relationship between land and sea articulated in the *Partidas*, particularly that excluding the sea from the realm. As the sea became ever more important to the realm itself, the virtual islands of Castile articulated within the statutes of the *Partidas* that required autonomous action of mariners and their vessels at sea proved inadequate in a new Castilian worldview. Ultimately, the Castilian crown confronted the critical importance of expanding that conceptual framework to include protection of its own subjects at sea, and hence, to the acceptance of some responsibility for security of the very waterways in which its subjects operated.

Sources

Las Siete Partidas

Although not formally implemented until the reign of Alfonso XI nearly a century later, and, as Evelyn Proctor has noted, hardly a law code in the modern sense, the *Partidas* reveal the concerns and state of affairs of the realm at the time of their composition.²⁴⁵ Spanning seven volumes and including a good deal of Alfonso X's own

²⁴⁵ A basic bibliography of the *Partidas* would include important earlier studies from E.S. Proctor, "The Castilian Chancery During the Reign of Alfonso X, 1252-84," in *Oxford essays in medieval history presented to Herbert Edward Salter*, ed. Herbert Edward Salter (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), 104-21. See also Jerry R. Craddock, "The Legislative Works of Alfonso el Sabio," in *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X the Learned of Castile and his Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, ed. Robert I. Burns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 182-97. Recently, Jesús Rodríguez Velasco has

legal philosophy as introductions to each of the major law codes, the *Partidas* lay out a vision of centralized authority, a culmination of a process begun in the reign of his father, Fernando III. Fernando's own attempt at this centralization was a pragmatic one, a realization that some kind of standardized law was necessary to unify the multiplicity of *fueros* and legal practices throughout Castile. This project became the *Fuero Real*, originally intended for use by Castilian and Extremaduran towns. Fernando died before he could present the unified *Fuero* to his kingdom, but his son Alfonso X promulgated it at the *Cortes* of Palencia in 1255.²⁴⁶ At the same time, he was actively preparing the *Espéculo*, or "Mirror of the Law", intended for use in his court, serving as the applicable law in case of an appeal from the *Fuero Real*. The events of 1257, however, changed the focus of this project forever.

In 1257, Alfonso X was elected Holy Roman Emperor, as was Richard of Cornwall, initiating a twenty-year struggle for papal recognition of his claim which would occupy a great deal of his time, energy, and wealth. It was following the election

made a strong argument that urgency lies at the heart of the *Partidas*, a consequence of politically volatile moments ranging from its creation in the 1270's to its first printing in 1555. He argues that commentary, editing, and promulgation of the *Partidas* always coincided with significant crises involving succession, abdication, or restoration of the monarchy, and that beginning with Alfonso X these tensions were foundational in shaping the direction of the law code. Jesús D. Rodríguez Velasco, "La urgente presencia de Las siete partidas," *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 38, no. 2. Rodríguez has also urged a reexamination of the Alfonsine legal project, arguing that his approach to the law was a way of establishing an area of "certainty, a semantic, hermeneutic, and rhetorical convention with which to construct the institutions and kingdom itself." This dramatically different approach to the *Partidas* as a larger issue involving perception of the law in relation to king, subject, and country alike does not abandon earlier historiography, but expands upon it in moving our discussion away from pragmatism toward a more nuanced understanding of both the laws and their purpose. Jesús D. Rodríguez Velasco, "Theorizing the Language of Law," *Diacritics* 36, no. 3 (2008). Also see Chapter Five, "Alfonso y los romanos" in H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, el Sabio: una biografía* (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2003). Finally, Connie Scarboroughs recent work, *A Holy Alliance*, argues for the propagandistic purposes of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* as part of a wider political project that would include law as well. Scarborough, *A Holy Alliance: Alfonso X's Political Use of Marian Poetry*.

²⁴⁶ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "On the Promulgation of the *Espéculo* and the *Fuero Real*," in *Alfonso X, the Cortes, and Government in Medieval Spain*, ed. Joseph F. O'Callaghan (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), 2.

that his intentions regarding the *Espéculo* changed, and he began work on *Las Siete Partidas*, a task he felt more befitting an emperor in that it represented a true law code. For example, Robert Burns observes that within the discourse on the proper role of a king contained in the *Second Partida* Alfonso “conveys an ideology of kingship, a picture of the imperial and centralizing king, whose legislative will and sacred person command loyalty.”²⁴⁷ Charles Fraker takes this issue further, noting that the frequent references to Roman rulers in the *Estoria de España* (subsequently the *Primera crónica*) was a means of Alfonso attempting to identify with Rome, regarding himself as a “Roman and universal emperor, simply, and that he should under these circumstances leave a very visible Roman stamp on his history of Spain is hardly surprising.” Indeed, as Fraker notes, Alfonso portrayed his own reign in direct descent from Charlemagne through the German emperors to the post of Holy Roman emperor.²⁴⁸ Manuel Gonzalez-Jimenez notes that beyond his claim as Emperor by lineage, he may have had a larger motive to position himself as superior to all other Iberian monarchs, becoming in effect “emperador-rey de toda España.”²⁴⁹ Contemporary consensus holds that the *Partidas* had the force of law in Alfonso’s time, and that the code held status as appellate law in cases involving the *Fuero Real* at his court. The lack of any formal record of its promulgation,

²⁴⁷ Alfonso X, *Las siete partidas*, ed. Robert I. Burns, trans. Samuel P. Scott, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 344.

²⁴⁸ Lineage was a critical element in his claim to the right of imperium, and his relationship with Frederick Barbarossa, his great grandfather on his mother’s side, was the primary basis of his claim to the imperial throne. Alfonso X and Sancho IV, *Primera Crónica*, Fraker, *The Scope of History: Studies in the Historiography of Alfonso el Sabio*, 157. For his struggle for the throne, see O’Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile*.

²⁴⁹ Manuel González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio, historia de un reinado, 1252-1284* (Burgos: Diputación Provincial de Palencia : Editorial La Olmeda, 1999), 74-75. See also Chapter 4, “The Quest for the Imperial Crown” in Martínez, *Alfonso X, el Sabio: una biografía*.

as O'Callaghan argues, is simply a result of the fact that the king reserved the right to modify the *Espéculo* as needed. Given that the *Partidas* replaced the *Espéculo* for appellate purposes in the Castilian court, there was, in effect, no need to promulgate a new code.²⁵⁰

An important consideration for scholarly research based on the *Partidas* is that there is no extant codex containing the complete text dating unquestionably to the reign of Alfonso X; all that survives are copies made by fourteenth- or fifteenth century scribes.²⁵¹ Nevertheless, scholarly consensus places the completion of the *Partidas* between 1256 and 1265. An additional concern for scholars is the issue of authorship, for although nearly every section of the *Partidas* begins with a statement declaring that Alfonso X himself actually wrote the laws contained therein, there is little doubt that he worked with a team of legal scholars to accomplish the task.²⁵² Regardless of the actual extent of his personal involvement, however, the monumental scope of the work exceeds any other legal work of thirteenth-century Europe, befitting the imperial vision of its creator.

²⁵⁰ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "Alfonso X and the Partidas," in *Las Siete Partidas*, ed. Robert I. Burns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), xxxix. See also Jesús Montoya Martínez and Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, *El Scriptorium Alfonsí: de los Libros de Astrología a las Cantigas de Santa María* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1999).

²⁵¹ O'Callaghan, "Alfonso X and the Partidas." O'Callaghan notes that this may be a function of the turmoil in the last years of Alfonso's reign.

²⁵² See the excellent study on the composition of this group in Evelyn S. Procter, *Alfonso X of Castile, Patron of Literature and Learning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 3. Also see Jesús Lalinde Abadía, *Derecho histórico español* (Barcelona: 1974).

The maritime law contained within the *Partidas* contains a good deal of influence from both Roman and Visigothic sources, but a noteworthy omission is absence of other readily available sources, particularly the *Llibre del consolat de mar*. This compilation of maritime law was the product of the Crown of Aragon, whose king, Jaime I (1208-1276), was Alfonso's father-in-law and presided over a successful, if fledgling, maritime economy. Jaime had commissioned the maritime code roughly simultaneously (1257-1256) with the *Partidas* project, and the encyclopedic nature of the work, which had originated in Italy and presented in written form the combined "common law" of the sea drawing on Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Rhodian, Italian, French, and, with the inclusion of Aragon, Spanish maritime law and custom, was unquestionably the most authoritative source on the subject at the time.²⁵³ It seems unlikely that Alfonso would not have known about Jaime's project, given their relative closeness and especially Alfonso's well-known patronage of intellectual literature; this warrants an alternative explanation.²⁵⁴ The imperial nature of the *Partidas* project from Alfonso's perspective drove the creation of a code relying solely on the authority of Visigothic and Roman law, thus granting the *Partidas* the virtue of resting largely on the "wisdom of the ancients," granting additional

²⁵³The work in Aragon is generally credited to Pedro III (1240-1285); the completion date is uncertain. The *Consulat* was, as an institution, an independent court to which merchants agreed to submit themselves for adjudication. The first courts were established in Italy (Trani, 1063), and additional consulates opened throughout the Mediterranean, with the last opening in Malta in the 17th century. Notably, Castile never allowed a consulate in its territory. Antonio de Capmany y de Montpalau and José María Font Rius, *Libro del consulado del mar* (Barcelona: Cámara oficial de Comercio y Navegación de Barcelona, 1965).

²⁵⁴ The relationship between Alfonso and Jaime, contrasting their respective projects and approaches to monarchy, is described in some detail in Robert I. Burns, "Castle of Intellect, Castle of Force: The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned and James the Conqueror," in *The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned and James the Conqueror*, ed. Robert I. Burns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Also see the still useful analysis of the Alfonsine project Antonio Ballesteros y Beretta, *El itinerario de Alfonso el Sabio* (Madrid: Tip. de Archivos, 1935).

weight to the code.²⁵⁵ In addition, the absence of borrowed law also emphasizes the limited importance of these new sections to the project as a whole. Finally, as the following analysis will show, the difference in approach to military and mercantile maritime law highlights the legal perception of the need for each in the two distinctly different marine environments of Castile.

Cuadernos de los Cortes de Castile-Leon

The gathering of the *cortes* of Castile-Leon had its genesis in the gatherings of the royal court of the kingdom of Leon, which began convening at the order of Alfonso IX (1171-1230) in 1188. Castilian monarchs began calling their *cortes* near the second quarter of the thirteenth century on a relatively regular basis, and following the union of Castile-Leon in 1230, the *cortes* began meeting regularly, usually every two years. This early adoption of a formalized gathering of representatives with interests in the consequences of royal proclamations was a definite trend in thirteenth-century European kingdoms. The gatherings were especially noteworthy in Castile, for it was the first kingdom to request the attendance of representatives from towns at such a gathering.²⁵⁶ The *cortes* consisted of a meeting of the nobility, prelates, and representatives from each town included in the royal domain, convened at royal request with varying levels of

²⁵⁵ See arguments in support of an “imperial vision” in Robert Ignatius Burns, *Emperor of culture : Alfonso X the Learned of Castile and his thirteenth-century Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

²⁵⁶ In England, for example, the initial admission of the commons to parliament is usually dated from Simon de Montfort’s summon to the knights of the shire and the burgesses of the towns in 1265, but it was not until 1295 that the “Model Parliament” of Edward I (1239-1307) included all three groups (nobility, prelates, commons), but it was not until the early fourteenth century that the English Parliament assumed its traditional form; likewise, Philip IV’s (1268-1314) convocation of the estates in 1302 is considered the traditional starting date for such gatherings there, and it was well into the fourteenth century before they solidified as well. Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile-León, 1188-1350* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

regularity primarily for the purpose of formalizing requests for taxation. The resultant ordinances, published in bound volumes known as *cuadernos*, represent the findings and proclamations of the king concerning the matters heard and decided at the particular *corte*.

We cannot assume that we have access to all of the events transacted at any of these individual *cortes*. The discussions of each group often occurred in secret, and only the ordinances remain in most cases.²⁵⁷ However, references in these ordinances to earlier discussions or petitions provide invaluable information as to the history and development of some of the matters under discussion. With regard to this study, the *Cuadernos* are of inestimable value, for they offer an opportunity to see the development of the importance of maritime subjects generally. More specifically, they are never the focus of any of the *cortes* convened during the period of this study, and often only tangentially involve taxation or royal revenues; yet when they appear, close analysis reveals a variety of interesting and important details relative to the growing importance of the place of the sea in the realm. Finally, because the publication of ordinances represented only the business that the king agreed to hear and settle, they are especially valuable to the present study in that they offer a glimpse at a selective prioritization of topics relative to the sea.

Spatial Differentiation

The laws of the *Partidas* reveal that a strongly differentiated conceptual distinction between land and sea undergirds laws concerning the relationship between the

²⁵⁷ O'Callaghan has argued that a new publication of the *Cuadernos* is long overdue owing to the decades of research which have resulted in various ordinances coming to light, formerly regarded as privileges or private correspondence, in a variety of archival and private sources throughout Spain.

two, and that two major elements govern that distinction. The first places the sea conceptually outside of the realm itself in terms of human control and firmly beyond the reach of secular rulers in terms of possession, where the emphasis on the precise location of the transition from shore to sea is the focus of the legal theory. The second involves a set of assumptions and expectations governing the qualities of the sea itself, one that frequently points to significant differences between activities there and on land. In examining each of these conceptual themes and the laws associated with them, and, where possible, contrasting those thirteenth-century views with later royal proclamations from the *Cortes* or other local *fueros*, important assumptions about the relationship between the realm and the sea reveal themselves. The legal distinctions between the two ranges from broad to quite specific; the former in reference to the overall place of the sea in the larger Castilian worldview, and the latter with regard to the necessary establishment of boundaries useful for addressing matters of equity regarding possession and liability. Overall, the differentiated perception of land and sea shown in the legal record is one consistent with that revealed in art and literature and provides yet another dimension to a perceptual understanding of the sea in late medieval Castile.

Sea and Shore

That the sea was, in its most essential nature, a thing outside the realm and beyond the control of temporal rulers was an entirely settled matter in the law of thirteenth century Castile. Broader definition of the power of kings and emperors, articulated in *partida* II.I.II, granted the king power “de facto” over “castles, fortresses, and ports of the empire...so that all the entrances and outlets of the empire may be in his

hands,” circumscribing the boundaries of the kingdom in literal terms that do not refer to the sea at all.²⁵⁸ Still, the legally defined sea was certainly a place of potential interest to kings, and the *Partidas* noted that kings were obligated to wage war against enemies “by sea or land.”²⁵⁹ Granting the necessity of such action was a matter of practicality, acknowledging the military necessity of prosecuting war in either environment, a matter of particular importance in the southern territories where the tremendous gains of the conquest of Seville remained tenuous at best. Underneath this concession, however, lay an important assumption about the temporality of actions at sea, one that finds voice in other statutes governing the activities of men there. War was a distinct possibility at sea, forcing a temporary commitment of men, materiel, and effort for some period in its prosecution; but no permanent garrisoning of troops or vessels would mark the outcome, much less any territorial claim. Indeed, the law rejected any such notion in a broad statement laying the foundation for the right to possession of material goods on earth generally: “There is a great distinction in the things of this world. For some belong to birds and beasts and all other living creatures, as well as men, to make use of...and there are others who [sic] do not belong to any one...” The sea is one of those things belonging “in common to the creatures of the world... every man can use the sea ...for doing everything there which he thinks may be to his advantage.”²⁶⁰ This generous view of the

²⁵⁸ “Poderoso debe el emperador ser de fecho...de los castiellos, et de las fortalezas et de los puertos del imperio...porque en su mano et en su poder sea todavía la entrada et la salida del imperio.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, II.I.III.

²⁵⁹ “Otrosi dixieron los sabios antigos que el emperador debe usar en tiempo de guerra de armas et de todas aquellas cosas de que se pueda ayudar contra sus enemigos por mar et por tierra.” *Ibid.*, II.I.IV.

²⁶⁰ “Las cosas que comunalmente pertenescen á todas las criaturas que viven eneste mundo son estas: el ayre, et las aguas de la lluvia, et el mar et su ribera; ca qualquier criatura que viva puede usar de cada una destas cosas segunt quell fuere meester: et por ende todo home se puede aprovechar del mar, et de su ribera

sea and its resources was the fundamental assumption at work in the Castilian legal theory of the sea, one that made it easy for monarchs to distance themselves from the activities of their subjects there. As a resource open to everyone equally, beyond the reach of surveyors or kings, the sea could not have been more distinct from the political and economic boundaries that defined the kingdom of Castile itself from the rest of the world on land.

Indeed, the contrast between the temporal limitations of activities at sea and its resistance to demarcation and the painstakingly segmented kingdom became clear in the legal definition of the seashore. In that definition, the law that excluded exertion of territorial authority over the sea included very specific language in aid of constructing a precise point at which the land and sea actually met – and by extension, simultaneously defined the physical and conceptual limits of the Castilian realm. The law described the seashore as “that ground which is covered with the water of the latter [the sea] at high tide during the whole year, whether in winter or in summer.”²⁶¹ In specifying seasonal and tidal distinctions, the law distinguished similar boundary concerns with riparian zones, further demonstrating the understood contrast between land amenable to parceling and possession and a sea environment where such division was impossible. Partida III, Title XXVIII, Law 32, demonstrates this legal differentiation in a statute governing the flooding of inland property:

pescando, et navigando et haciendo hi todas las cosas que entendiere que á su pro serán.” Ibid., III.XXVIII.II.

²⁶¹ “Et todo aquel logar es llamado ribera de la mar quanto se cubre del agua della quando mas cresce en todo el año, quier en tiempo de invierno ó de verano.” Ibid., III.XXVIII.IV.

The lands of men are sometimes covered with water caused by the inundations of rivers, so that they remain hidden for many days, and although their owners lose possession of them while they are under water, nevertheless, their ownership remains secure, for just as soon as they are uncovered and the water return to its bed, they can use them as they did formerly.²⁶²

The emphasis here on the temporal quality distinguishing an inland flooding event from the permanence associated with the seashore boundary underscores an assumed figurative permanence of the boundary between land and sea. Unlike the perceived permanence of the tidal limits defined in Partida II, Title 28, Law V, fluctuating water levels inland were simply an inconvenience to the owners of property, because as “soon as they are uncovered,” all returned to normal. Permanence was thus an important element of the understood nature of the seashore, and served to define the very time and place at which the ability of law to define such boundaries ended.

Indeed, the distinction between littoral and riparian boundaries was necessary in order to lay the foundation for the subsequent sections of law addressing property rights, as well as to meet the potential conflicts of interest arising from the generous pronouncements of Law III, which granted common use status to the sea. Concrete examples for the need for specificity regarding the shoreline and potential conflicts of interest appear in Partida III, Title 28, Laws III and IV, which discuss the ownership and

²⁶² “Cúbrense de aguas á las vegas de heredades de algunos homes por la avenidas de los ríos, de manera que fincan cubiertas muchos días: et como quier que los señores dellas pierden la tenencia en quanto están cubiertas, con todo des en salvo les finca el señorío que en ellas habien; ca lugeo que sean descubiertas et que el agua torne á su logar, usarán dellas también como enante facien.” *Ibid.*, III.XXVIII.XXXII.

property rights attached to buildings constructed on the seashore. Law IV states that anyone “can build a house or a hut on the seashore which he can use whenever he wishes,” although any such building must be consistent with the “common custom of the people” locally.²⁶³ Such a building remained the personal property of its builder, protected under Law III, which provides that it could not be “torn down or used in any way without the permission of the party who built it.” Yet, later Law III extends the right to use the area occupied by the building to anyone “if the sea or any person should demolish it, or it should fall down.”²⁶⁴ The temporary nature of possession in the area considered seashore contrasts strongly with that of the riparian zone, where ownership was permanent and only temporarily impeded by water coverage. The law makes plain a conceptual assumption that the junction of sea and shore represented an area not entirely in either setting. Where land met sea, it was amenable to ownership only so long as certain conditions existed and in no other case.

Similarly broad rights to ownership of any materials found on the shore, including fish taken from the sea, appear in the *Partidas*. Precious metals, gems, or pearls found there belonged to those “first to take possession of them,” providing they found them

²⁶³ “En la ribera de la mar todo home puede facer casa ó cabaña á que se acoja cada que quisiere, et puede hi facer otro edificio qualquier de que se aproveche de manera que por él non se embargue el uso comunal de la gente.” Ibid., III.XXVIII.IV.

²⁶⁴ “Empero si en las ribera de la mar fallare cas ó otro edificio qualquier que sea de alguno, nol debe derribar nin usar dél en ninguna maner sin otorgamiento del que lo fizo ó cuyo fuere, como quier que si lo derribase la mar, ó otri, ó se cayese él, que podrie quien quier facer de nuevo otro edificio en aquel mesmo lugar.” Ibid., III.XXVIII.III. Although the language used is “any person should demolish it,” it cannot refer to anyone other than the actual owner of the structure or someone to whom he has granted permission for the act, since the immediately preceding sentence specifies that “If, however, a house or any other edifice whatsoever, is found upon the sea shore, it should not be torn down or used in any way *without the permission of the owner*. Thus, a literal interpretation of the next sentence allowing “any person” to demolish a structure, paving the way for a rebuilding of a new one, would invalidate any notion of ownership; this would be entirely contrary to the spirit of the law as introduced.

within the area defined as seashore. However, in including the whole of the area defined as “seashore,” the statute grants primary ownership to someone finding something in the areas underneath the sort of edifices mentioned in Law III (which, by nature of the definition of the seashore, would probably require stilted construction), because “whatever is found in a place of this kind is not part of the property of any individual.”²⁶⁵ A similar legal protection extended to the taking of fish, considered the possession of the fisherman “as soon as he has taken them, whether he takes possession of them on his own land or on that of another.”²⁶⁶ Thus, potentially important economic resources belonged to all men equally, going to those able to first gain possession of them. This provision stands in strong contrast with the ownership of game animals implied in the same statute:

When any man desires to enter upon the land of another for the purpose of hunting, and the owner of said land is present and tells him that he shall not enter and hunt there; and afterwards, contrary to his prohibition, he secures any game there, it shall not belong to the hunter but to the owner of the property.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ “Oro, ó aljofar ó piedras preciosas fallan los homes en el arena que está en la ribera de la mar: et por ende decimos que todo home que fallare hi alguna destas cosas sobredichas et la tomare primeramente, que debe ser suya; ca pues que non es en los bienes de nīgunt home lo que en tal logar es fallado, guisada cosa es et derecha que sea de aquel que primeramente la fallare et la tomare, et que otro ninguno non gela pueda contrallar nin embargar.” *Ibid.*, II.XXVIII.V.

²⁶⁶ “Bestias salvages, et las aves et los pescados de la mar et de los ríos quien quier que los prenda son uyos luego que los ha presos, quier prenda alguna destas cosas en la su herdat mesma á en la agena.” *Ibid.*, III.XXVIII.XVII.

²⁶⁷ “Quando algunt home quisiese entrar á cazar en herdat agena estodiese hi el señor della et le dixiese que no entrase hi á cazar, si después contra el su defendimiento prisiere hi algunacosa, entonce non debe seer lo que hi prisiere del cazador, sinon del señor de la herdat; ca nīgunt home non debe entrar en herdat agena para cazar en ella nin en otra manera contra defendimiento de su señor.” *Ibid.*

The distinction presented here demonstrates an unequivocal right to ownership of animals on land not present at sea... In making this point clearly, the legists demonstrated that they considered the land in an entirely different way, one that allowed for ownership and allocation of property rights even to wild beasts. By contrast, those things found on the seashore or in the sea itself, to include items of potentially great value, belonged to all equally.

The legal lines drawn between land and sea and ownership of goods within the critical junction formed by the seashore found another important conceptual locus in the legislation regulating port facilities. Because of the export restrictions on a broad variety of goods throughout the late medieval period by virtually every Castilian monarch, ports, as a means of losing important materials or revenue, were the focus of repeated royal proclamation in the *cortes*. As a contemporary example from 1268 demonstrates, Alfonso X warned of consequences for those loading or unloading at non-designated entry facilities:

If any merchant or other man shall be found in my kingdoms taking anything by land or sea from those whom I defend, via any part of my kingdom or by any ports, excepting those that are mentioned above, or if they shall load into their vessel more than they have said they have in the letters which they have given to those appointed there to see them, they

shall take all they discover on them and record it, and detain and bring his person before me.²⁶⁸

Despite the later attempts of the *Hermandad de las Marismas* to self-police import and export activities, smuggling remained a near constant and a source of friction between communities.²⁶⁹ As late as 1404 in Seville, Enrique III (1379-1406) adjudicated a dispute between San Sebastian and Oyarzun in Guipuzcoa, siding with the *consejo* of San Sebastian in demanding that entry rights remain enforced for that community as traffic attempting to avoid entry taxation diverted to Oyarzun was resulting in substantial financial losses to San Sebastian.²⁷⁰ The loss of goods by sea owing to such smuggling activities underscored the fragile line between Castile and the sea itself. Legal definitions could make that line patently clear, and royal proclamation could demand that only certain port cities could serve as entry or exit points to the sea, but the truth remained that the sea provided an entry at any point where navigation was possible. This porosity was a fundamental problem for monarchs viewing the realm – and their ability to regulate activity there – as ending at the legally defined boundaries indicated here in the *Partidas*.

²⁶⁸ “Sy algund mercadero u otro omne fuere fallado en todos mios reeynos sacando ningún aver por mar nin por tierra delos que yo defiendo, por ninguna parte fuera delos rreynos nin por otros puertos, synon por estos que son sobre dichos, o sy cargare enla nao mas aver de quanto dixere enlas cartas quel dieren aquellos que lo had de ver, tomen le todo quanto quel fallaren por escripto e por rrecabdo et rrecabden le el cuerpo para ante mi.” Colmeiro, *Cuadernos de los Cortes*, 75.

²⁶⁹ In 1296, the Cantabrian ports of Santander, Castrourdiales, Laredo, and San Vicente de la Barquera, joined the Vizcayan ports of San Sebastián, Fuenterrabia, Bermeo, Guetaria, and Vitoria, in forming the *Hermandad de las villas de la marina de Castilla con Vitoria*, also known as the *Hermandad de las Marismas* (hereafter *Hermandad*) the primary function of which was to: 1) Preserve the privileges of each of the member towns; 2) Honor the international treaties and agreements of Castile; 3) Peacefully resolve disputes between member communities; 4) Provide mutual defense to any member under attack, and (5) to share equally in the cost of their mutual activities. the development and critical issues surrounding the *Hermandad's* inception, purposes, and overall history, see Francisco Morales Belda and España. Ministerio de Marina, *La Hermandad de las Marismas* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1974).

²⁷⁰ Enrique III, "Dispute with Oyarzun," in *Colección Diplomática de D. Antonio Siles* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1404).

In fact, by the mid-fourteenth century, evidence appears demonstrating that the limitations imposed by the thirteenth-century boundaries articulated in the *Partidas* could prove inadequate in the face of realities on the ground. An example from the northern coastal community of Castrourdiales shows the problem inherent for such communities in recognizing such hard and fast boundary definitions and the consequences the conceptual limitations they contained could have for mariners, communities, and the crown alike. In 1351, the *procuradores* of the community presented a petition to Pedro I at his *cortes* in Valladolid, seeking a royal decree from him regarding vessels seeking shelter in their harbor during storms. According to the petition, vessels were arriving from elsewhere laden with goods upon which they would normally have to pay the *diezmo* (entry tax) upon arrival, but were remaining offshore “because they have some merchants that may wish to go with them to other destinations,” and thus did not want to dock and pay the *diezmo* upon doing so. However, “it happens at times that great storms from the strong sea rise, and thus they do not dare to tie up and moor at the port, because the customs agents will take the *diezmo*; and thus they remain outside the port of Castro, and as a consequence sometimes men are lost from them.” The petitioners asked the king to allow the vessels to dock inside the harbor without paying the *diezmo*, if they were proceeding to other parts of the realm to unload. Pedro agreed, granting that they could “enter and moor at the port and remain there as long as the storm lasts; and after the storm has ended, they may go. They shall not have to pay the *diezmo* there, unless they wish to unload.”²⁷¹ This petition and its response, revealing as they do the necessarily close and

²⁷¹ “Alo que dizen que quando algunas naves e navios vienen a Castro Dordiales de Fflandes e de otras partes con algunas mercadorías de que deven pagar diezmos, o por que vienen en ellas algunos mercaderos que an devisas de ir conellas a algunas otras partes, que pasan fuera de delas ssennales donde non deven

dependent relationship present between vessels at sea and the need for safe harbor in a storm regardless of final destination, highlight an important limitation in the conceptual assumptions present in the legal definitions of sea and realm imagined by the framers of the *Partidas*. By not allowing vessels to put into port in such a situation, potential revenue and even vessels and their crews were at risk, many potentially subjects of the Castilian king. The concern for the temporary nature of the activities at sea found in the provisions of the *Partidas* treating its essential difference from the land appear again here, for the weather itself was a significant factor in merchant marine activities, and the failure of the law to address the need for flexibility in that case underscores the isolation of the sea conceptually as an almost alien environment. The closed door represented by the problem illustrated here also points out the conflict such a conceptual boundary created with the maritime community itself, as shown in the emphasis the petitioners placed on the potential disaster for vessels and crews rather than solely on lost revenue to the crown. Overall, the petition shows that by the fourteenth century, communities reckoning with considerably more complex concerns than the simple demarcation

pagar diezmos, et que acaesce que algunas vegadas que vienen grandes tormentas de vientos dela mar brava, et que se non osan amarrar en la concha, por que los dezmeros les quieren tomar diezmo; por ende que están fuera dela concha del dicho lugar de Castro, et que las naves e navios que peligraron algunas vezes por ende las gentes que y etavan. Et pedieron me merced que tenga por bien que las naves o navios que vinieren al dicho lugar, que se amarren en la penna de dentro en la concha, et que mande que los mis dezmeros que agora sson o serán daqui adelante que los non tomen diezmo por ello, ssalvo a aquellos que quisieren y descargar las mercadorías o se avinieren con los dezmeros para dezmar. Et las otras mercadorías que ffueren en las dichas naves e navios para levar al mio sennorio, que non paguen diezmo, ssalvo ende en los otros lugares do quisieren ir con ssus mercadorías e las descarguen.

A esto rrespondo que, dando ffiadores los dichos mercaderos que las dichas naves e navios troxieren, que descarguen ally o vayan descargar a qual quier delos otros puertos del mi sennorio do ay dezmeros mios las mercadorías que traxieren, que puedan entrar e amarrar en la concha e estar y en quano durare la ffortuna; et pasada la ffortuna, que se vayan luego ende, aviendo tiempo en que puedan yr. Et que non sean tenudos de pagar el diezmo ally, ssi non quisieren descargar e quisieren yr a descargar a qual quier delos otros dichos puertos do ay los mis dezmeros.” Manuel Colmeiro, *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de Leon y de Castilla. Introducción escrita y publicada de orden de la Real Academia de la Historia, por su individuo de número don Manuel Colmeiro*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Madrid: Est. tip. de los sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1883), 62.

between land and sea began to seek a more expansive role on the part of the Castilian crown in terms of its recognition of its own interests and obligations beyond the physical shoreline.

The firm distinction made between land and sea in the thirteenth century law of the *Partidas* remained a constant throughout the majority of the late medieval period in Castile. The rigid conceptual boundary those laws defined and carefully articulated left no room for the extension of royal authority to the sea itself, and drew a sharp distinction between land and sea as a fundamental assumption in their creation. The sea was not only outside the realm in legal terms – it was also a potential conduit for the ingress and egress of men and goods, at best a difficult, porous border. As the crown sought to regulate the flow of goods through carefully designated ports, the very laws that limited the distinction between land and sea also proved too limited in scope to deal with dangers faced by mariners moving goods along Castile's coastlines. Yet, as the rest of this chapter reveals, despite the limitations inherent in the distinctions between land, sea, and realm inherent in the laws of the *Partidas*, the crown of Castile tended to consider the essential separation they prescribed between the three as inviolate until key events forced a reevaluation of that concept in the early fifteenth century.

Hierarchy at Sea

If the *Partidas* defined the distinction between land and sea in unequivocally distinct terms, punctuating those differences and employing them as foundational to a concept distinguishing one from the other, their treatment of the creation of the maritime hierarchy represents both a continuation of that approach and the addition of some

integrative thought as well. The majority of the twenty-eight maritime laws contained in the *Partidas* govern the creation and definition of the various military officers required to wage war at sea. An analysis of these laws reveals much of the same distinctive qualities associated with land and sea present in both the contemporary artistic and literary evidence and underscores important conceptual considerations raised in the definition of boundaries discussed above, especially the importance of temporal limitation on the authority of those going to sea in a military capacity. In addition, the parallels and contrasts present in the description of each position and their respective land counterparts reveal even more detail regarding perceived differences in the expectations the writers had when creating the statutes. A certain lack of specificity pervades the statutes, resulting in a vague approach to the definition of skills and experience required by military men at sea. This hesitant treatment hints at the lack of experience of Castilians with marine warfare generally, while at the same time accentuating the expectation of the efficacy of traditional military command structures in meeting the challenges of the sea. Finally, in continually emphasizing the unique bravery required by those going to sea in any capacity, the statutes reaffirm the important concept of differentiation so clearly outlined in the distinction between sea and shore analyzed above.

At the pinnacle of the maritime hierarchy stood the *Almirante*, or Admiral, a position analogous in many respects to the *Alferez* (standard-bearer) on land, yet a comparison of the requirements mandated by the *Partidas* reveals several intriguing differences in their construction arguing for significantly different expectations based upon the environments within which each worked. *Alferez* was the highest non-royal office one could hold in thirteenth-century Castile, and the symbol of his authority was

his permission to bear the royal standard, signifying his right to act in the king's stead when necessary, and to confront personally any challenge to the king's authority or possessions. As with every important royal appointment, nobility was a prerequisite for his appointment, for he had a duty to "sit in judgment of men of high rank who have given cause for it," and to "execute sentence upon them" in his capacity as "Supreme Judge of the Court."²⁷² One of his most powerful functions was to serve as the king's advocate in any dispute arising regarding royal possession of "town or castle," or to "other personal property which belongs to the dominions of the king, where anyone desires to question or obscure the rights which the king has in it."²⁷³ In short, the *alferez* could represent the king's interest in any land or territory disputes, and by his mere presence represented royal authority.

The *almirante* was also required to be a man of noble lineage, but the statutes describe his authority in very different terms. Like the *alferez*, the admiral had the right to "carry on his galley the standard of the king," and could administer justice while at sea, being able to "inflict punishment upon all those who have given cause for it," although not to the extent that it would cause "wounds or death in consequence."²⁷⁴ He was also restricted from administering corporal punishment to the captains of vessels "appointed

²⁷² "...et antiguamente él solie justiciar los homes granados por mandado del rey quando facien por que; et por esto trahie la espada delante dél en señal que er la mayor justicia de la corte." Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, II.IX.XVI.

²⁷³ "Otro si quando alguno feciese perder heredamiento al rey, ó villa ó castiello, sobre que debiese venir repto, él lo debe facer, et ser abogado para demandarlo." Here we must recognize that this is a matter of all things considered *raiz* under the law. Ibid.

²⁷⁴ "Et otro si de facer justicia de todos los que merecieren por que, asi commo de los que se le desmandasen, ó que fuyesen, ó furtasen alguna cosa, ó que peleasen de guisa que hobiese hi feridas ó muerte, fueras ende de los cómitres que fuesen puestos por mano del rey; ca estos como quier que los pueda recabdar si feciesen por que para traerlos delante el rey, con todo eso no debe facer justicia dellos si non gelo mandase el rey señaladamente." Ibid.

by the king,” without the king’s specific order to do so; in this respect, his judicial authority was significantly less than that of the *alferez*. He had complete authority over the fleet when it was in port, being responsible “to order each of the captains to moor the galley or ship which he commands to the shore of the port and cause it to be guarded,” as well as the right to command them while in port with regard to anything related to the “marine service.”²⁷⁵ Although the statute does not specify the meaning of “marine service,” the boundaries of the admiral’s authority are clear – it began and ended in the sea itself, demarcated by the shoreline, a boundary clearly articulated in Partida III, Title XXVIII, Law IV. Lastly, the admiral’s authority was temporally limited: “from the time when the fleet sails, until it returns to the place from whence it started.”²⁷⁶ No similar limits constrained the authority of the *alferez*, who simply represented the king *de facto* whenever the king was not present. By placing such physical and temporal limits on the power of the admiral, the legists not only resolved any potential conflict in jurisdiction between *almirante* and *alferez*, but also demonstrated a fundamentally insular perspective toward the sea. In circumscribing the admiral’s role in this manner, they granted him power only at sea, and once there, only aboard the individual vessels under his command as the sea was entirely outside the realm in conceptual terms.

In addition to the limitations placed upon the admiral’s physical jurisdiction and the temporary nature of his authority, the law also emphasized the unique nature of the qualities naval commanders ought to possess in order to meet the unique challenges

²⁷⁵ “Et debe mandar á cada uno de los cómitres que lleguen la galea ó el navio en que fueren á la ribera del puerto, et la fagan guardar de manera que non se pierda nin se dañe por su culpa...Otro si él ha poder que en todos los puertos que fagan por él et obedezcan su mandamiento en las cosas que pertenescen en todo fecho de mar.” Ibid., II.IX.XXIV.

²⁷⁶ “Él ha poderío desde que moviere la flota fasta que torne al lugar onde movió.” Ibid.

presented by the sea. An emphasis on the admiral's willingness to display fairness and generosity with his men reveals an important difference in expectation on the part of the writers of the *Partidas* in considering the relative qualities of land and sea commanders. The following demonstrates the importance and justification for the special concern given to this issue of fairness at sea:

Although all men are naturally well pleased and delighted when they are treated well by their commanders, and presented with a good portion of the spoil which the latter secure, much more should those be so who belong to the sea; first, on account of the great hardships they endure there; second because they are in a place where they cannot obtain anything except from the hands of their lord.²⁷⁷

Here, the law acknowledges that those who brave the sea in any capacity face extraordinary danger, meritorious of special consideration, while at the same time, recognizing the isolation of life at sea and the communal spirit necessary to maintain order and discipline aboard a vessel. The emphasis on fairness as an essential trait for the admiral is more specific than that found for either sea captains or land commanders, where the avoidance of "parsimony" is the most important issue, because the emphasis in the statute is on the distribution of booty, where the appearance of fairness was critical.

In specifying the admiral's personal supervision of an inventory of any booty obtained at sea, the law reveals a significant concern for the lack of control of military

²⁷⁷ "Et como quier que todos los homes hayan placer et sabor naturalmente quando lesfacen bien et les dan buena parte de lo que ganan, mucho lo han mayor los de la mar; lo uno por la grant cuita que sufren en ella, lo al porque son en logar que non pueden haber la cosa sinon por mano dél." Ibid., II.XXIV.III.

forces once they left the physical realm, and reinforces the importance of the hierarchy under construction in the statutes meant to counter the possible loss of jurisdictional authority and legal oversight when vessels went to sea. The fiduciary responsibility owed by the admiral to the king, a responsibility completely absent in the consideration of the *alferez*, is apparent in this passage:

It is also one of the duties of his office to account for all property which he obtains by sea or land, and have a schedule of it made in the presence of all the captains, or the majority of them, in order that no one may steal or conceal anything, and be able to render an account and list of this property to the king, *so that he may receive his share of it.*²⁷⁸

The passage emphasizes the legists' concern with the broad powers granted to captains over their own vessels by the *Partidas*, and underscores the role of the admiral in providing a necessary check to that power via oversight in aid of that concern.

Thus, the emphasis on “fairness,” so important to the overall tenor of the statute governing the qualities the admiral ought to possess, suggests a greater interest in the loss of influence and oversight suffered by the king in receiving his share of spoils once the fleet left shore, rather than in any larger altruistic concern for proper leadership of subordinates at sea. This is not to say, however, that such concerns were unimportant; the statute is consistent in demonstrating the same acknowledgement for the special need of

²⁷⁸ “Otrosi á su oficio pertenesce de facer recabdar las cosas todas que ganaren por mar ó por tierra, et de facerlo escribir, estando delante todos los cómitres ó la mayor parte dellos, porque las non pueda ninguno furtar nin encobrir, et pueda dar cuenta et recabdo dellas al rey, de manera que haya él ende su derecho, et cada uno de los otros el suyo.” *Ibid.*, II.IX.XXIV.

collective action and cooperative effort at sea as that contained in the other statutes governing maritime commanders. In short, differences in expectation governing those commanding at sea meant an emphasis on community absent from similar positions held on land, and demonstrate the legists' desire to codify qualities that would best support that communal effort through these statutes.

Finally, even the descriptions of the lowest-ranking members of the fleet -- the marines and sailors -- reveal different assumptions at work regarding the qualifications necessary for each. In describing the qualities of *peones* (infantry,) who fight on land, the law stresses acclimation in describing life on the Spanish frontier:

The frontier of Spain is naturally hot, and animals born there are larger and of stronger constitution than those which belong to the older country [Old Castile]. For which reason that the infantry who march with the *adalides* and *Almocadenes* to engage in warfare should be physically qualified, accustomed to, and prepared for, exposure to the open air and the hardships of their calling; for where they are not of this description, they cannot long remain healthy.²⁷⁹

In its emphasis on the climate and the potential hardships it could impose on soldiers, the statute directly links the qualities of the environment to the qualities needed in the men

²⁷⁹ “La frontera de España es de natura caliente, et las cosas que nascenen ella son mas gruesas et de mas fuerte complision que las d la tierra vieja: et por ende los eones que andan con los adalides et con los almocadenes en fecho de guerra, ha meester que sean afechos et acostumbrados et criados al ayre et á los trabajos de la tierra; et si tales non fuesen non podren hi luengo tiempo vevir sanos, maguer fuesen, ardidos et valientes.” Ibid., II.XXII.VII.

themselves. The description of the qualities required by marines and sailors also tie environment to the qualities needed by men a sea, but are noticeably less specific in their description of the environment itself. For example, in addressing the requirements of the *proeles* who served in the bow, the law suggests that they should be “valiant, active, and accustomed to life on sea,”; and that marines, such as crossbowmen, aboard solely “to defend those in their ships by fighting with the enemy,” should also share a basic affinity for the sea: “*he more accustomed they are to the sea the better.*”²⁸⁰ With respect to the link between environment and the men best suited to serve at sea, the legal descriptions are at least similar to those prescribed for land warriors. However, the laws describing that relationship between men and the land are less vague than those offered for the sea are, where a direct comparison with the Castilian land environment itself forms a conceptual basis for the required attributes. No description of the nature of the sea acts as a qualifier to the requirements of those who would go there, consistent with a broader view of the sea as outside the realm by virtue of its vague and undefined character. Ultimately, the laws reveal that there was an expectation that sailors were aware of and brought the special requirements or experience needed for working at sea with them when they boarded their vessels. While we find no real evidence of this in the thirteenth-century evidence, as the next chapter reveals, ample evidence exists by the fifteenth century for this assumption.

²⁸⁰ “Proeles son llamados aquellos que van en la proa de la galea que es la delantera; et porque de su officio es see en las primeras feridas quando lidian, por ende deben haber en sí tres cosas: la primera que sean eforzados; la segunda ligeros; la tercera usados de fecho de mar... et quanto mas usados fuesen de la mar tano será mejor.” Ibid., II.XXIV.VI.

The emphasis on the different qualifications necessary for those who served on fleets at sea, from the Admiral to the simple sailor, coupled with a simultaneous attempt to integrate land-based military systems for use at sea illustrates an important assumption present in the Castilian approach to maritime law generally: proven land-based systems, with some adaptation, could serve to meet the challenges present at sea. The lack of specificity in addressing the nature of those challenges, and hence the precise skills sets necessary for those undertaking to meet them, reveals the limited place of the sea in the realm at the time of the *Partidas*' creation. As later *cortes* activities demonstrate, this limited perspective became much more expansive by the fifteenth century. Perhaps most remarkably, the statutes reveal a clear assumption that human agency could prevail at sea if the right men served in each important capacity, granting a place for skill and experience not present in either thirteenth-century artistic or literary accounts.

Thus, from broad to very precise terms, the distinction between land and sea appearing in the *Partidas* offers significant evidence for a highly nuanced, thoroughly distinctive understanding of the place of the sea in the larger realm in thirteenth-century Castile. Whether in terms of distinguishing the right to own and utilize resources or defining the different skills and experience anticipated for military men, the sharp delineation of sea and shore, together with the expansive view of the universality of freedom of action and possession to all things related to the sea, provides solid evidence for a conclusion that the sea was firmly outside the realm in the minds of the thirteenth century Castilians.

Conceptual Integration

The clarity of articulation in the distinction between sea and shore in the statutes of the *Partidas* was only one of two major conceptual elements underlying the perceptual assumptions about the sea employed by the Castilian jurists in the creation of the thirteenth-century code. Conceptual integration was equally important, as it allowed for a union between land and sea essential for the extension of royal Castilian law to the sea, otherwise clearly defined as beyond the reach of human legal authority or royal jurisdiction. Yet, despite these attempts at joining land and sea in legal theory, it would be more than a century before the *Cortes* would reflect significant movement toward the concrete realization of such unity. Unlike the evidence present in the other thirteenth-century artistic or literary sources which show a gradual trend toward integration moving from the thirteenth-century forward, the laws of the *Partidas* offer evidence of a complex association between land and sea in conceptual terms *a priori*, one that becomes apparent upon close analysis of the use of language and association present in the codes themselves. For example, the rather unlikely conflation of castles and vessels present both literally and figuratively in the laws of the *Partidas* served to project a strong defensive analog of Castilian might out to sea. The conflation created a legal conceptual foundation that would allow for the application of Castilian law to vessels at sea. The impetus for the construction arose in the stark contrast present between the much more easily defined frontier boundaries found on land and the inability to set such boundaries at sea beyond the decks of vessels themselves. Because the authors of the *Partidas* could not apply the land-based advance, consolidate, and settle model employed for centuries in the southern expansion of the Castilian frontier in modeling the hierarchy for military

expeditions at sea, they instead settled on the importance of the stronghold itself as the locus for all three components of the conquest and consolidation model. In this way, the legists created literal islands of the vessels themselves, thus creating the legal foundation for the jurisdictional application of law aboard them, moving an already insular perspective of land and sea from the confines of the terrestrial realm itself out into the deep.

Fortresses by Land or Sea

Tracing the logical process by which the legists conflated two seemingly irreconcilable objects -- land fortresses and vessels at sea --leads to an examination of the right of kings to possess various components of the realm, such as those rights delineated in Partida II, Title XVIII, Law I. This statute, intended to clarify absolute royal possession of certain immovable assets of the kingdom, depended conceptually upon a legal designation known in Castilian as *raiz*, or immovable properties that were by legal definition the sole property of the king. Under the provisions of this statute, “Towns, castles, and other fortresses” belonged to the king, although they might be “under the jurisdiction of other lords,” and this right of possession extended to the “towns, castles, and fortresses” acquired in battle.²⁸¹ Later, Title XXVI, Law V of the same Partida, expanded this absolute right to the possession of immovable towns, castles, and fortresses to include “ships taken from the enemy,” including a preface to the proclamation citing

²⁸¹ “Raiz segunt lenguaje de España es llamada toda cosa que non es mueble as como diximos en las leyes del título ante deste; mas como quier que en ellas mostramos de los heredamientos desta manera que son quitamente del rey, queremos agora aquí decir de los otros que maguer son suyos por señorío, pertenescen al regno de derecho, et estas son las villas, et los castiellos et las otras fortalezas de su tierra...” Ibid., II.XVIII.I.

the ruler's right to the same on land. In so doing, the legists integrated the right to ownership of the two seemingly disparate types of property in aid of protecting the king's ancient right to the spoils obtained in war by land or sea, and simultaneously firmly equated enemy vessels at sea with settlements and fortresses on land in the legal sense that they were also immovable possessions.²⁸²

The conceptual link between castles and vessels, established through the assessment of the status of *raiz*, also appears in a close examination of the statutes governing the responsibility for securing each. Inasmuch as both the castle and the vessel could serve critical roles in anchoring Castilian presence in their respective frontiers, the responsibility for maintaining their possession was a matter of the gravest consequence. Indeed, allowing an enemy to gain control of either, intentionally or otherwise, was considered an act of treason: "He who loses a castle, or intentionally transfers it to anyone who might injure or make war upon the kingdom, or its king, will be guilty of open treason, for which he should lose all the lands when he possesses and be banished from the country forever."²⁸³ Indeed, so important was the potential loss of a castle that the statutes forbade the occupants of a besieged castle to surrender it even at the order of its governor, saying "although those who are in the castle are bound to obey the governor in everything, they should not do so in a matter of this kind, since they would thereby

²⁸² "...otrosi debe haber las villas, et los castiellos et las fortalezas en qual manera quier que las ganen...eso mesmo serie de los navios que hobiesen tomado de los enemigos." Ibid., II.XXVI.V.

²⁸³ "...el que perdiese el castiello ó lo engaenase á sabiendas á quien feciese daño ó guerra al rey ó alreño dél, farie traycion conocida por que debe perder todo el heredamiento que hobiere et ser echado de la tierra para siempre jamás..." Ibid., II.XVIII.I.

incur the penalty of treason.”²⁸⁴ Commanders of vessels faced a similar penalty if through their negligence or failure to provide properly for their vessels they allowed an enemy to take control of them: “when the ships are lost through their fault, [they] are, for this reason, traitors, *just as if they had lost a castle*, and should be put to death and be deprived of all their property.”²⁸⁵ The use of the word *castiello* in both cases is particularly important, for the statutes make clear distinctions between *castiellos* and *fortalezas* (lesser fortresses), and there are more than 32 individual laws governing their maintenance and preservation.²⁸⁶ Because the *castiello* also fell under the category of *raiz*, defined as “lands and structures which cannot be moved,” its use in the comparison was conceptually logical in constructing the correlation.²⁸⁷ In both cases, the legists presented the loss of either in terms of treason, because such loss was more than material. In the case of a castle, it meant the loss of the ability to provide military control of the surrounding area, and would require the expenditure of men and time in order to

²⁸⁴ “...ca como quier que los que estodieren en el castiello sean tenudos de obedecer al alcaide en todas cosas, en tal como esta non lo deben facer, pues que por ella caerien en pena de traycion.” Ibid., II.XVIII.VII.

²⁸⁵ “...si por su culpa se perdiesen los navios, serien por ende traydores com si perdiesen un castiello, et deben perder los cueropos et lo que hobieren.” Ibid., II.XXIV.IX.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., II.XVIII.1-XXXII.

²⁸⁷ “...et raices son las heredades et las labores que se non pueden mover en ninguna destas maneras que dichas habemos.” *Raiz* appears alternately as *rayzes* or *raices*, always referring to an immovable object, as distinguished from property that one could move or that could move on its own accord, as with livestock. The distinction between movable and immovable or living property may be seen as early as the Code of Cuenca, where distinctions between property types occupy a good deal of the entire code. Chief among the concerns for such divisions was the attention paid to immovable property, for it was essential to the community as a whole in many instances, particularly so with regard to a castle. According to Norbert Rouland, notions of immovable fixtures have their origins in the collapse of the collective use of land prevalent in many areas under the “feudal” system and the rise of exclusivity of control, which formed the basis for a permanent ownership. Under this construction, “immovable” referred more closely to the inalienable right to ownership, transcending the merely physical character of land. See Norbert Rouland and Philippe G. Planel, *Legal anthropology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994). For Spain generally, see the introduction by James Powers in (Spain), *The Code of Cuenca: Municipal Law on the Twelfth-Century Castilian Frontier*. Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, II.XVII.I.

recapture successfully. The loss of a vessel might well be permanent, given that either sinking or capture as a prize was possible. More importantly, as the authors had already indicated that vessels at sea were essentially the only “settlements” one could maintain there, they represented the only Castilian possessions in that environment.²⁸⁸ Thus, both castles and vessels served in a capacity entirely consistent with one we might call insular, each serving a critical function in their own right in the midst of potentially dangerous frontiers.

One important motivation for this conflation was the necessary military emphasis at the heart of the construction of marine law in the *Partidas* generally, and the specific focus on expansion and consolidation that was still the major concern of Castilian monarchs in the mid-thirteenth century. Such a defensive focus lent itself especially well to the familiar defensive symbolism of the castle. In addition, given the wider perception of the sea as an untenable area where even the conceptual placement of a frontier was impossible, the need for fortification served perceived needs throughout Castile, whether against the sea itself or enemies found there or on land. Strong comparisons were relatively simple to establish between a besieged castle and a vessel at sea, beginning with the definition of the proper preparations each should take to meet that possible threat. In addressing the proper provisioning of a castle, the *Partidas* emphasize the isolation and self-contained nature of a siege, as well as the critical fact that once in such a situation men are “shut up and guarded, so that they cannot go out anywhere without

²⁸⁸ See note 13.

order,” and that even if commanded to leave they may find themselves powerless to do so, through being besieged or constantly attacked by the enemy”.²⁸⁹

This description of confinement and isolation was, of course, a natural condition of a vessel at sea, where the danger of the sea itself was a constant threat. Partida II, Title XXIV, Law X clearly acknowledged this: “For war carried on by land involves no other dangers except that of the enemy alone, but in war by sea this peril is incurred by the water and the winds as well.” Besieged by the sea itself, the vessel was dependent upon its store of supplies, for “if these resources fail them they have no others to make use of.”²⁹⁰ Difficult though it might be, it was still possible that a besieged castle might receive aid by land or that the inhabitants might escape; but such options did not exist for the occupants of a vessel. Those who traveled by sea, according to the Partidas, “have not the power to protect themselves whenever they desire to do so, nor can [they] avoid falling from the conveyances in which they are transported, or keep out of the way, or escape, in order to preserve themselves, although they may be in danger of death.”²⁹¹ In describing the plight of those at sea, the legists revealed their perception of travel at sea as truly isolated and accompanied by a lack of agency that is in itself a hallmark of their approach to maritime law generally.

²⁸⁹ “Vianda es cosa sin que los homes non pueden vevir, et por ende ha meester que la hayan siempre; ca si en los otros logares non la pueden escusar, mucho menos lo pueden facer en los castiellos en que han á estar como encerrados guardándolos, as que non deben sallir á ninguna parte sin mandamiento del alcayde suyo, et aun sin todo esto podrie acaescer que maguer los mandase salir, que lo non podrein facer seyendo cercados ó muy guerreados de los enemigos...” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, II.XVIII.X.

²⁹⁰ “...ca en la guerra de la tierra non es peligro sinon de los enemigos tan solamente, mas en la de la mar es de esos mesmos, et demás del agua et de los vientos.” “...si aquello les fallece non han á que se tornen.” Ibid., II.XXIV.X. (Emphasis mine)

²⁹¹ “...los que andan en ella... non han poder de decender cada que quisieren, nin dexarse caer de aquellas cabalgaduras en que van, nin desviarse nin fuir para guarescer maguer sean en peligro de muerte.” Ibid., II.XXIV.I. (Emphasis mine)

Yet, despite the clear similarities between the castles and vessels that made their comparison a sound and useful one in the construction of the maritime code, the contrast between the ability of the vessel to move and the immobility of the castle required another step to equate them in the legal sense implied by the use of the term *raiz*. The castle was as an immovable object and in legal terms a fixture of the land. Holding the legal status of *raiz*, it was as much a part of the surrounding territory as vineyards, orchards, or towns; a vessel could meet none of those requirements. Yet, evidence linking vessels to this kind of concrete attachment to permanent fixtures appears in Partida V, Title V, Law XXV, which deals with the sale of a “ship, a house, a shepherd’s hut, or *any property of this kind...*” noting that all are subject to the same protection under the law in a transactional sense.²⁹² By including the vessel with houses “or any other property of this kind,” which we must take to mean holding the status of *raiz*, or immovable chattel, the principle invoked in the comparison of castle and vessel is again reinforced. This is particularly true because no qualification is made regarding the vessel, which is simply included as part of the list of properties subject to the provisions of the statute. A similar connection made without qualification appears in Partida V, Title VIII, Law VIII, concerning what we would today term the liability incurred through an “act of God”:

Moreover, we decree that which anyone has hired is lost or injured, or dies, through some accident which happens without the fault of said party; as for instance where a slave or animal dies a natural death, or where the

²⁹² “Nave, ó casa, ó cabaña de ovejas ó otra cosa semejante vendiendo un home á otro con las cosas quel pertenesiesen, s venciesen al comprador en juicio por alguna cosa señalada de aquellas, tenuto es el vendedor de sanar al comprador aquella cosa señalada, como sil venciese por toda la cosa principal sobre que fue fecha la véndida.” Ibid., V.V.XXXV.

property was a ship and it was in danger on account of a storm which arose; or where it was a house and it was burned; or where it was a mill which was carried away by an inundation; where through any cause like these property was lost or perished on account of accidents such as the aforementioned; the party will not be bound to pay for the property which he had rented, except in certain cases.²⁹³

It is the conscious choice to compare the situation of a burning house and the ship in peril at sea that reveals the conceptually parallel thinking at work on a larger scale in the law, and here, the law diverges from the emphases apparent in thirteenth-century artistic and literary evidence. For example, nothing is made of the “unique dangers of the sea,” so evident elsewhere in regard to the proper qualifications for naval officers, or in the *Cantigas* in referring to the perils awaiting travelers there, or the dramatic imagery of the occupants of vessels praying for salvation in the midst of terrifying storms at sea. Instead, the statute presents two disasters on land and sea as readily comparable, a house fire, and a flood; yet this type of comparison does not appear in either art or literature, where the *unique* danger represented by the sea, and by extension the terrific power it possessed *in se*, is the focus. Here, as in the comparisons drawn between castles and vessels generally, the inclusion of vessels into an otherwise incongruous list is evidence for a conceptual process involving the creation of legal jurisdiction, and a literal recreation of an insular Castilian presence in the maritime frontier.

²⁹³ “Otro si decimos que si se perdiere, ó se menoscabase ó se moriese de su muerte natural, ó fuese nave et peligrase por tormenta que acaesciese, ó fuese casa et se quemase, ó si fuese molino et lo llevasen avenidas de ríos, ó otra cosa qualquier semejante destas, que se moriese ó se perdiere por tal ocasión como sobredicho es, que non serie tenuto de la pechar el que la toviese alogagada, fueras ende en casos señalados.” *Ibid.*, V.VIII.VIII.

Islands of Castile

The distinctions between land and sea that framed the visual, literary, and legal perception of the sea were at least in part a reflection of the composition of Castile itself. This composition led to another important aspect of the relationship between land and sea: a distinction between northern and southern experience that contributed to the insular maritime perspective revealed in the sources. The long-standing tradition of seafaring all along the northern coast of Castile and Leon, characterized by a good degree of mercantile freedom and, because of its geographic distance from the Mediterranean, immunity from Arab naval threats, was a world apart from southern coastal communities. In the South, the sudden acquisition of an enormous expanse of territory thrust the Castilians into the complexities presented by a southern border that now included the critically important Straits of Gibraltar and even a port on the Mediterranean, neither of which would prove easy to secure. What would eventually follow, for nearly one hundred twenty years, was a solidly differentiated experience at sea in each of these two distinct areas.

The experience of the inhabitants of the northern coastline of Castile-Leon in the late medieval period was a mixed bag. The ruggedly mountainous terrain of the northern coast of the Iberian Peninsula created a harsh living environment for the majority of those communities in Leon, Galicia, and Vizcaya, featuring ample rainfall but relatively limited arable land. For these communities, even the largest of them with less than two or three thousand inhabitants before 1300, the sea was vital to their continued survival, both directly and indirectly. Tucked against unforgiving cliffs rising to the central Castilian

plateau, fishing and whaling were staples along the entire northern coastline, and most of these small communities were dependent on importation of necessary items, particularly grain, which they could not grow in large quantities in the steep mountainous terrain. Cantabria, on the other hand, featured the best port on the northern coastline in Santander, an important import center, particularly for the finished cloth known as *valencina*, so highly sought after by elites throughout Castile, who used it to clothe themselves and their retainers.²⁹⁴ Santander could also produce up to two crops annually owing to the generally rainy nature of the northern Iberian “green belt”, the rainy zone which granted the maritime settlements year round moisture; indeed, its productive capacity was so impressive that it was an important exporter of grain, particularly to Seville following its conquest in 1248. Active mercantile trade, particularly with Gascony and Flanders, fed a larger network of mercantile interests, including prominent elites inland, such as Ramon Bónifaz, the hero of the siege of Seville. While largely small-scale until the early fourteenth century, a constant stream of goods made their way to the northern ports from the high Castilian plateau, and the return merchandise found ready buyers throughout both New and Old Castile. Yet, while some enjoyed greater advantages than others did, all shared the common danger of travel on the Bay of Biscay. The need to travel along the coastline in order to escape the ferocity of storms there, some of the worst to be found anywhere in the northern Atlantic, meant that northern coastal communities shared a common attachment to the sea and to one another – one that would have both economic and political consequences.

²⁹⁴ The volume of this trade was relatively large even before 1300; Ruiz refers to a one-year importation figure of the cloth as “staggering”, despite incomplete records available to reconstruct the volume. For details regarding the cloth and its use, see Miguel Gual Camarena, “El comercio de telas en el siglo XIII hispano,” *Anuario de historia económica y social* I (1967).

Politically, although titularly part of the larger Castilian-Leonese realm, the northern maritime communities operated in what was essentially an autonomous manner for most of the late medieval period. In 1296, the Cantabrian ports of Santander, Castrourdiales, Laredo, and San Vicente de la Barquera, joined the Vizcayan ports of San Sebastián, Fuenterrabia, Bermeo, Guetaria, and Vitoria, in forming the *Hermandad de las villas de la marina de Castilla con Vitoria*, also known as the *Hermandad de las Marismas* (hereafter *Hermandad*) the primary function of which was to: 1) Preserve the privileges of each of the member towns; 2) Honor the international treaties and agreements of Castile; 3) Peacefully resolve disputes between member communities; 4) Provide mutual defense to any member under attack, and (5) to share equally in the cost of their mutual activities.²⁹⁵ That the *Hermandad* existed at all is a testament to the insular nature of the Castilian maritime experience, an insularity that included both geographic and political differentiation. Climate and relative isolation separated them from the central Castilian experience, and that difference was significant enough that banding together with other communities sharing the same unique needs was a necessity, for the communities of the northern coastline were quite different from those in the south, and not solely by virtue of their position on the coastline. Food anxiety and the threat of invasion dominated the concerns of southern maritime communities, and the activities and attention of the crown was always southern-looking throughout the majority of the late medieval period in Castile. Meanwhile, the northern maritime communities enjoyed access to the rest of northern Europe for trade purposes, and return goods flowed through

²⁹⁵ On the development and critical issues surrounding the *Hermandad's* inception, purposes, and overall history, see Francisco Morales Belda and España. Ministerio de Marina., *La Hermandad de las Marismas*, [Edición patrocinada por el Ministerio de Marina] ed. (Barcelona: Ariel, 1974).

their ports on their way inland. In many ways, these northern coastal communities seemed to offer opportunity, and the sea they fronted, if certainly dangerous, was at least a welcome and familiar reality; in the South, it was a decidedly different matter.

Thus, the linking of land and sea in *Partidas* reflects certain realities regarding the southern frontiers and the critical importance of the sea in the last half of the thirteenth-century there. Military necessity was certainly a reason for seeking relationships between land and sea in legal terms, for moving an army from land to sea and assuring that it would function as efficiently as possible there demanded the articulation of expectation we find in the hierarchical section of the *Partidas*. Military concerns for re-invasion, especially, demanded the creation of physical and conceptual boundaries between land and sea. Invasion anxiety also drove the expectations of rulers on settlers in the newly conquered areas and led to unique pressures on any coastal community forming in the southern territories. One such pressure was the expectation of military service, which, according to the *fuero de Sevilla* granted by Fernando III, included service by sea, now a necessity: “The inhabitants must do army service three months every year by sea, at the cost of the king, and in the year in which they do so they do not have to do so by land.”²⁹⁶ Sánchez describes the mustering for such service following a royal request as an announcement by royal heralds in the town squares that “all those at sea should come and receive payment and join the fleet in service to God and the king”.²⁹⁷ This gives some sense of the ease by which any vessel in port at the time of the call could find itself

²⁹⁶ Juan de la Reguera Valdelomar, *Extracto de las leyes del Fuero viejo de Castilla con el primitivo Fuero de León, Asturias y Galicia, se añaden el antiguo Fuero de Sepúlveda, y los concedidos por S. Fernando á Córdoba y Sevilla* (Valladolid: Maxtor, 2001), 286.

²⁹⁷ Sánchez de Valladolid, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 243.

impressed. In addition to the service requirement by sea, there were also the predatory practices of fleet preparation in use throughout the medieval world to consider. In a practice particularly well documented in the Chronicle of Alfonso XI and that of Pedro, fleets seized or impressed virtually any vessel encountered as they moved along a coastline, impressing or taking them by force if necessary. As those examples show, even Genoese merchants bound for Castilian ports were not immune from such a fate.²⁹⁸ Yet, even in such cases, the jurisdictional rights of kings and their representatives never extended beyond the decks of the vessels, and thus the legal justification for all such actions remained grounded in the rights of kings to those things indicated in the *Partidas* as being their property by right.

As a succession of Castilian monarchs struggled to deal with increasing problems of security along the Straits of Gibraltar, they began to generate increasing pressure on communities responsible for supplying vessels and arms. For the Northern communities, a responsibility for the *fonsadera*, a war tax assessed annually which might include supplying a galley or fee in lieu thereof, was always an obligation under their existing *fuero*. In the case of the Vizcayans, for example, their *fuero* provided them with exemption from the authority of any admiral or admiral's official, "from answering his call, from obeying his commands either at sea or on land, and from paying any tribute or

²⁹⁸ The account of the capture and seizing of *La Bestia* in the opening phases of the Marinid invasion of 1340 illustrates a typical example of such impression, as does the account of Pedro's fleet action on the Mediterranean coast in his war with Pedro of Aragon. López de Ayala, *Crónicas de los reyes Castilla: don Pedro, don Enrique II, don Juan I, don Enrique III*, Sánchez de Valladolid, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 243.

tax there might be for anything that they take with their ships at sea or on land.”²⁹⁹

Elsewhere along the northern coast, the primary involvement with the southern military effort was a requirement to supply a vessel annually, a provision that created potential hardships to local economies and later remedied by Pedro I as part of his efforts to expand the royal influence in maritime matters generally.³⁰⁰ Petitions seeking relief from the requirement first appear in the *cortes* of Madrid in 1329, heard by Alfonso XI. At that time, he heard a general petition from those required to present galleys or ships annually or a fee in lieu thereof, but granted an exception only in the case of preexisting exemption by *fuero*.³⁰¹ The same petition appears again in the *cortes* of Valladolid in 1351, where

²⁹⁹ Gregorio Monreal Zia et al., *The Old Law of Bizkaia (1452): introductory study and critical edition* (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, 2005), 176-77.

³⁰⁰ “Alo que me pidieron por merced en que dizen que las villas e logares do me an a dar galeas, que tenga por bien e mande que non paguen otro pecho nin ffonsadera nin les tomen omes para armar otra galeas nin los despechen. Et porque dizen que quando el Rey mio padre mandava armar galeas, e otrosi quando yo las mandé armar, et que a aquellos que las avian e ovieren de armar para levar algo para ssi, que las tomavan los oes delos puertos dela mar e los cohechauan. Et piden otrosi que ssea mi merced e que mande que los non prended nin tomen nin cohechen daqui adelante. A esto rrespondo que tengo por bien e mando que quando yo tomare galea en la villa o en el logar, que e ese anno que non ssean tenudos de pagar ffonsadera. Et quando yo mandare armar galeas yo la mandaré guardar e escarmentar en tal manera que ninguno non reciba agravio nin cohecho nin despechamiento.”

“They petition me for my grant that in those villages where they are required to give me galleys that I allow them to not pay any other costs or *fonsadera*, nor that I take men to arm other galleys without paying them. And because they say that when the King, my father, ordered galleys armed for some purpose, and also when I have done so, that the men of the port towns have been impressed. And they also ask that it be my will and that I order that they should not seize or take or impress them from henceforward. To this I respond that I do consider it good and I order that when I take a galley from a town or place, that in that year they shall not have to pay the *fonsadera*. And when I order galleys armed, I shall see to it that no one receives any damage, nor shall they be impressed or seized.” At the Cortes of Valladolid in 1351. Colmeiro, *Cuadernos de los Cortes*, 70.

³⁰¹ “Otrossi alo que me pidieron por merced que en las villas e logares delos puertos dea mar do an ffueros e previllegios e cartas de non dar galeas nin naves nin mr. Por ellas, que ssea la mi merced de galeas non demandar e que las ssea guardado... Aesto rrespondo que aquellos que an previllegios del Rey don Alfonso e del Rey don Ssancho e del Rey don Ffernando mio padre, que non ssean delos tutorías del Rey mio padre nin dela mia, que me muestren los previllegios que an en esta rrazon, et you que los vere e que los mandaré guardar.”

Alfonso's heir Pedro displays a much greater concern for maritime issues throughout the realm generally, the details of which will appear later in this chapter.

Two critical turning points accelerated a process which would lead to a transformation in perception of the sea's place in the realm and toward an integration of land and sea in terms of royal assumption of responsibility for the safety and security of Castilian operating there: Alfonso XI's victory over Abuhacen at the Battle of Rio Salado in 1340, and a skirmish off the coast of Winchelsea between a fleet under the personal command of Edward III and one composed of Castilians and their Genoese allies in 1350, referred to as the Battle of Winchelsea or *les Espagnols sur la Mer*.³⁰² The southern battle was another in the centuries-long southern struggle of reconquest, and the maritime involvement in that issue was the same as it had always been in the South – a nearly constant struggle to “guard the seas” in the Straits and slow or stop invasion forces from reaching the mainland. In the North, the conflict and its aftermath could not have been a more spectacular example of the relative freedom enjoyed by the northern Castilian maritime communities and the mutually supportive defense provided by one community to another under the treaty of the *Hermandad de las Marismas*. Despite the wide gulf between the two events, together they served as a catalyst that transformed the perception of Castilian monarchs regarding the limits of their legal obligation and

“Those of the villages and seaports where they hold charters and privileges and letters stating that they do not have to give galleys or ships nor money for them petition me that I should grant that they be protected from any demand for them. To this I respond that any who bear privileges from King Alfonso or King Sancho or King Fernando, my father, should show those to me, and I shall order them preserved.”———, *Cuadernos de los Cortes*, 421.

³⁰² Winchelsea refers to the port town nearest to the battle, on the southeast coast of England. The primary source for this battle is that recorded by Froissart in his *Chronicles*. Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. Geoffrey Brereton (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 113-19.

authority regarding the sea and Castilians there, formerly ending at the seashore itself. This hands-off approach had dominated Castilian royal policy from the writing of the *Partidas* in the mid-thirteenth century, placing responsibility for the safety and security of those who sailed at sea squarely on their own shoulders once they left port. As the following paragraphs will show, these two events led to a change in the level of interest and involvement expressed by Castilian monarchs toward the place of the sea in the larger realm and the role of the monarch concerning the activities of his subjects there.

The Battle of Rio Salado was the last great battle of the *Reconquista*, and the last time an Arab force constituted a legitimate threat to reinvade the peninsula. In essentially ending the *Reconquista* until the battles with Granada in the late 15th century, it was the end of a nearly century-long focus on the Straits of Gibraltar that opened the door to a change in perception of the place of the sea in the realm.³⁰³ By contrast, the Battle of Winchelsea was a watershed event that both highlighted the untenable nature of the hard division between land and sea so clearly articulated in the thirteenth century and forced both the Castilian king and the northern communities to reconsider their former positions on maritime concerns at all levels. The battle began because of reports received by Edward III that northern Castilian vessels had been preying upon English shipping, an almost certainly true assumption given the nearly ubiquitous nature of that kind of

³⁰³ For the battle of the Rio Salado, see the account in Catalán and Núñez de Villaizán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*. For its historical significance, see also Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975). For the Arab perspective on the battle and aftermath, see Arié, *El reino Nasrí de Granada, 1232-1492*

activity by all sides in the Middle Ages.³⁰⁴ A largely Vizcayan fleet received news that Edward and formed a fleet to engage them on their return from Flanders, armed themselves, and engaged his fleet off the coast of Winchelsea. The resulting battle saw the English lose three vessels, two of them capital ships and royal property, and nearly ten for the Vizcayans, though all small mercantile sloops. Although Edward returned to England claiming victory, the treaty signed the subsequent year suggests that the Vizcayans had seriously shaken the English, given that concessions granted to them by Edward included “mutual freedom of commerce and navigation,” and that the “fishermen from Castile and Biscay should be at liberty to come freely and safely to fish in the ports of England and Brittany, and in all other places and ports, paying the dues and customs to the lords of the country.”³⁰⁵

The lack of Castilian royal involvement in the battle is a matter of critical importance. Alfonso XI had remained neutral regarding relations between northern seafarers and others in all matters and had declared himself neutral in the fledgling Hundred Years’ War.³⁰⁶ The willingness of the Vizcayans and the *Hermandad* to fight the English generally was a direct response to the frequent predation they had suffered at the hands of English pirates, which was at least in part a reflection of the much more

³⁰⁴ Piracy and merchant marine activity were so closely related in the Bay and Channel that Edward’s assumption would have been true at almost any moment in time. A good source for the late medieval period in Cantabria is Ferrer Mallol, *Corsarios castellanos y vascos en el Mediterráneo medieval*.

³⁰⁵ Fernández Duro, *Marina de Castilla*. « Il est convenu... Item, que personers de la seigneurie del rio de Castelle et del counte de Viscay peussent venir et pescher fraunchement et suvement en les portz d’Engleterre et de Bretaigne, et en touz autres lieux et portz où ils vorrontz, paiantz les droitz et les custumes à les seignurs du pais. »

³⁰⁶ Cervera Pery, *El poder naval en los Reinos hispánicos: (la marina de la Edad Media)*.

expansive and aggressive maritime policies pursued by English monarchs.³⁰⁷ The battle forced the issue of royal involvement in maritime affairs in a way that would become obvious in 1351, when a newly crowned Pedro ratified the treaty signed between Edward III and the *Hermandad* at the *Cortes* of Valladolid. There, he displayed the concerns that not only made him a favorite of merchants, but also set a course for future royal attitudes toward the sea that would increasingly move toward a unification of the formerly insular attitude that had dominated late medieval royal Castilian maritime perspectives. Among the petitions heard at this important event was one concerning wood for shipbuilding, the first example of a royal decree regarding its use. Pedro regulated wood under the protection of a royal steward in all areas save Asturias and Galicia, noting that they could “take and load their wood wherever they wish, according to what they have been able to do by use and custom.”³⁰⁸ It was at this *cortes* that Pedro heard the petition regarding

³⁰⁷ For example, as early as 1208, King John (1167-1216) requested all merchants “to aid the barons of the Cinque (Refers to the Confederation of the Cinque Ports, consisting of five ports at the eastern end of the English Channel where the crossing to the continent is narrowest. The members of the Cinque were the ports of Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich.. During the Middle Ages they were supported by the smaller ports of Rye and Winchelsea) in arresting all ships found on the seas, and conveying them to England,” and was even able to demand that “the whole shipping from every port in England should be at Porstmouth by mid-Lent.”³⁰⁷ Henry III (1207-1272) also called upon the barons of the Cinque to ravage the coasts of France and directed all the galleys of Ireland to do so as well. In 1243, he called upon them to “make reprisals” upon John, Duke of Brittany; and the power of the English monarchs with regard to their ability to call upon merchant power only grew as time went on. For the consequences of the battle on a more aggressive royal attitude toward control of naval forces, see J.S. Kepler, “The Effects of the Battle of Sluys upon the Administration of English Naval Impressment, 1340-1343,” in *Medieval Ships and Warfare*, ed. Susan Rose (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2008).

³⁰⁸ “Et otrosi que sacan madera que es unna cosa de que se aprovechan los del mio ssennorio, et por esto que se yerman los montes dela mi tierra e que encaresce enel mio ssennorio e la non pueden aver, e los delos e que encaresce enel mio ssennorio e la non pueden aver, e los delos otros rregnos mis vecinos que han della quanta quieren, e que es grand mengua dela mi tierra e grand mio deservicio, porque señalada miente la madera que he a labrar en las mis taracanas e navios non la puedo aver sinon muy cara, ca della se sacapor mar e della por rrios e della por tierra, e quela lievan a otros ssennorios, de que fazen galeas e navios, e que non han madera de otra parte de que se tanto acurran para ello...Et tengo por bien que en Galizia e en Asturias que puedan ssacar e cargar su madera por do quissieren, segund quello han de huso e de costumbre.”

vessels fearing to dock discussed earlier in this chapter, as well as a petition asking for relief from the galley requirement first heard by his father. In comparison with all earlier *cortes*, Pedro's was by far the most involved in terms of the number and nature of maritime petitions heard, and certainly the events of the preceding twenty years were of major significance. As a monarch, he would be the first to lead an aggressive fleet action personally in the Straits and Mediterranean against Pedro of Aragon, a struggle made possible, at least in part, by his excellent relationship with the *Hermandad* and their willingness to supply him with men and ships for that expedition.³⁰⁹

Although Pedro's actions signaled a turn in Castilian perception toward the place of the sea in a larger sense, it would not be until the reign of Juan II (1405-1454) and the *Cortes* of Madrid held in 1419 that the hard line between land and sea in place since the thirteenth century would finally begin to blur. The first formal request at *Cortes* for a standing fleet appears at this time, with the petition arguing that preparing one in the traditional manner by arming existing vessels or impression is time-consuming. This petition is a direct request to the King for his extension of royal protection to the sea and

And also that they take wood, a thing much needed by those in my service, and because of this they are denuding the mountains of my realm, and making it increasingly scarce in my lordship such that they cannot have it, and the kingdoms of my neighbors have as much as they desire, but it is a great need in my land and greatly to my disservice, especially because the wood that they have to use to work in my arsenals and ships cannot be had without great cost, because they take it by sea, by river, and by land, and carry it to other lordships, in order to make galleys and ships; and they do not have wood sufficiently large enough from anywhere else... And I consider it good that in Galicia and Asturias take and load their wood wherever they wish, according to what they have been able to do by use and custom. Colmeiro, *Cuadernos de los Cortes*, 23-24.

³⁰⁹ For the expedition, see López de Ayala, *Coronica del rey don Pedro*, 103-08. For Pedro's relationship with the merchant community broadly, see Clara Estow, *Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 1350-1369* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995).

his subjects engaged in travel there, something that has no precedent in Castilian history; as such, it merits inclusion here in its entirety.

You request my grace saying that of the principle things that pertain to me to order done is to have in my villages and coastal areas of my kingdoms a good number of ships and galleys, which would be greatly to my service for many things, and especially each time I might order an armada formed to send a fleet to where it can be of service to me, the ships are standing made, and the fleet could be armed in time of need; but when not finding the vessels quickly, it could not be done thusly, as has been shown.

And in the same way, all the bordering foreign kingdoms of my royal crown would be more timid and fearful, and many of the robberies and damages and kidnappings that have been done by sea, and that are being done each day to my subjects, would not occur; it is clear to me that it would be to my service, benefit, and protection of my kingdoms that it may be necessary to order it done thusly.

To that end, you beseech me to order these things to be provided:

- 1 The first, that some ships be ordered to be made that will stay in those said seaports;
- 2 The second, that some galleys be ordered made, and that those made be ordered repaired, and also the boat houses in which they will stay;

3 The third, that in as much as there are many robberies done at sea every day in the name of “recoveries”³¹⁰ or in other ways that two galleys and two whalers, together with the men and arms necessary for them, which would travel continually guarding and doing as I command and in my service.

Which, doing this with good diligence and in the form and manner that it is required to be done, there are certain things that would be greatly to my service, and to my subjects, for they would be able to travel more securely, and there would be more business in my kingdoms than there is presently, and so my revenues will increase. And although costs may increase as a result, they will bring benefit and honor, and ought not to be regretted.

To this, I respond to you that you spoke well, and that I intend to order it done just as you have petitioned.³¹¹

³¹⁰ Attempts to collect debt, owed by the owners of the vessels or their master; abused frequently.

³¹¹ “Alo que me pedistes por merced diciendo que de las cosas principales que a mi pertenescia mandar fazer, es tener en las mis villas e logares dela costa dela mar delos mis rregnos muchedumbre de navios e galeas e otras fustas; lo qual era mucho mi servicio por muchas cosas, e especialmente cada que yo mandase fazer armada, e enviar flota donde cumpliese ami servicio, que estando los navios fechos, la flota se podría armar al tiempo del menester, lo qual non fallando los navios prestos, se non faria asi, segunt que de fecho se avia mostrado. Et eso mesmo en todos los rregnos comarcanos estrannos la mi corona rreal seria mas temida e ensalcada, e muchos rrobos e dannos e rrepresarias que por la mar se avian fecho e fazian de cada dia alos mis súbditos e naturales, se non farian; lo qual bien visto por mi, fallaría que para mi servicio e pro e guarda de mis rregnos seria necesario de lo mandar fazer asi. Por ende que me suplicavades que mandase proveer en estas cosas: la primera que mandase fazer algunos navios que estudiesen enlos dichos puertos dela mar; la segunda que mandase fazer algunas galeas e mandase rreparar las que están fechas e otrosi las taracanas en que estudiesen; la tercera que por quant enla mar de cada dia se fazian muchos rrobos en nombre de rrepresarias o en otra manera, que ordenase e mandase andar por la costa dela mar e donde fuese menester dos galeas e dos balegneres, conlos omes de armas que para ello fuesen menester, los quales andoviesen continuada mente guardando e faziendo lo queles yo mandase e mi servicio fuese; lo qual faziendose con buena diligencia e enla forma e manera que se rrequiriese de fazer, cierta cossa era que seria mucho mi servicio, e los mis súbditos andarían mas seguros, e enlos mis rregnos avria mas meneos delos que ay, e las mis rrentas valdrían mucho mas. Et en caso que dende se rrecreciesen costas, las tales costas, que traen provecho e onrra, non se devian escusar. A esto vos rrespondo qu dezides bien, e que yo lo entiendo mandar fazer asi segunt que melo pedistes por merced.” Manuel Colmeiro, *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de Leon y de Castilla. Introducción escrita y publicada de orden de la Real*

This petition calls upon the Castilian monarch to take responsibility personally for the safety of his subjects when at sea, and to maintain vessels specifically for that purpose. The patrols it calls for would benefit all the coastal areas, but the fact the petition mentions “whalers” is especially telling, as this indicates northern vessels, and certainly represents a request for protection of the sea-lanes along the routes to Flanders. The show of force such protection could afford also demonstrates that the merchant marine was ready to see the crown shoulder more of the expense and effort involved in securing those trade lanes as well, for it argues that such an action would provide a means of making bordering kingdoms “more timid,” and reduce “robberies and kidnappings that have been done by sea.” Careful wording indicates a desire to avoid hollow completion of the petition; for example, they ask not only for ships, but that those ships should “stay in those said seaports,” as well as for galleys, but also boathouses for them, as well as a commitment to their maintenance. Taken together, the petition records a significant, clearly thought out proposal to pass the independent responsibility for maritime security so ingrained in the designation of responsibilities given in the *Partidas* off to the Crown, a transference already accomplished in England long before; indeed, the fact that the kings of England were willing and able to actively support and protect their mercantile fleet certainly had a hand in prompting the actions of the *Hermadad* in taking this important step with Juan II.

The 1419 *cortes* was only the beginning of a series of petitions heard by Juan II over his long reign, each representing another example of a new perception of the proper

Academia de la Historia, por su individuo de número don Manuel Colmeiro, 5 vols., vol. 3 (Madrid: Est. tip. de los sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1883), 39.

role of the crown in extending its protection to Castilians at sea. In 1436, at the *Cortes* of Toledo, the king heard another petition regarding protection for merchant vessels, this time asking for “great ñaos,” to counter the English pirates, noting that their size alone would be sufficient to cause the English to flee. The petition appeals to the king’s interest in increasing the traffic of merchandise in his realm, as well as the increased exports possible if vessels could travel unmolested, and asks that he place them “on the coast of the sea”, specifically mentioning the “Sea of Castile” (here referring to the Bay of Biscay), again underscoring the *Hermandad’s* desire to pass the primary responsibility for safety and security of merchant shipping off to the monarch.³¹² The king agreed to the request, and also heard a petition asking that he personally issue a royal edict requiring that “every time three ñaos depart from any port that they go together, and they protect themselves as a good company, and that they should have to do so under pain of great

³¹² “Otrosi muy poderoso señor, por quanto la costa dela mar de Castilla está muy grant falta de naos grandes e segunt que en los tiempos pasados solia aver, que de poco tiempo aca son todas perdidas, las quales quando alguna flota va en Flandes e en otras partes, que yvan en su compañía yva, que sy en la flota que ha pocos días que vino de Flandes oviera grandes naos en su compañía non se le escapara ninguna nao delas de Inglatierra que todas non fueran tomadas, e por las naos de aca ser pequeñas aun que eran muchas mas que las de Inglatierra non tomaron la dicha flota, e por ser las naos delos ingleses grandes las de aca non osaran allegar aellas, antes se desviaron en manera que se escaparon todas las ms delas naos de Inglatierra; e por esto e otrosy por que las mercadurias de vuestros rregnos segura mente puedan pasar en las partes de allende, ca del todo punto la dicha marisma está muy desfallecida de grandes naos, suplicamos a vuestra alteza que mande fazer algunas naos grandes que será vuestro servicio e provecho de vuestros súbditos e naturales, e que vuestra alteza ponga tal rrecabdo en la vuestra costa dela mar por que non rresciba delos ingleses el danno que fast aquí se ha rrescebido. Aesto vos rrespondo que ami plaze de mandar proveer en ello commo cunpla ami servicio e abien común de mis rregnos.”

“Most powerful Lord, in as much as the coast of the Sea of Castile is greatly lacking large ñaos...for when some fleet goes to Flanders, or elsewhere, and if there were great ñaos with them in the fleet, not one English ñao would escape, because their ñaos are small, even though there are many more of them. Thus they could not take the said fleet, and because the great ñaos were there, the English would not dare to approach them, most of them likely to flee. And for this reason, and also because the goods of your realm would surely be able then to pass into those parts, and given that every part of said seashore is very undersupplied with great ñaos, we beseech your highness that he order some great ñaos that will be to your service and to the benefit of your subjects, and that your Highness place such received (ñaos) on the coast of the sea in order that it not receive the damage from the English which is has up to now. To this I respond that it pleases me t provide for this as it will result in service to me and to the common good of my realm.” *Ibid.*, 263.

penalty.”³¹³ By any standard, this request for a royal proclamation requiring that vessels mutually support one another is another dramatic departure from the formerly insular attitudes held by maritime communities relative to the crown in late medieval Castile.

In this case, it is the first time a Castilian monarch ordered a vessel not operating in a military capacity to abide by any specific restrictions regarding their freedom of movement while at sea, a condition formerly entitling them to complete independence once at sea. The petition explained that convoys were leaving the port cities together, but then drifting apart as petty differences between masters, referred to as “enmity held by some against others” led to some ignoring the plight of others in emergencies. The

³¹³ “Otro si señor, por quanto al tiempo que las cargazones se fazen en la costa de vuestros rreynos, asi para en las partidas de Flandes como en las partidas de Francia e Bretanna e otras partes, carganse diez o venyete naos e barchas en una compañía o mas o menos, después que son en la mar por algunos maestros ser desordenados e por enemistades que los unos con los otros han, non guardan la conpañia que devian asi en la partida del puerto como en la mar, e las dichas naos fuesen juntas e en buena orden non rrescribirian los maestros e mercadores vuestros súbditos el daño que had rrescebido e rresciben de cada dia, ca por quatro o cinco naos que se apartan para la semejante manera dela dicha flota e salen de buena ordenanca, es notorio el camino para ir en Flandes por las costa de Inglaterra, e como los ingleses vean que van desordenada mente fazen armada sobre ellos e aviene que los toman, lo qual señor, non se atreverían afazer si todos juntos fuesen segunt que dela costa partieron, delo qual se han sequido e siguen muy grant deservicio a vuestra mercet e daño a los vuestros súbditos e naturales. Por ende muy excelente señor, avuestra alteza plega mandar dar vuestras cartas para toda la costa dela mar, mandando les que cada e quando que de tres navios adelante ovieren de partir a qual quier parte, que vayan junta mente e se guarde buena compañía como son tenudos so grandes penas. A esto vos rrespondo que yo mandaré platicar en ello la manera que cunpla ami servicio e abien e guarda de los mis súbditos e naturales que en esto se tenga, e lo mandaré asi guardar.”

“Also, my Lord, for some time, convoys have formed on the coast of your realm for travel to parts of Flanders or France, Brittany, and other places, composed of 10 or 20 naos and boats in one company, more or less. After they are at sea, they become disorganized by some masters, and by enmity held by some against others, they do not protect the company as they should, *in port or at sea* [as in the *partida* of the port or sea?), and if said ñaos were together and in good order, your merchant subjects would not receive the damage that they have received and do receive every day. For when five ñaos separate themselves in a similar manner from the said fleet and leave the good order, the route to Flanders by the coast of England being notorious, the English seeing that they are traveling disorganized, gather themselves into an armada to come take them, which, my Lord, would not have occurred if all were together as they had left the coast, from which has followed and continues to follow a very great disservice to your grace and damage to your subjects.

Thus, most excellent Lord, may it please your Highness to order your letters given for all the coast ordering that every time three ñaos part from any part that they go together, and they protect themselves as a good company, and that they should have to do so under pain of great penalty. To this I respond that I will order this proclaimed in a manner that benefits my service and for the good and protection of my subjects contained therein, and I will order it so done.” Ibid., 264.

petition underscores the appearance of the perception that the King had an obligation to command certain behaviors of masters at sea in furtherance of protecting his subjects while en route to their destination, illustrating that Castilians were no longer comfortable with the hands-off approach of earlier centuries. They are demanding here that the King take an active role in providing for the defense and safety of the “masters and merchant subjects” aboard the vessels in such convoys. The inclusion of the “master” is indeed noteworthy, for the *Partidas* specifically designated the safe operation of a vessel and responsibility for passengers to the master as a matter of law, a subject dealt with in the next chapter at some detail. In addition, both petitions pointedly refer to the English threat specifically, as well as to the organization of the English in responding to perceived disorganization on the part of merchant fleets at sea. They do not refer to pirates, for example, or to unnamed predatory problems besetting the convoys; rather, they seem to appeal to the King in an attempt to arouse a certain possessive attitude regarding “his” subjects, and even their operation in “his” sea, here specifically referred to as the “*mar Castellano*”.

Overall, the petitions presented to Juan II show that by the mid fifteenth century, the insular attitudes that had governed maritime perception in late medieval Castile had begun to disappear, replaced by the beginnings of agreement on the part of the King to ensure the safety of his subjects at sea. The presentation of the petitions alone demonstrate that maritime communities were increasingly uncomfortable with the insular attitude which had prevailed for so long, an attitude which regarded the sea as belonging to no man and that all who acted there did so essentially at their own risk and for their own reward. Here, in these few petitions, we can see the beginnings of a perception of the

sea as part of the realm, at least to the extent that the monarch had a responsibility to actively protect his subjects there and defend their rights to use it to their advantage. Nothing about the proclamations issued here constituted an active intention on the part of the Castilian king to rewrite the thirteenth-century law, but the decisions show that practical realities had rendered the old separation of land and sea model as utterly incapable of dealing with the complexities of the fifteenth-century Castilian world. If the *Partidas* had established virtual islands of Castilian identity through the extension of hierarchy and a conceptual basis for considering the vessels as Castilian territory for legal purposes, these decisions eliminated the conceptual element. From the early fifteenth century forward, Castilian vessels would, at least in theory, enjoy protection of a Castilian monarch in the same manner as any individual on land.

Conclusion

From the place of the sea in the larger world to the specific point at which it began on the seashore, the statutes of the *Partidas* offer us a clearly articulated perspective on the relationship between land and sea as understood in the mid-thirteenth century Castile. This perspective combined a highly differentiated spatial definition, an integrated conceptual framework that fused land and sea, and a detailed approach to the assignment of skills and responsibilities necessary for those seeking to go to there. At the same time, through persistent use of comparative conflation between land and sea, the law laid out a conceptual framework for the extension of Castilian legal authority to a sea already declared as outside the realm in both physical and legal terms. The integration of these two environments found in the creation of the military hierarchy, the perceived

similarities between fortresses on land and sea, and a hands-off attitude toward the activities of those who left the physical realm combined to create conceptual islands of the vessels themselves. This insular model would prevail for nearly a century and a half, until events recorded in the fifteenth-century records of the *Cortes* reveal that practical realities required a tangible implementation of what had been a conceptual integration in the thirteenth-century law by extending direct protection of the crown to those at sea. Vessels at sea remained autonomous in most respects, but the crown's agreement to create permanent fleets and to use them to patrol and protect its coastal areas meant that they no longer operated in a sea exclusively considered outside the realm. If these vessels sailed as islands, they now sailed in seas considered Castilian by their rulers.

CHAPTER V

CASTILIANS AND THE SEA: PLACE, COMMUNITY, AND LIABILITY

The vivid portrait of the emotions, obstacles, and opportunities teased from the art, literature, and law of late medieval Castile provide a variety of perspectives on the nature of the sea and the unique experiences one could expect when going there. Each genre also dealt with fundamental concerns for the loss or limitation of agency suffered by those at sea, albeit in different ways and with different expectations of outcome. In the law, the careful attention given to delineate a maritime military command hierarchy reveals this concern for the loss of human agency, while simultaneously presuming that agency could and would prevail in the case of military expeditions there. In addressing questions of merchant marine legislation, the law bowed to customary practice in addressing the perceived needs of merchant captains, their passengers, and the responsibilities and liabilities each assumed at sea. However, later evidence reveals that ordinary Castilians imagined “custom and practice” in decidedly different terms from those framed by the legists of the *Partidas*, particularly when it came to matters of ownership of property lost at sea. In both cases, the *Partidas*’ focus on responsibility and individual agency stands at odds with the communal perception of shared danger so evident in contemporary art and literature. Yet, while the helplessness and fear emphasized in the early visual and literary evidence grant little agency to those at sea, they do stress a communal approach to the calamities experienced there, still evident even in later accounts even as individual agency becomes more and more evident. In each

case, genre plays a significant role in the reflection of maritime experience offered by these sources, and the analysis of agency and its place in each of them is the subject of this chapter.

As in the case of the previous chapters, a similar pattern of differentiation and integration emerges when examining perception of agency in each of these genres. In terms of the law, statutes governing marine hierarchy preserved existing military systems in use on land and served to address the otherwise largely independent and more egalitarian structure enjoyed by contemporary Castilian mariners. The construction of the hierarchy thus demonstrates a perception of a need for such a system at sea – a perception bolstered from examples from both the *Cantigas* and *Cifar*, demonstrating an imagined distinction between land and sea requiring such an action. At the same time, in employing an organizational structure based almost entirely on that already in Castile, the law demonstrates the same sort of conceptual integration found elsewhere in the *Partidas* and analyzed in Chapter IV. With regard to the artistic and literary evidence, highly differentiated views of land and sea appearing in the thirteenth-century accounts provide a generally negative, one-dimensional view of mariners that gives way to a much more flattering and highly nuanced one by the fifteenth century. At the same time, the agency they display in the accounts shows increasing levels of sophistication and efficacy throughout the late Middle Ages.

This chapter begins with an analysis of the conceptual underpinning of the military marine hierarchy appearing in the thirteenth-century *Partidas* and the relationship between its highly structured vertical hierarchy and the accounts of life at sea

found in the *Cantigas* and *Cifar*. Next, an analysis of communal action and its appearance in all three genres reveals that it remained a constant throughout the late medieval period in Castile. Finally, an analysis of the mercantile laws governing merchant marine liability serves to highlight the difference in expectation regarding agency between military and civilian vessels, as well as demonstrating later conflicts with the law in practice.

Together, these three major areas provide a more detailed overview of agency in the experience of Castilians at sea.

An Illusory Hierarchy

As Chapter IV demonstrates, the perception of the sea reflected at the heart of the maritime law included in the *Partidas* differentiated land from sea and integrated them as well. On the one hand, the law drew clear distinctions between land and sea, and those distinctions served as the foundation for royal perception of the place of the sea in the Castilian realm. On the other hand, integration of land and sea was an integral component of the law as well, one that served to allow for the necessary extension of legal authority into an otherwise non-Castilian environment. With regard to agency, however, the law simply presumed it throughout, as it was required for any assessment of either responsibility for actions taken or liability for losses incurred. In the case of the marine hierarchy, it was a necessity consistent with the legal requirement for agency generally, but also served to impose a vertical hierarchy onto the decks of vessels that, as both literature and art reveal, often operated in a much less hierarchical way. Thus, the laws of the *Partidas* both presumed and celebrated the utility of agency at sea and sought to impose organizational infrastructures consistent with those assumptions, but those infrastructures did not reflect reality aboard Castilian vessels at sea.

From the thirteenth century forward, example after example illustrate that a meritocracy of sorts operated to address emergencies at sea, a function of the collectively-shared danger enjoyed there and the necessity for a united response to the event. The very idea of this kind of communal action typical of vessels at sea was directly at odds with the rigid social stratification of Castilian society. The mere act of boarding a vessel automatically placed any individual into a situation where the elimination of distinction based on social status, or at the very least exposure to vulnerability and dependence on others of lower social rank, was a certainty. The trappings of social hierarchy included in the creation of a naval hierarchy addressed this issue using the traditional Castilian military hierarchy as its model, a process already described in Chapter IV. With familiar military order and language, the legal statutes projected the appearance of familiarity and confidence in the ability of military expeditions to exercise that agency necessary to carry out their missions. Their goal was to create virtual Castilian environments at sea, the vessels becoming, in effect, islands of Castile, distinct in the sense that they were at sea, but otherwise operating under the expectations and assumptions of Castilian territory within the realm. In other words, there was a normative desire at work in the creation of the statutes, an attempt to familiarize and even domesticate the sea for use by men accustomed to war on land.

The irony, of course, was that land and sea-based combat required very different sets of skills, and, as traditional land-based knights trained in sword and lance, early Castilian maritime expedition leaders were really quite unprepared to pursue Castilian military efforts at sea. More importantly, the nameless mariners, pilots, and captains of the vessels were those actually responsible for those successes enjoyed at sea. Ultimately,

this meant that all passengers, regardless of social rank, were dependent upon them for their very lives. By delineating rigid qualifications, responsibilities, and liabilities for those operating in these key positions, the *Partidas* attempted to remedy the leveling nature of the relationship by also imposing nearly *all* of the responsibility and blame for any mishap on the men in these positions, short of an act of divine will.

The prominence of negative attitudes associated with mariners generally in thirteenth century Castile, reflected abundantly in thirteenth century sources such as the *Cantigas*, *Cifar*, and echoed in some of the provisions of the *Partidas* as well, provide evidence for a perceived problem at sea which the legists sought to address through the imposition of the familiar and therefore reliable Castilian military hierarchy. The major theme present in these sources is fear of the unknown, for passengers simply had no way of knowing what nature of men they were sailing with until at sea, when death awaited should their companions decide to turn upon them. It was the very combination of the possibility of treachery and the entirely savage and dangerous nature of the environment itself that made the establishment and elevation of status associated with the hierarchy so important, for it was a way to buttress the social “betters” against their inferiors when they boarded vessels over which they exercised little control. Suspicions regarding the motives of captains and crews alike find voice in the provisions of Partida V, Title IX, Law X, where concern for “men who have the control and command of ships are sometimes guilty of great fraud and treachery,” and may actually divert their assumed courses to “dangerous places in order that the ships may be lost,” in order to “steal or

seize a portion of the freight.”³¹⁴ This provision echoes similar concerns found in several cantigas, particularly *cantiga* 193, where the fear of this sort of treachery reveals itself clearly. In this tale, a merchant accompanying the fleet of Louis IX in route to the Eighth Crusade was accosted by an unspecified group of sailors and soldiers bent on robbing him, an action, the story reminds us, made possible by the fact that he had “embarked alone with that company”.³¹⁵ Robbed and thrown overboard, it was only the intervention of the Virgin Mary that prevented his death by drowning.³¹⁶ We find precisely the same concern in the contemporary *Cifar*, after *Cifar* places Grima aboard a vessel for Alexandria. Here again, the primary issue is the fact that he is unaware of the perilous situation in which he is placing her, as he has no way of knowing the nefarious plans of the seemingly trustworthy captain and crew. When they reveal their intentions in mid-voyage, the terror of the moment directly relates to the fact that she is now at the mercy of evil men while aboard a ship at sea, offering no chance for escape.³¹⁷ The confinement of the vessel, together with the hidden nature of the crews themselves, spoke to the very concern for the anarchy traveling at sea represented, and a strong impetus for the rigor of the maritime hierarchy we find in the statutes of the *Partidas*.

³¹⁴ “Engaño et falsedat muy grande facen á las vegadas algunos de los que han de guiar et de gobernar los navios, de manera que quando sienten que trane grant requiza aquellos que lievan en ellos, guíanlos á sabiendas por logares peligrosos porque se perezcan los navios, et pudean haber ocasión de furtar et de robar algo de aquello que traen.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.IX.X.

³¹⁵ The story refers to Louis IX, 1214-1270, King of France and later canonized as St. Louis. This action occurred near Tunisia, and was in fact the second crusade undertaken by Louis IX.

³¹⁶ See Chapter Two, Figure 17, for the miniature panel illustrating this event.

³¹⁷ Wagner, *El cavallero Cifar*, 94.

Concern for the treachery of those who lived by the sea went beyond the fear of disloyal crews and extended to those who made their living on or near the seashore as well. The *Partidas* made this concern plain through a statute that both warned of a hidden danger and offered stiff penalties for daring to engage in such behavior. Partida V, Title IX, Law XI addresses a concern for fishermen engaging in behavior similar to that described in Law X, but describing an even more insidious danger: the possibility that those ashore might set signals to lure a vessel onto dangerous shoals for the purpose of sinking it and stealing its cargo. The language used extends the concern for treacherous crews to “fishermen and *others of those who are accustomed to fish and to be near the seashore*”, for they might “secretly make signals by fire at night in dangerous places, to persons at sea, causing them to think there is a port there”.³¹⁸ While the primary focus of the statute, of course is that they would do this to “steal and seize some part of their freight,” there is a common concern revealed in these two laws: those with experience and knowledge of the sea may well turn that knowledge against others, and in a particularly treacherous manner. Indeed, by using the words “fishermen and others of those who are accustomed to fish and to be near the seashore”, the law essentially casts suspicion on *anyone* who makes a living in this way near the seashore, suggesting a nearly universal mistrust of those who make their living at sea. When taken together, these statutes underscore the concerns for a loss of agency associated with travel by sea and a deep mistrust of those who made their living near it – a mistrust intimately

³¹⁸ “Pescadores et otros homes de aquellos que usan á pescar ó ser cerca de la ribera de la mar, facen señales de fuego de noche engañosamente en logared peligrosos á los que andan navegando por que cuidan que es el puerto allí, ó las facen con entencion de los engañar qu vengan á la lumbre, et fieran los navios en la peña ó en logar peligroso et se qubranted, porque puedan furtar ó roba algo de lo que traen.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.IX.XI. (Emphasis Mine)

associated with the unfamiliarity of the new environment and a generalized sense that those who knew it well were potentially as treacherous as the sea itself.

The *Cantigas* offer two examples showing sailors in an especially negative light, important because they are the only two *cantigas* in which the word *marýeiros* occurs outside of tales involving vessels at sea. Their presentation, together with the location itself, provides further evidence for the decidedly pejorative attitude toward seamen present in thirteenth century Castile.³¹⁹ The first, *cantiga* 244, involves a group of people from the town of Laredo who sight and kill a whale in the port, and then retire to the church in order to give thanks to the Virgin Mary for their providence. Upon entering the church, one of “those sailors” began an insulting tirade to the others gathered there, saying that he would “go to the tavern instead to drink some wine, and by so doing, I’ll act more sensibly than all of you”. He then does so, for which he is subsequently punished via an affliction which only his heartfelt repentance the next day can relieve, with the Virgin’s intercession.³²⁰ Drinking and sacrilege, as well as an unwillingness to acknowledge the divine role in the bounty received at sea, all combine in illustrating the sailor as profane and intemperate. *Cantiga* 248 also condemns the boorish behavior of sailors in an even more striking and intentionally startling manner. The story takes place in the same church in Laredo while a gathering of the faithful prays with their votive offerings. Suddenly, “two sailors began to fight in mortal struggle right in front of the altar”. The Virgin intercedes and does not allow either to harm the other and they

³¹⁹ *Marýeiros*: Gallician, *marineros* in Castilian.

³²⁰ “Mas un desses maryeiros/ fillou-ss’ a escarnecer/ da gente que y entrava/ e começou a dizer: ‘Ir quer’ eu aa taberna/ and do vinno beber,/ e en aquesto ben tenno/ que os vencerei de sen.” Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 363.

eventually repent and make amends.³²¹ This case highlights the inability of the sailors to control their own propensity for violence, a trait also appearing in *Cifar* when the crew begins the literal fight to the death over Grima, as discussed in Chapter III. In both examples, sailors commit acts of sacrilege in the church itself, and each involves an example of their inability to control their impulsive and amoral tendencies, specifically drinking, violence, and general immorality. Their selection and inclusion in the *Cantigas*, together with the contemporary corroborative evidence from *Cifar* and the *Partidas*, argue for a decidedly negative perception of seafarers generally. Finally, the *Partidas* also offers an excellent example of the pervasively negative attitude toward sailors in a law concerning the responsibility of innkeepers and sailors for property in their charge lost while in their possession, noting that “it frequently happens that among these two kinds of men [those found in taverns or ships], some are found who are very dishonest, and are guilty of great injury and wickedness toward those who confide in them.”³²² There are few references to mariners in the thirteenth century sources, but a definitely negative connotation associated with them and those with whom they associate on the shore.

Thus, given the thirteenth-century Castilian view of the already chaotic nature of the sea itself, treacherous and potentially murderous crews certainly argued for the

³²¹ “e enton dous maryeiros/ fillaron-ss’ a pelejar,/ ben ant’ o altar estando,/ de peleja mui mortal.” Ibid., 372.

³²²“Caballeros, et mercadores et otros homes que van camino acaesce muchas vegadas que han de posar en las casas de los hosteleros et en las tabernas, de manera que han á dar sus cosas á guardar á aquellos que hi fallan, fiándose en ellos sin tetigos et sin otro recabdo ninguno; et otrosi los que han de entrar sobre mar meten sus cosas en las naves en esa mesma manera, fiándose en los marineros. Et porque en cada una destas maneras de homes acaesce muchas vegadas que hi has algunos que son muy desleales et facen muy grandes daños et maldades á aquellos que se fian en ellos, por ende conviene que la su maldat sea refrenada con miedo de pena.” ———, *Siete Partidas*, V.VIII.XXVI.

installation of a strong hierarchical system representing not only familiar military leadership, but reinforcing social hierarchy as a bulwark against the sort of situations described in these examples as well. In the figure of the *Almirante*, the *Partidas* fulfilled both requirements by placing a nobleman in a position to administer justice while at sea, “inflict[ing] punishment upon all those who have given cause for it,” and who held complete authority over the fleet when it was in port with regard to anything related to the “marine service.”³²³ His nobility was an important provision, for it appears nowhere else in any other requirement for a position in either marine military or mercantile service. We can find the conceptual roots for the assumptions the legists attached to the importance of that nobility elsewhere in the *Partidas*, in sections governing knighthood. There, men of such pedigree are exalted because they are reliable, given that they come from “good families, who had property,” and such men “avoid doing anything through which they might suffer humiliation.”³²⁴ In short, the Admiral served as the representative of the warrior elite in Castilian society, and as such, the very antithesis of the treacherous sailors described in the *Cantigas* and *Cífar*. He was, in his very person, a visible link to the existing traditions of the realm itself. By placing him aboard a vessel, the legists sought to neutralize the potentially chaotic elements that might reside there through the stabilizing influence of a man with a concern for both the loss of personal honor and physical property as well.

³²³ “Et otrosi de facer justicia de todos los que merescieren.” *Ibid.*, II.IX.XXIV.

³²⁴ “Sobre todas las otras cosas cataron que fuesen homes de buen linaje, porque se guardasen de facer cosa por que podiesen caer en vergüenza.” *Ibid.*, II.XXI.III. For the relationship between nobility, lineage, and dynastic relationships with the admiralty, see Castro y Castro, García Oro, and Portela Silva, *La nobleza española y la iglesia: dos ejemplos relevantes: los Almirantes de Castilla y los Condes de Altamira*. For the roots of the relationship between the nobility and admiralty, also see Sánchez Saus, “El Almirantazgo de Castilla hasta don Alonso Jofré Tenorio: redes de parentesco y tradición familiar.”

Deep mistrust of those who operated at sea extended all the way to this very summit of the legal maritime hierarchy, despite the presumption of quality and loyalty the statutes granted the Admiral. Much of this distrust stemmed from the ancient belief that the original Moorish invasion was a consequence of treachery involving allowing the Moors into the kingdom via the port of Algeciras, at that time under the control of Count Julian and by whose treachery the Moors gained entry to the Iberian Peninsula in 711. The tale of the betrayal of Rodrigo, the last of the Visigothic kings of Spain, first appeared in 754 in the *Crónica mozárabe del año 754*. The story, repeated and embellished for centuries, retained an essential dependence on the complicity of a powerful noble – eventually Count Julian – in allowing the Moors access to the peninsula by providing them the safety of the port of Algeciras. From the thirteenth century onward, the Castilian monarchs tended to cast the Moorish Conquest as a matter of divine punishment for the wickedness of the last Visigoth dynasties, but continued to include the essential betrayal involved by Count Julian as the proximate cause of the eventual disaster.³²⁵ While Martínez de Fe apparently suffered no injury to his reputation following the disaster off Algeciras in 1278, Diego García de Toldeo (d. 1332), who assumed the position of Admiral of Galleys in 1304, suffered suspicion of collusion with the Aragonese when he failed to take their fleet, discovered as he approached Ceuta. While there was no evidence to back the claim, the campaign to discredit him came from “jealous nobles” according to Zurita, subsequently rejected as unsubstantiated by

³²⁵ For the development of the legend over time and its political significance, see A. Deyermond, “The Death and Rebirth of Visigothic Spain in *Estoria de España*,” *Revisa Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 9 (1985), Ramón Menéndez Pidal, “El rey Rodrigo en la literatura,” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 11 (1924), Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *Rodrigo, el último godo*, 3 vols. (Espasa-Calpe, 1958).

Alfonso XI.³²⁶ Joffre de Tenorio was apparently not so fortunate. Sánchez tells us that an intense whisper campaign at court resulted in a charge that he may have taken pay from the Marinids directly in order to allow them to cross in force, thus granting them Algeciras in a manner consistent with that employed by Count Julian. Sánchez reports that Alfonso XI appeared unsure as to what to believe in the matter, prompting Tenorio's wife to send word to the Admiral that he should "look to his reputation."³²⁷ Indeed, Sanchez argues that it was this concern for defending his personal honor against these scurrilous charges that led Tenorio to take the reckless actions culminating in the loss of the fleet in 1340. Both cases reveal that even those noblemen at the top of the maritime hierarchy could find themselves the brunt of a deep mistrust of the motives and activities of men who made their livings at sea.

When Alfonso XI sought out a genuinely experienced naval commander in the person of Egidio Bocanegra (d.ca. 1368), a Genoese mercenary, as a replacement for Tenorio, similar concerns regarding his loyalty and possible treachery surfaced.³²⁸ So

³²⁶ Jerónimo Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón, compuestos por Jerónimo Zurita. Ed. preparada por Angel Canellas López*, ed. Angel Canellas López, V vols., vol. I (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1967), 437.

³²⁷ Sánchez de Valladolid, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*. Sánchez later claims that after the arrival of the news of the Moorish crossing Alfonso had personally questioned the messenger and was satisfied with Tenorio's report; thus, the suspicion he implies on the part of the king was probably exaggerated, or a matter of the reporting of a momentary reaction on first hearing the news.

³²⁸ Bocanegra, arguably the greatest of all medieval Castilian Admirals, was the brother of the Duke of Genoa and a highly sought after commander by both sides in the Hundred Years' War. He had recently commanded a flotilla at the Battle of Sluys (Winchelsea, to the English), where a smaller English fleet had engaged and routed the much larger French fleet in a protected harbor. Bocanegra, employed by the French at that time, urged them to make sail for open water when the English appeared, but his advice went unheeded. Alfonso XI had apparently heard the story and was greatly impressed, and in the dire situation of 1340, immediately commissioned him.

great was Castilian resistance to his command that Alfonso XI penned a letter demanding that all those of the fleet accept him as their commander:

We command by this letter that all aboard these ships shall obey the said Admiral Bocanegra and shall follow his orders as they would do if we were with the fleet. We command him to arm said fleet with whatever provisions and men he shall deem necessary, and we give him our power as the admiral to administer justice by land or sea to those aboard the said *naos*...and let no one dare to oppose what is proclaimed here under penalty of our will.³²⁹

Alfonso's actions in response to the continuing mistrust of the motives surrounding the fleet commanders also tackled another important concern regarding this particular appointment: a commonly held view in Castilian circles at that time that "the Genoese have always aided whoever paid them, and in this regard, they did not consider Christianity or the good of anyone."³³⁰ In this case, of course, Bocanegra was indeed acting as a mercenary; but immediately following his successful support of the Battle of the Rio Salado less than a month later, Alfonso awarded him substantial lands in Castile,

³²⁹ "Mandamos por esta nuestra carta a todos los que fueren con las dichas naos que obedescan al dicho Almirante y cumplan su mandado as como lo obedezieran si fuessen con la flota que nos. Mandasemos armar con qualesquier personas nuestro mandamos damos poder al dicho Almirante faga justicia por mar o por tierra en los que fueren en las dichas naos... e ningun algunos non sean osados ir pasar contra esto que dicho es so pena de la nuestra merced." King of Castile and Leon Alfonso XI, "Letter to the Castilian fleet," in *Colección Salazar y Castro* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1340).

³³⁰ "ca los genoveses ovieron siempre manera de ayudar a quien les diese dineros, e sobre esto non catavan cristiandad nin otro bien ninguno." Catalán and Núñez de Villaizán, *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, 324. For Genoese/Castilian maritime interaction, see Eugene Hugh Byrne, *Genoese Shipping in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co, 1970). For an analysis of the cultural exchange between southern Iberia and Genoa in the late Middle Ages, see Alberto Garcia Porras and Adela Fabregas Garcia, "Genoese Trade Networks in the Southern Iberian Peninsula: Trade, Transmission of Technical Knowledge and Economic Interactions," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25, no. 1 (2010).

including the village of Palma near Cordoba, “for the many good thing he has done for us in this office of the Admiralty”, and also the right of inheritance to his descendants.³³¹

This grant cemented Bocanegra’s connection to Castile, and while it was certainly a reward for his timely service in the Straits, it was also a means of silencing critics by tying Bocanegra’s fortunes to the kingdom it was his duty as *almirante* to protect. By making Bocanegra a land-owning member of the Castilian elite, the king placed him in the position envisioned by the framers of the *Partidas* hierarchy – a land owning “man of quality”, for who shame would -- hopefully -- act as a sufficient bulwark against treachery.

In the creation of the marine hierarchy, the framers of the *Partidas* responded in part to the perceived chaos of the maritime realm, populated as it was by potentially dangerous and unscrupulous individuals. The section on maritime military hierarchy is the largest section of laws dealing with the sea in the *Partidas*, and precisely for that very reason; for the great majority of those at sea were simple sailors, presumed to be of exactly the unsavory sort indicated in the examples above. The laws delineate proper qualifications and conduct for each position – from the Admiral to the lowest seaman – with special concern for the legal jurisdiction and responsibilities from lowest to highest.

³³¹“Nos Alfonso, por la gracia de Dios Rey de Castilla de Toledo de Leon en uno con la reyna Dona Maria nuestra mugger et con nuestro fijo el Infante Don Pedro primero heredero por fayer bien y merced a nos Don Eguidio Bocanegra de Genoa, nuestro Almirante Mayor dela Mar, por muchos servicios e buenos que nos fecisteis e facedes de cada día en este oficio del Almerantazgo por mar e tierra... y por que es nuestra voluntad de vos a crecentar en buestra honrra e en buestro bien por que ayader mas e balades mas damos vos el nuestro lugar de Palma villa e Castillo que era fasta aquí aldea...” King of Castile and Leon Alfonso XI, "Grant of the village of Palma near Cordoba to Admiral Egidio Bocanegra," in *Colección Salazar y Castro* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1342). See the brief treatment as well in Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa, "A construção da memória sobre a batalha do Salado em Portugal," in *Cadiz en el siglo XIII: Actas de las Jornadas Conmemorativas del 7 Centenario de la muerte de Alfonso X el Sabio*, ed. Manuel González Jiménez and Isabel Montes Romero-Camacho (Camas-Sevilla: Pinelo Talleres Gráficos, 2003).

The thirteenth century tendency to support a rigidly class-based reportage of events – and the presumption of agency in the law granted to every member of the hierarchy it described – was partly a matter of style for documents written in the thirteenth century. In reality, however, the abilities and skill of individuals varied widely and meant that often the least among those assembled in a crew might actually have the skill necessary to read the weather correctly, or to guide a vessel properly in certain waters, even to actually make the decisions necessary to save the vessel itself. Ultimately, this meant that a certain horizontal organizational structure existed at sea, entirely at odds with the rigidly vertical juridical model. In practice, the collective dangers faced by those at sea had a leveling affect on any imposed hierarchical structure, and agency, so highly touted in the law, was often as illusory as any notion of position.

Communal Action

From the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, example after example show us that communal action was the norm at sea and that hierarchies, to the extent they mattered at all, functioned best when all involved understood that the shared danger of the sea took precedence over all other considerations in an emergency. This appears visually in striking detail in the many examples of the *Cantigas*, where divine intervention becomes a given in every such situation. Yet, despite the fact that we must recognize that the purpose of the *Cantigas* itself was to document the miraculous intervention of the Virgin in a myriad of situations, we can also glean great significance from the patterns emerging with regard to the way those miracles unfold at sea. Above all, we can see that in each case, there is no reliance on any kind of hierarchy at all to solve or address the problem at

hand, and that in place of that hierarchy there exists a commonality of purpose and a willingness to accede to the most persuasive voice aboard at the moment of greatest danger. As the following examples reveal, this communal action, so firmly at odds with the hierarchical structure imposed by the *Partidas*, was in fact the norm at sea as illustrated by the *Cantigas*. Rather than great men in confident command, we find groups of individuals working together for their mutual salvation in a desperate environment, with seemingly little pattern at times involved in the elevation of an individual to a position of ultimate authority.

The shared nature of danger at sea takes precedence in every *cantiga* dealing with the subject. Cantiga 33, for example, relates the story of the sinking of a vessel with nearly 800 people aboard, but there is no account of any leadership present in the disaster. More importantly, as the story describes the survivors making their way aboard lifeboats, there is no differentiation between crew and passengers – all share in the immediacy of the danger, and all are equal in the circumstances. Neither is there mention of social status of any kind, beyond noting that a bishop was present and that “when he saw that the sea became turbulent, his only thought was to escape, so he got into the lifeboat with two hundred people”.³³² The leveling character of the disaster reads plainly here, emphasizing the absence of social hierarchy as a concern in the situation. In Cantiga 313, passengers aboard a ship tossing in a ferocious storm face the situation in exactly the same way as an undifferentiated mass of humanity collectively facing disaster.³³³ Indeed,

³³² “Un Bispo forar entrar/ y, que cuidava pasar/ con eles; e pois torvar/ o mar viu, seus pensamentos/ foron dali escapar” Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 97.

³³³ ———, *Cantigas*, 155-57.

the *Cantigas* emphasize this communal situation through the consistent use of the pronominal form “they” in addressing the response of those aboard. In the case of the former example, “those in the boat,” rowed for shore; “they raised their sail,” and “they began to cross themselves,” as they turned to the Virgin for aid.³³⁴ In the latter example, “all the people on it were in grave danger... they saw many people on the ship dying around them...therefore they shouted and called on the Lord God...all were in danger and mortal fear and thought they were as good as dead”.³³⁵ In both cases, the lack of individual agency takes the fore as the disasters unfold, and nowhere is there evidence of any kind of hierarchy or differentiation, even between passengers and crew. Passengers aboard a vessel owed their lives to the vessel itself, and all had an equal stake in the outcome of events.

The equalizing effect of dangers faced at sea, exacerbated as they were by the confines of the vessels themselves, had another consequence – the tendency of individuals to assume leadership roles regardless of any social status or given position among the crew. Collectively shared danger thus spawned a horizontally based notion of hierarchy, where anyone could potentially serve as a leader in a given moment, whether because of his cool head, ability to lead, or experience with a specific situation. Given the centrality of Marian miracle in the *Cantigas*, we might expect to find that priests take that role at certain moments, and they do. In Cantiga 313, for example, as the vessel began to founder and “all” realized that death was imminent, it was a priest who stepped up and

³³⁴ “Os do batel a remar se fillaron”; “ssa vea foron alcar”; “comecaron-ss’ a sinar”.———, *Cantigas*, 98.

³³⁵ “pelo mar en gran tormenta/ e quanta gent’ era y estaban en mui gran coita...demás viian da nave muitos a ollo morrer...Todos en perigoo eran e en gran coita mortal,/ e ben cuidaban que fossen mortos.” ——, *Cantigas*, 156.

calls on the Virgin to save the hapless passengers.³³⁶ In Cantiga 36, a “great storm” threatened a vessel carrying “a great company of men,” all of whom began, collectively, to appeal to various saints for their aid. However, an abbot eventually stepped forward and reminded them to appeal to the Virgin, whereupon her appearance at the masthead saved them when she miraculously calmed the storm.³³⁷ In both cases, there is a total absence of the involvement of a “crew” of any kind. At some point, the priests step forward to intervene. As in the previous example, the need for a situation beyond the remedy of human agency forces the issue of a crew entirely out of the equation, but it again emphasizes the helplessness and seeming inadequacy of human agency in meeting conditions at a certain point at sea.

Such a prominent role for the clergy is hardly unexpected in the stories of the *Cantigas*, but as the following examples relate, there are an equal number of such events that do not involve a priest or religious of any kind. In Cantiga 339, for example, it is a “good man” who steps forward at a moment of crisis. A vessel traveling from Cartagena to Alicante began to take on water, and the assembled passengers began praying to various saints for aid. After the “good man” reminds them that they ought to rely upon the Virgin, “they then examined the ship where the water was coming in, and all went there to decide what to do.” Having arrived together and assessed the damage, “their decision was to bail out the water.”³³⁸ Thus, in this case, an unnamed person comes to the

³³⁶“e ben cuidaban que fossen mortos non ouuess’ y al;/ mais ú crerigo que era y, pois viu a coita tal/ e oyra dos miragres de Santa Virgen dizer.” *Ibid.*, 157.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

³³⁸ “Mais ú ome bõ lles disse : ‘Non/ á y quen nos possa tanto valer/Como a Vergen, que Madr’ é de Deus...E eles o fezeron log’ assy/ e pois cataron a nave des y/ per u entrara a agua, e y/ foron todos por conssell’ y põer/ E o consello deles foi atal/ que sacassen, enon fezessen al, a agua da nave.” *Ibid.*, 220.

fore in the moment of emergency; the assembled group *collectively* decides what they ought to do to save themselves and the vessel, and they implement that decision as a group. Neither captain nor crew receive mention at any point until the final two lines, when the vessel has docked, whereupon the captain examines the hull breach to find that three fish had sealed it shut. His appearance as almost an afterthought in the story is consistent with the rest of the *cantigas*, where neither ships' crews nor leadership receives mention or credit for the exercise of any meaningful agency in the outcome of an event.

Indeed, even the lone military example in the collection, *cantiga* 271, attributes little importance to the role of hierarchy or command in addressing a crisis at sea. In the story, a Portuguese galley finds itself stranded for three months in a shallow estuary off the coast of Morocco.³³⁹ Eventually, the captain gathers the crew together and asks them to join him in a communal offering to the Virgin in exchange for salvation: "I have great hope in the Spiritual Virgin, who, if we promise her something, will free us from this plight".³⁴⁰ All agree to this shared pledge, and the wind rises and pulls the galley into deeper waters. In this case, the captain is critical as a catalyst to the ultimate salvation of the crew, an occurrence unique to this particular story. However, the elevation of his role in the collective effort, otherwise entirely consistent with the rest of those presented here from the *Cantigas*, is noteworthy. As the only *cantiga* in the collection dealing directly

³³⁹ The event, contemporary with the early years of Alfonso's reign, was probably a personal contribution. It probably refers to the unsuccessful siege of Marrakesch of 1261-62, analyzed by Jesus Montoya. See Jesús Montoya Martínez, "La cantiga núm. 181 o el frustrado cerco a Marrakech (1261)," *Cuadernos de Estudios Medievales* 8/9 (1978).

³⁴⁰ "Eu ei tan gran esperanca na Virgen espirital/que, se ll'algo prometemos, sacar-nos-á deste mal;/ poren cada un prometa de grado do que tover." Emphasis mine. Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, 54.

with Iberian military men at sea, it is also the only such example of a captain taking direct action in this manner, and as a military figure, argues for a difference in expectation regarding civilian and military experience in a similar situation. This difference in expectation would be entirely consistent with the assumed agency granted so freely in the *Partidas* to military officers and their expected ability to meet the challenges of the sea.

Thus, agency does not tend to resolve problems at sea in the *Cantigas*, and the pattern appears consistently throughout. On the one hand, such lack of agency is consistent with the genre itself. Marian miracle tales required the suspension of any hope of agency in order to necessitate the miracle; hence the miraculous nature of the resolution.³⁴¹ Yet, the demonstration of communal attitudes in facing emergency at sea is one that finds resonance across the centuries, as the following section will demonstrate. The creation of a military hierarchy in the *Partidas* was a prescriptive articulation of a conceptual ideal, intended to provide a solid and reliable foundation for the comfortable transference of Castilian military success to the marine environment. Yet, it would be nearly a century before truly experienced military naval officers would begin to appear in the sources, and longer before reflections of the many other mariners vital to the operation of the fleets would receive attention in chronicle or tale. Finally, if sailors received generally less negative references by the fifteenth century, better accounts of their actions both praised their skill and revealed concern for their tendency to disregard hierarchy in favor of self-preservation. As the centuries wore on, the utility of agency in all respects appears as more and more critical to activities in Castilian accounts.

³⁴¹ See especially Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000-1215*.

Those Who Can...Should

The role of collective action in addressing danger at sea remained an absolute given throughout the last half of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries. As the fifteenth century dawned, however, a decidedly different model appears in the sources, one suggesting the advent of a new era in Castilian history, one where the sea had become much more closely integrated with the realm in conceptual terms, and one where the sort of military hierarchy envisioned by the *Partidas* did exist. Four sources give us a clear look at this phenomenon, two of them travel narratives, the others contemporary chronicles. The travel narratives, Pero Tafur's *Andanc* (1435-39) and Ruy González de Clavijo's *Embajada a Tamorlán* (1412), each offer excellent examples of a dramatically different approach to the sea and descriptions that indicate both continuity and change with regard to thirteenth century assumptions.³⁴² Two chronicles, the *Crónica de Juan II de Castilla* (c. 1460) and *El Victorial* (1449), both provide particularly strong evidence for the appearance of the qualified, experienced naval officers and the functioning maritime hierarchy so clearly articulated in the *Partidas*. Taken together, these sources provide an outstanding contrast to those of the thirteenth century and make possible some further conclusions regarding a change in the expression of possibility regarding the ability of Castilians to meet the sea's challenges.

If one thing is clear in the fifteenth century evidence, it is that a communal approach to emergency remained the hallmark of life at sea. However, this does not mean that one encounters the sort of chaos found in the *Cantigas* or the foolhardy actions of

³⁴² Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán*.

admirals like Tenorio Indeed, in place of these we find that experience and competency of exactly the sort recommended by the *Partidas* is in great abundance – though sometimes displayed in ways that they certainly would not have expected, as in this example from Tafur’s *Travels* off the coast of Adalia.³⁴³ With a Turkish vessel in pursuit, all aboard Tafur’s smaller boat rowed for their lives against the faster Turkish galley. Tafur’s servant, a Catalan who had killed the nephew of the Captain of his galley, had come into his service after narrowly escaping death when the hanging rope broke and Tafur asked for him. As they rowed, this servant – whom Tafur had discovered was a skilled navigator – was lightening the boat by jettisoning cargo, something one of the accompanying vessels refused to do. The Turks overtook and sunk the other vessel, drowning all aboard, before turning on Tafur’s as well. As darkness fell, his servant urged them to put to sea, saying that the Turks would expect them to stay near shore given the small size of their vessel, and that they would simply lay in wait for them near there. They did as the servant recommended and escaped the Turks. Just as we have already seen in thirteenth century evidence, an emergency brings an individual to the fore – in this case, a servant, a condemned man, whose decisive action saves all aboard. Tafur, a Castilian knight whose descriptions of the places and peoples he encounters is particularly concerned with lineage and social status, makes no qualification or excuses for the event involving his slave taking charge of the situation, noting that he would rather “have fallen into the hands of the Turks than be drowned at sea!”³⁴⁴ He makes no

³⁴³ Tafur notes this as “Satalia”, as it was known in the Middle Ages. It is the largest town on the southern coast of Asia Minor, roughly 250 miles southeast of Smyrna. Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, 123.

³⁴⁴ “Quánto yo más quisiera aver caydo en poder de los turcos que non ser anegado en tal lugar!” Ibid., 124. See the discussion of Tafur’s presentation of chivalry in Calbarro, “Pero Tafur: un caballero andaluz en Tierra Santa.”

real mention of the remarkable reversal of status, or of the actions of the captain or crew of the vessel. The example reveals a critical distinction between command in emergencies on land and sea. Nowhere will you find an example of a company of men commanded by military leaders on land surrendering that power to a servant of any kind. In this case, a man of the lowest possible social status in Castilian society received immediate command of a situation involving all aboard the vessel, including the captain and his own master, a Castilian nobleman. The critically important factor was that the event was occurring at sea, and his expertise was the most important element in the decision to grant him such control and ignore the obvious disparity in social rank between the slave and every other freeman aboard. The example underscores that leadership at sea in an emergency was a matter of competence throughout the late medieval period in Castile, and in such cases, experience was the most important factor in gaining the trust and confidence of all aboard.

The ascendancy of the primary role of a communal approach to the display and application of experience and expertise at sea easily eclipses the fact that certain continuities remained – fear of the sea and mistrust of seamen being two of the most prominent. Tafur's *Andanzas y Viajes*, for example, is full of examples of storms and perils faced collectively by crew and passengers, but in every case, the journey continues in one way or another and the crews display great skill in the exercise of their tasks in remedying any problem, as in the following example:

A great tempest arose which damaged the ship, but the sailors, being very skilled in that art, repaired the damage as best they could...we doubled the

Cape of S. Maria and came to the island of Tenedos, where we anchored and disembarked. While the ship was being refitted we set out to see the island.³⁴⁵

The casual, straightforward description of this event reveals a significant shift in expectation regarding agency at sea. Although a “great tempest” is underway, and we well know Tafur’s fear of drowning (recall his earlier reference to his preference for capture by the Turks than to suffer such a fate), he is again relatively casual in his description of the event because he recognizes, appreciates, and *relies* on the skill of the sailors involved.

We find a similar example of what would have been a disastrous situation in an earlier century resolved by skilled seamen in the record of Clavijo’s *Embassy*, relating the events occurring after a fierce storm erupts at the very moment the vessel is attempting to enter the Straits of Messina to make port there:

That night the wind increased greatly, whereby the pilot, who had come out to us from Messina to take the carrack through the Straits and into port, ordered sail to be made turning us back...the carrack struck taking ground, and the rudder became unshipped from its box. We thought now indeed that all was lost, but after a spell we managed to get the carrack off

³⁴⁵ “Ovimos tan grant tormenta que se abrió nuestro navío, é ellos, como desta arte son discretos, reparáronlo lo mejor que pudieron...doblamos el cabo de Santa María é fuemos á la isla del Téndedon é allí surgimos é descendimos en tierra; é en tanto que se adovaba la nao, fuemos á ver la isla.” Tafur, *Andanças e viajes*, 135.

the rocks and so gained safety with sea room³⁴⁶. Forthwith we let down two anchors, and remained stationary until daylight.³⁴⁷

As with the previous example, this passage emphasizes skill and agency in meeting what would have certainly been a disastrous occurrence in the thirteenth century. Several features of the passage point to notable changes in perception, the first of them being the level of specificity regarding individuals and their roles. We hear specifically about a pilot and his function, and although the *Partidas* made it plain that the pilot ought to be supremely knowledgeable generally about the nature of local “currents...the course of the winds...changes of the weather,” and other details of local navigation, we do not hear of them in operation until the fifteenth century. Indeed, Clavijo’s casual reference to the pilot’s presence and function suggests that he was familiar with them and had probably seen several of them prior to entering ports elsewhere.³⁴⁸ In addition, following a potentially catastrophic equipment issue – the loss of rudder function – the response is methodical and calculated, resulting in a stable anchorage at night and riding out the storm. As in the previous example, a coordinated effort by skilled crewmembers results in what amounts to a triumph of agency over circumstance with regard to the description itself.

³⁴⁶ Unobstructed space at sea for maneuvering.

³⁴⁷ “En el noche, creció el viento e un piloto que venía de la ciudad de Mecina para meter por aquella boca la carraca, fezo fazer vela; e llegando en par de aquella torre del Faro, tocó la carraca en tierra e saltó el timón de caja, e ovieron de ser perdidos, salvo que el viento era poco e el mar andava baxo. E fizieron de manera como en un punto la carraca fue recobrada e metida al largo. E desde que fueron al largo, surgieron dos anclas e estudiaron así fasta el día.” González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán*, 93.

³⁴⁸ Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, II.XXIV.V.

Both Clavijo and Tafur provide descriptions of events and sometimes-detailed activities of crews at sea that reveal a great deal about their ability to meet the challenges all aboard shared. During a monstrous storm accompanying a volcanic eruption off the island of Stromboli, Clavijo describes the appearance of “a candle that appeared on the mainyard arm, and at the masthead of the carrack, while another light flamed at the end of the bowsprit.” He then casually adds, “All these lights, which are St. Elmo’s fires, were seen by the crew of the carrack,” an event that roused great interest, but no concern or association with the supernatural.³⁴⁹ When compared with the appearance of the Virgin at the masthead in *cantiga* 36, the contrast is striking indeed. In both cases, the crews were under duress and a storm raged; but although Clavijo’s crew was certainly *interested* in the sight – at one point the captain “caused all the crew of the carrack to be roused,” in order to relate what they had seen, they did not make an association with the divine, nor did they immediately appeal for divine intervention. The story not only reinforces a certain demystification of the sea for Castilians, but also the increasingly important role of agency in affairs at sea. Crews do not have difficulty recognizing or addressing the crises or phenomena they witness, and while this may have always been true to some degree, it is only in the fifteenth century that we begin to see specific evidence of this kind for the confident exercise of agency so confidently assigned to those crews by the *Partidas*.

³⁴⁹ “Andando en la tormenta, pareció una lumre de candela en la gavia, encima del mástel de la carraca, e otra lumre en el madero que llaman bauprés, que está en al castil de vante...E estas lumbres que así vieran dezían que era fray Pero Goncales de Tuy, que se avían encomendado a él.” González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán*, 92. Bertran notes that the specific references to nautical equipment indicate the involvement of experienced mariners in the compilation of the manuscript. See also the exposition on the tradition of St.Elmo’s fire and its presence in this particular part of the tale in Francisco López Estrada, “El paso por las Islas Eolias y Sicilia de la embajada de Enrique III al Tamorlán,” *Atti Accademia Peloritana dei Pericolanti* 70 (1996): 14-15.

In like fashion, Clavijo describes careful actions on the part of the crew that illustrate confidence and even freedom of action at sea. Facing stiff headwinds against which progress was impossible, Clavijo tell us that the vessel proceeded by “tacking and going about,” a process made more difficult because “it was impossible to make long tacks by reason of the numerous islands that lay on every hand.”³⁵⁰ When winds snapped the lateen mast in otherwise fair weather, they “landed on the coast to repair the damage, getting off again shortly before midday.”³⁵¹ When his vessel approached the port of Ineboli³⁵², requiring careful navigation into the hidden channel of the port, “at command, one of our rowers threw himself into the waters and managed to swim ashore, where procuring a lantern he signaled clearly to us.”³⁵³ Again, the relaxed manner in which he includes these details lends weight to their importance, for they reveal a greatly more confident attitude and testify to the level of agency men could bring to bear at sea. Because Clavijo was keeping a travel narrative similar to Tafur’s, he makes no particular fuss over these events and simply included them among the details contained in the daily chronicle he was keeping in the manner of a log. The daily recording thus allows confidence in a conclusion that the events did *not* stand out to him as particularly important or unusual examples, but rather as ordinary events with expected outcomes.

³⁵⁰ “Ovieron viento contrario, e andudieron voltejando de una parte a otra, que no podían doblar un cabo de la tierra de la Turquía. . .no poder tomar vueltas, salvo cortas, por las muchas islas e por la tierra de la Turquía ser cerca. E andudieron todo ese día voltejando, que no pudieron pujar, salvo muy poco.” González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán*, 101-02.

³⁵¹ “E a ora de terciá, yendo la vela con buen tiempo, quebró el antena e andudieron un poco a ritieron de rimos e llegaronse a la tierra e adobaon su antena e prtieron de aquí.” *Ibid.*, 151.

³⁵² A port town on the Black Sea, roughly 590 km from Istanbul.

³⁵³ “E un galeote que se lancó en el agua a nado, fue a tierra e tomó una lanterna e alumbrólos de manera que la galeota fue a puerto en salvo.” González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán*, 160.

Indeed, his lack of surprise or use of superlatives argues for an expectation that agency will triumph over weather, equipment failure, and even the lack of a pilot to enter a hidden port.

Even greater celebration of agency, collective action, and the importance of individual skill appears in *El Victorial*, the chronicle of Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna. It is here that we can see the efflorescence of the *Partidas* legists' vision of Castilian agency manifested in the marine hierarchy, the very essence of the islands of Castile they envisioned in their statutes – for the men that appear in this account meet the basic qualifications and display precisely the sort of agency they described in the thirteenth century. In 1404, Enrique III (1379-1406) commissioned Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, to take a fleet and combat Castilian pirates in the Mediterranean who were indiscriminately attacking merchant vessels. Niño's selection of his crews included The best mariners, experienced in the navigation of galleys at Seville," including "Micer Nicolaso Bonel, ship's captain of the captain's [Niño's] galley, a strong knight and a good mariner, who had often been at sea on great affairs and had been captain of galleys; Juan Bueno, who all his life had been going about in carracks, sailing ships and galleys, a proved mariner whose advice in sea councils was always surer than that of other mariners, and others, both masters of oarsmen and mariners, strong in body and skilled in their calling.³⁵⁴ This observation, merely preparatory to the chronicle to follow, provides an excellent example of the degree to which maritime skill and experience had become

³⁵⁴ "Nicolò Bonel, Patrón de la galera del capitán, un recio cavalleo e buen mareante, que se avía acaecido muchas vezes sobre mar en algunos grandes fechos, e avía seydo patrón de galeras. Hera allí Juan Bueno, marinero que toda su vida avía andado en carracas e en naos e en galeras. Here muy provado marinero: siempre fue en los consejos de la mar más cierto que ningún marineros heran. E otros cómitres e marineros, recios por sus personas, e muy buenos marineros.: Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 82.

commonplace in Castille by the early fifteenth century. Here, the chronicle presents men actively sought for their experience and placed into key positions, just as the *Partidas* envisioned, and evidence for a broader cadre of those men throughout greater Castile and Spain itself.

El Victorial is a testament to the great change in the way agency appeared in Castilian sources by the fifteenth century, as well as to the implementation of the hierarchy imagined by the framers of the *Partidas*. Niño's crews face storm and disaster with exactly the same mixture of experience and confidence as those described in both Tafur's *Travels* and Clavijo's *Embassy*. Niño himself appears as the quintessential captain as imagined by the *Partidas*: a knight and warrior first, but experienced and brave in matters involving the sea. However, Like Tenorio before him, Niño's tactical priorities are the same as earlier military naval commanders – personal honor and glory first, even when the actions taken might endanger the fleet itself. As an example, when Niño learned that the Corsair fleet was near and had moved towards Sardinia, the assembled sailors in his council warned against a pursuit, citing unfavorable winds and the approaching dusk. Yet, as Díaz relates, Niño “took no account of any danger when it was a question of gaining honor, [and] had so great a wish to catch these Corsairs, that he forgot all perils and toils which might befall.”³⁵⁵ The consequences were immediate, as the vessels encountered a storm in open water which blew fiercely, while the “captain bade them

³⁵⁵ “Mas Pero Niño, que non temía peligro ninguno que venirle pudiese a respeto de la honra, tan gran cobdicia abía de alcanzar aquellos cosarios, que olvidava todos los peligros e trabajos que venirle pudiesen.” Ibid., 110.

busy themselves in making the best of it and not to speak more of turning back.”³⁵⁶ Niño later taunts the sailors for their fear during the ferocious storm, and as they busied themselves keeping the vessel afloat and making frequent promises to do pilgrimages in return for their salvation, frequently appeared on deck in a show of bravado. In this case, the collective struggle to save the vessel, juxtaposed as it is with the appearance of the brave Castilian knight acting as their commander, heedless of any potential danger, shows Niño in a light similar to that of Tenorio, though fortunate in this instance. Acting as a group however, it is his crew that shines through the account as the most important element in the story, again demonstrating the critical importance of communal action at sea.

There were, however, distinct differences in Niño’s approach to leadership at sea that mark a significant departure from that of earlier centuries. Chief among these was his willingness to seek counsel from the experienced seamen aboard his vessels, a quality greatly valued and praised by his chronicler. While stranded in the Habibas Islands³⁵⁷, strong headwinds prevented them from returning to Spain. After suffering fifteen days in the situation, rations ran low – but it was by collective agreement that they reached a solution, when “the captain and his sailors agreed that they were in great jeopardy in this desert island and that the crews must be rationed.” Díaz emphasizes that “all, from the greatest to the least, were set under this rule *and even the captain obeyed it.*”³⁵⁸ Niño later

³⁵⁶ “E los marineros quisieran tornar a la tierra; mas el capitán les dixo que curasen de poner el mejor remedio que pudiesen, que en la tornada no fablasen.” Ibid., 111.

³⁵⁷ Two rocky islands lying 12 km west of the Algerian coastline.

³⁵⁸ “E que diesen a la gente el pan por peso, e el agua e el vino por medida, tan solamente con qu pudiesen pasar e non pereziesen de anbre e sed. En estaregla entraron todos, del mayor fasta el menor, e aún el capitán entró en esta misma regla.” Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 133.

called a council of all “his sailors experienced in sea matters...skilled in their calling,” at which time he sought advice as to how to proceed given the wind direction and conditions.³⁵⁹ Díaz describes a lively debate involving several differing opinions, with Niño finally turning to Juan Bueno, the famed *cómitre* from Seville, for his advice. When Bueno defers until morning to give an answer, Niño waits and then accepts his judgment without question, leaving for Spain the next morning on Bueno’s recommendation.³⁶⁰ Niño’s willingness to ask and receive the counsel of his crews, as well as his habit of leading by example, gained the appreciation of his men and of his chronicler. Indeed, Díaz takes great pains to point out that this behavior was not only exemplary, but typical of his master – and the magnanimity of his willingness to confer is something he was especially keen to point out.

Niño drew a distinction between land and sea in his willingness to seek the advice of his crews or to act upon it. When, with their water supply fully exhausted, he engaged in another council meeting to determine the best course of action, Niño told the group that he favored a short but dangerous journey to a nearby spot known as a good watering source, but his crew cautioned him against it, warning that the ocean conditions were still treacherous and the place itself known for ambushes.³⁶¹ Niño’s response reveals the nature of his command relationship with the mariners: “Do you give me your warrant for matters that pertain to the sea; on land, God, who is ever wont to come to our help, will

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 135.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Díaz reports this place as “El Bergelete”, which he notes is near the caves of “Alcocevar”; Evans argues it is thus probably a grotto called *Arcozava* or *Aqua oiva* on Buchon’s fourteenth-century Catalan map.

help us yet again see that we do not perish.”³⁶² This statement reveals much about Niño’s relationship with the crew, and his willingness to seek their counsel; Niño infers that he will defer to their expertise at sea, but not ashore, preferring instead to refer to God as the ultimate source of guidance there. He pointedly does not link God to that role by land *and* sea, but only to land – suggesting that he expected God to guide and support his efforts when he was engaged in battle there.

Niño would later prove to be true to those words when, in a battle off the French coast somewhere north of Calais, his crew demonstrated the limits of the hierarchical system at sea.³⁶³ As Niño’s combined French-Castilian fleet engaged the English, the wind turned in favor of the English vessels and several large whalers began to move briskly toward his flagship. His crew urged him to break off and withdraw, and Niño responded typically by challenging their bravery: “Let him who is afraid take to flight; but this time either they shall carry us away prisoners to England, or we will take them to France, or he shall die whom God wills to die.”³⁶⁴ Díaz reports that the crew then changed course “without the captain’s sight or knowledge,” and that when he realized what was happening and demanded an explanation, the sailors replied that they had simply responded in the only sensible way to save the vessel.³⁶⁵ Niño’s response, Díaz

³⁶² “De la mar me asegurad vosotros; que de la tierra, Dios, que nos suele ayudar, nos ayudará agora aquí que non perezamos.” Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 134.

³⁶³ The engagement occurred at “Nuleta” according to Díaz, but Evans notes that this is to Calais and in English hands in Niño’s time. The consensus is that it was somewhere north of Calais, but there is no way of knowing precisely where.

³⁶⁴ “El que oviera miedo, heche a fuyr, que desta vez, o ellos llevarán a nos a Angliaterra, o nos a ellos para Franzia; o morirá quien Dios quisiere.” Díaz de Gámez, *El Victorial*, 230.

³⁶⁵ “E los marineros, veyendo el peligro tan grande, e cómo todas las otras galeras se acogían, a más tirar giraron la galera, que nunca el capitán lo vió ni lo sopo.” *Ibid.*, 255.

tell us, was “May God’s will be done; and since it has so fallen out, and that luck has turned, do the rest of you do as you think ought now to be done.”³⁶⁶ Thus, despite the fact that they disobeyed his orders, Niño simply deflects the event as God’s will; and the sailors, for their part, act in their own interests despite his authority aboard the ship, which included royal letters from the king himself. The event points to the limitations of the hierarchy at sea, reinforcing the older concerns about the chaos and treachery possible there. In the end, military commanders could certainly provide exemplary motivation and offer a brave face in the midst of adversity, but it was ultimately the responsibility of the actual crews of the vessels, including the maritime captains, to ensure the safe operation and survival of all aboard. In this case, the quest for glory so inextricably intertwined with Niño’s mission conflicted with the basic drive for self-preservation on the part of his crew in a way that dramatically underscored the limitations of the military hierarchy at sea.

Niño’s uneasy example is not an isolated one, as the contemporary example of Juan Enriquez, son of the *almirante mayor*, Alonso Enriquez, illustrates. In 1407, Juan Enriquez received orders to take a small Castilian fleet into the Straits of Gibraltar in response to reports of an Arab flotilla bearing siege engines and horses heading for Gibraltar.³⁶⁷ His actions there reveal many of the same characteristics of Niño’s

³⁶⁶ “Fágase lo que de Dios está hordenado; epues que así es, e que l ventura es cambiada, vosotros fazed lo que entendedes qucunple.” Ibid., 321.

³⁶⁷ The movement of fleets was preparatory to a blockade of the Straits by an alliance between the sultans of Tunis and Tlemcen, who sought to capitalize on the minority of the infant Juan II, then less than a year of age. Their action was taken in support of Muhammad VII (1392-1408), who had invaded Murcia in 1405 following his refusal to pay the customary tribute to Enrique III, the infant king’s father. The action in the Straits was more of a distraction than any significant threat to the Iberian peninsula however. For the narrative, see O’Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*, 540-42. An excellent view of the Arab side of the issue is available in Arié, *El reino Nasrí de Granada, 1232-1492*

command and suggest that the functioning of the maritime hierarchy had reached a sort of equilibrium by the early fifteenth century in which mariners and military leadership each occupied their respective places. Upon arrival in the Straits and an indecisive skirmish, Enriquez, like Niño, called a council of the masters of the vessels in his fleet. Like Niño, he asked the assembled mariners to give him their advice regarding whether it would be an advantageous time to engage the Moors; and, like Niño, he stated that he would prefer to fight, saying, “Since the Moors had come to skirmish, they considered it a good time to fight”.³⁶⁸ López de Ayala tells us that the council advised a strategy that took into account the wind conditions and the ability of the *ñaos* to make sail, and he then notes the names of those involved in the agreement to take action. Indeed, an extraordinary component of this account is the fact that nearly all of the actual masters of the vessels receive notice in López de Ayala’s narrative alongside the military captains for each, a level of detail not included in any account prior to the fifteenth century. His attention to that detail suggests that something had definitely changed by the early fifteenth military men had become increasingly comfortable and experienced with their roles there, and their merchant marine counterparts were valued and recognized as essential in what amounted to a partnership in the collective effort that was seafaring. By naming men like Rodrigo Alvarez de Osorio, Alonso López de Vargas, and Pedro de Pineda at the same time as he listed the military captains of each vessel, López de Ayala underscored their mutual importance to the success of the venture he was attempting to relate.

³⁶⁸ “Porque si los moros viniesen a la pelea, que pudiesen con ellos mejor pelear.” Pérez de Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 110.

Not only was López de Ayala keen to acknowledge and name the mariners involved in the venture, his attention to that detail provides us with additional information regarding the status of military mariners in the early fifteenth century. When a vessel bearing reinforcements arrived for the fleet in the Straits, López de Ayala reports that “all aboard the galleys were greatly pleased with this galley, both as a reinforcement and because she brought Cabeza de Vaca, who was a great knight and *very knowledgeable about the sea*, for he had traveled upon it for a very long time and had done so in many different ships.”³⁶⁹ The specific listing of de Vaca and the presentation of his credentials as a mariner parallels the later *Vitorial* in such an emphasis and is especially important because in describing him, López de Ayala links the fact that he was a “great knight,” to his status as someone “very knowledgeable about the sea”. Indeed, López de Ayala made a point of noting that he had *lengthy* experience there, attesting both to the fact that military men were gaining considerable experience at sea and that such experience was valued and considered consistent with the practice of knighthood generally. Taken together with the later example of Niño, we can see that military men were increasingly holding positions within the fleet hierarchy in a manner finally commensurate with the sort of agency and experience envisioned by the *Partidas* a century and a half earlier.

A closer examination of Enriquez’ experience reveals similar flexibility in the nature of the military marine hierarchy as the example related in *Victorial*. While Enriquez engaged in the same kind of mutual consultation with his crews, he also experienced loss of direct control of his own vessel in a manner similar to Niño’s

³⁶⁹ “Los de las galeas ovieron muy grande placer con esta galea, por el refresco della e por la venida de Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, que her buen cavallero e bien sabidor de la mr, porque avía andado en ella de muy antiguo, e se acaesció en mulas naos.” *Ibid.*, 112.

experience. During his initial attack on the Moorish fleet, the small Castilian fleet found itself significantly outnumbered by heavier Moorish galleys. As the two fleets approached each other on a ramming course, Enriquez' flagship veered to the left of an oncoming Moorish galley, putting him out of the fighting entirely. López de Ayala relates that many in the fleet blamed Enriquez, particularly as there were significant casualties among the Castilian galleys that did participate. Enriquez claimed that it was the "fault of his boatswains and the drummer," though they in turn insisted, "he [Enriquez] had ordered them to attack after the five other galleys arrived".³⁷⁰ Enriquez summoned another council together that evening, claiming that not only had his own orders gone unheeded, but that "five other galleys had not come to the fight" (reflecting the same self-preservation apparent in the example from *Victorial*). The council collectively agreed to punish any further offense by saying that "if such a sin should happen on account of the boatswains or masters, that the galley crews ought to kill them and throw them into the sea."³⁷¹ The remarkable thing about this resolution, of course, is the thorough absence of recourse to any law. Just as in the same situation suffered by Niño, Enriquez appears somewhat hobbled as his crew opted for self-preservation in an apparently hopeless situation; but neither of the fleet commanders mention, nor is there any indication elsewhere in the record, of any use of the maritime statutes to deal with such a problem. Instead, we see a collective agreement here to implement punishment immediately upon

³⁷⁰ "Juan Enrriquez dis que fué muy enojado, porque por culpa de sus cómitres e timonero se escusó el enbestir...los quales dezían que manavan el enbestir fasta que llegasen las cinco galeas que estaban..." Ibid.

³⁷¹ "E des que fueron ayuntados, díxoles mosén Robín e Juan Enrriques el mal recaudo que fuera fecho, e otorosí de que no avían venido las cinco galeas a la pelea, mostrando gran sentimiento por ello. E por ende ordenaron todos que s los moros viniesen a la pelea, que si tal yerro acaesciese por culpa de patrón o cómitres, que los de su galea los pudiesen matar e echar en la mar." Ibid.

the offenders by casting them into the sea, a fate that would have held far greater fear for those at sea than any obscure statute in a legal code. Enriquez sought a collective agreement to that penalty, asking all involved to swear to uphold the agreement in the event of another occurrence. He was indeed the *Almirante*, but as this example shows, his authority was not absolute and his ability to exercise it heavily dependent on an uneasy balance in his relationship with the crews under his command and their expertise.

Thus, the evidence is quite convincing for a thirteenth-century Castilian view of the sea as a realm of chaos, one that could potentially upset understood social boundaries and military hierarchies. The prescriptive nature of the statutes offered a potentially neat solution, re-creating Castilian society on the decks of the vessels, literally creating Castilian islands at sea, where social and juridical norms could flourish and potentially offset such chaos. Yet, the hierarchy those same statutes prescribed as proof against disorder remained presumptive at best, and it was only near the last quarter of the fourteenth century that the somewhat egalitarian structure of the sea began to give way slowly to the orderly hierarchy envisioned by the framers of the *Partidas*. Indeed, from the late thirteenth through the mid fourteenth centuries, hierarchy remained a largely superficial affair, dominated, as I have noted, by the activities of admirals, at least as far as the historical records go. Instead, collective action was the driving force behind life at sea throughout the late medieval period in the Castilian experience. The major change involved the importance of individuals to the communal effort and a steadily increasing importance on the differentiation between roles and the experience and ability displayed in the accomplishment of those roles – experience and ability that became increasingly expected and even celebrated in accounts by the middle of the fifteenth century.

Liability, Responsibility, and Agency

If the legal attempts at establishing fixed hierarchies at sea were less than effective, they do at least reveal a cognizance of the disorder that Castilians could face when they ventured there and sought to ameliorate that disorder through the imposition of structure and familiar social distinctions of rank and command. However, as we have seen, agency, to the degree that it manifested itself at all, did so without regard to those artificial hierarchical constructions, and in fact, often eschewed them entirely. When turning to the issue of liability, the same concerns for disorder come to the fore, and as my analysis will show, many of these laws were a direct response to another set of disordered practices involving the operation of merchant vessels and their cargoes. Where thirteenth-century art and literature give little attention to human agency in the face of the nearly limitless power they grant to the sea as an environment, in effect negating any real question of liability, the *Partidas* focuses on both of these subjects in terrific detail. By their very nature, the laws governing liability concentrate on the roles of individuals and their respective legal responsibilities; and, as in the case of the military hierarchy, they reveal a good deal about the degree to which the legists felt those individuals might influence the outcome of events at sea. We still see evidence of an underlying concern for the capricious danger of the sea and the very limited role of humans in meeting that danger, but the law itself tends to deal in great detail with the specific legal requirements and obligations of individuals who must go there, always presuming that individual agency should have a significant effect on the ultimate outcome of events. Ultimately, the statutes presume that the *right* people were essential in attempting to lessen the danger presented by the sea, and in that regard, the concerns they address mirror those of the

hierarchically oriented statutes governing the military code. The great difference in these statutes, however, is in their determined focus on the qualifications and expected performance of each individual as they pertained to legal liability.

Shipmasters bear the majority of the burden for merchant losses in the statutes governing liability. Indeed, the law places this onus squarely upon them, both as the operators of the vessels themselves, and as the individuals ultimately responsible for the exercise of agency in determining the course of events at sea. Their very presence aboard a vessel essentially marked the moment at which it came under true command, as the statute governing the responsibility for the safety of a vessel prior to his arrival attests.³⁷² The law holds that the owner of the hired vessel is liable for losses incurred because of any action he takes, such as moving or otherwise instructing anything to be done, that results in damage or loss to the cargo, before the arrival of the “master who was to command it.” The operative legal concern was that he might do “something which he did not understand,” hence requiring him to pay damages to the party loading merchandise onto the vessel.³⁷³ This provision solidly links agency to a strict chain of command,

³⁷² The use of *maestro* appears throughout the merchant marine sections of the *Partidas*. Though it refers to a ship’s captain, it is a civilian designation, not comparable with the *comitre*, to which the military statute refers in the section dealing with captains. It is also interesting to note that the *Partidas* do not specify the proper qualifications for the *maestro*. In my view, the appearance of the definition of the captain’s qualifications under the military hierarchy section of Partida II, Title XXIV derives from the fact that the expense and organization of a naval military expedition was, up to that point in Castilian history, an entirely royal undertaking. The statutes governing mercantile issues focus on liability and equity, perhaps obviating the need for such description. See especially Chapter 1 in Manuel Flores Díaz, *Hombres, barcos e intercambios: el derecho marítimo-mercantil del siglo XIII en Castilla y Aragón* (Madrid: Castellum, 1998).

³⁷³ “Afretado habiendo algunt home nave ó otro leño para navegar, si después que hobiese metido en ella sus mercaduras ó las cosas para que la logó, el señor de la nave la moviese enante que veniese el maestro que la habie de gobernar, non seyendo él sabidor de lof hacer, óstando hi el maestro non quisiere aobedescer su mandamiento nin se guiar por su consejo, si la nave peligrase ó se quebrantase, entonces el daño et la pérdida que acaesciese en aquellas mercaduras pertenesce al señor de la nave porque avino por su culpa,

pointedly requiring the involvement of experienced operators in order to insure the interests of all parties to the transaction. The provision reinforces the importance of the Master's role in assuring the safe operation of the vessel and presumes that safe operation will only occur upon his arrival. As in the military section, however, allusion to specifics about the nature of his sailing skills is broad, though the liability requirements nonetheless assume such skill.

Yet, despite the widespread misgivings about sailors and the ability of masters to manage them at sea, with regard to the liability a master should bear in facing the perils of the sea itself, the legists of the *Partidas* married their assumption of agency with their confidence in the efficacy of hierarchy in meeting those perils. In doing so, they laid an enormous burden on the master to, through the exercise of personal agency and experience, meet or mitigate events ranging from a mishap caused by poor seamanship to the otherwise deadly effects of storm. Partida V, Title IX, Law IX, for example, places the burden for damages suffered by any merchants or passengers aboard a vessel squarely upon the master, should he cause the foundering of his vessel via his own negligence of existing conditions. The statute specifically notes that the master should avoid sailing during the peak of storm season, occurring between “the eleventh day of the month of November until the tenth day of March,” as well as any “place which is dangerous on account of the enemy, or for some other reason,” or on account of the actions of “men who do not know what to do.”³⁷⁴ The concern for losses owing to careless masters or

porque se trabajó de facer lo que non savie, et por ende él es tenuto de lo pechar á aquel que la habie afretada.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.VIII.XIII.

³⁷⁴ “El pecio de los navios aviene á las vegadas por culpa de los maestros et de los gobernadores dellos, et esto podrie acaescer quando comentzassen andar sobre mar en tal sazón que non fuese tiempo de navegar, et

reckless owners is evident here, but the reality is that the law reflected a desire to impose some regularity to the ad-hoc reaction to mishap so commonly exhibited at sea, and to draw on common sense or collectively agreed safeguards by which to judge malfeasance on the part of the masters.

Indeed, in practice, accidents involving loading or unloading of vessels in port could present a much more complex situation for liability, as the following complaint by Genoese merchants to Enrique I in 1366 demonstrates. The complaint, made by a Micer Periam, declares:

It happens that as a result of storm or need to lighten a vessel of its goods or merchandise and other things, that many times ships go down or break up at sea or in rivers, and that such said merchandise often comes to rest dry in the ports, and when that occurs, others come to carry it off, saying that they have the right by custom and privilege.³⁷⁵

This example conflates the loss of cargo, including reasons beyond the control of the master and his crew, with the deliberate jettisoning of cargo or other equipment for saving the vessel in a storm. The Genoese complain that some merchandise may survive,

el tiempo que non es para esto es desde el onceno día de Noviembre fasta diez días andados de Marzo...Decimos que serie se el gobernador et el guardador del navio sopiesen que habien á pasar por logar peligroso de los enemigos ó de otra manera de peligro, et non apercebiesen ante dello á los mercadores.” Ibid., V.IX.IX.

³⁷⁵ “Micer Percia en nombre delos dichos genveses nos pidio por merced que quando acaescia que, por tormenta o por aliviar el navio, que echan en la mar de sus averes e mercadurias e otras cosas e por muchas vezes los navios por tormenta van o, en otra manera, quebrantan en lamar o enlos ríos o que vienen muchas vezes a asentar en seco enlos puertos, e que do esto acaesce o do van a aportar que gelo toman diciendo que han de aver por usos e por previllegios.” *El libro de los privilegios concedidos a los mercaderes Genoveses establecidos en Sevilla (siglos XIII-XVI)*. Corp Author(s): *Archivo General de Simancas*, (Madrid: Tabapress, 1992), 358.

but it is often picked up and carried off by people citing “custom and privilege” as a justification. “Custom and privilege,” and essential element of nearly every *fuero* in Castile, is a particularly interesting use of terms, meant to immediately imply an ancestral right which Castilian kings nearly always honored during their own reigns.³⁷⁶ Yet another law in the *Partidas* may possibly reflect the origins of that assumption. Partida II, Title XXVIII, Law V grants broad rights to ownership of any materials found on the shore, and even to fish taken from the sea, specifying that precious metals, gems, or pearls found there belonged to those “first to take possession of them,” providing they were found them *within the area defined as seashore*.³⁷⁷ Though there is no mention of cargo here, the fact that in the mid-thirteenth century the legists recognized that there was a zone within which all things went to the first to claim them suggests the roots of the interpretation implied by those taking the goods described in the Genoese complaint.

The Genoese sought remedy in the complaint under the authority of Partida V, Title IX, Law VII, though they do not specify the statute in their complaint, instead stating that “it was against the law that king Alfonso, my father made”, a reference to the promulgation of the *Partidas* by Alfonso XI at the Cortes de Alcalá de Henáres in

³⁷⁶ *Por usos y privilegios*. In the preamble of nearly every royal proclamation upon ascension to the throne, Castilian kings typically reiterated their intention to honor the *usos y privilegios* existing for their subjects prior to their rule. The practice was especially important in the early to middle centuries of the *Reconquista*, when repopulation efforts depended heavily on inducements granted by the crown, such as tax exemptions and perpetual freedom from certain obligations. Margarita Serna argues for the development of an early modern system of maritime customs as the foundation for legal practice in Cantabria in Margarita Serna Vallejo, “El viejo derecho de los navegantes del mar de poniente,” *Estudios e Investigaciones Marinas* II (2002). For the legal adaptation and incorporation of custom in medieval law, see Peter Stein, “Custom in Roman and Medieval Civil Law,” *Continuity and change*. 10 (1995).

³⁷⁷ “Oro, ó aljofar ó piedras preciosas fallan los homes en el arena que está en la ribera de la mar: et porende decimos que todo home que fallare hi alguna destas cosas sobredichas et la tomare primeramente, que debe ser suya.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, III.XXVIII.V.

1348.³⁷⁸ This law specified that the owners of property lost under such circumstances retain ownership of that property if found ashore:

Where a ship happens to be wrecked by storm, or in any other way, whatever is found remaining of it, or of the property on board, no matter who finds it, shall belong to the parties who lost it; and we forbid any special grant, or it may be a general custom, that any such property which is unexpectedly brought to any port, belonging to such a person, or found near any castle, or on the seashore, shall belong to the owner of the latter...³⁷⁹

Moreover, the law *specifically* forbids the use of a defense of *usos y privilegios*, suggesting a wider and earlier application of that same reasoning in other such cases. In

³⁷⁸ “E que es contra ley del ordenamiento que fizo el Rey don Alfonso, nuestro padre.” Ibid., V.IX.VII. The promulgation of the *Partidas* as the undisputed *Fuero Real* marked the end of a nearly 150 year old attempt, first begun by Fernando III, to eliminate the use of ancestral *usos y privilegios* as the basis for Castilian law. The issue was largely one of multiplicity of *fueros* (nearly 120 in the twelfth century) and hence the lack of a coherent legal code to address issues uniformly throughout the realm. The political nature of the *fueros* themselves added to the confusion and were a primary impetus for the movement begun by Fernando III to limit their authority and use. By the time Enrique I heard this complaint, there was no question that the *Partidas* were, and had been for some time, customarily used as royal law; but their implementation was by no means a given throughout Castile until nearly the mid 17th century. See an excellent introduction to the issue in “Introduction” in Richard L. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants in Castile, 1500-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

³⁷⁹ “Si acaesciese que la nave se quebrantase por tormento ó de otra manera, que todo quanto podiese ser fallado della ó de las cosas que eran en ella, do quier que lo fallasen, que debe ser de aquellos que lo perdieron, et defendemos que ningunt home non gelo pueda embargar que lo non hayan, maguer hobiese previllejo ó costumbre usada que tales cosas que aportasen á algunt puerto suyo ó que fuesen falladas ceca de algunt su castiello ó en la ribera de la mar, que deben ser suyas, nin por otra razón que ser pueda.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.IX.VII. Emphasis mine.

his decision, Enrique asserted that he would assent to the revocation of any such *privilegio* and uphold the law, by this time the appellate law in Castile.³⁸⁰

The law was of little use in curtailing the widespread notion of the right to ownership of things found ashore, as another complaint, this one nearly seventy years later, attests. In February of 1432, Aran and Juan Ardimento presented a complaint to Juan II, claiming illegal “salvaging” and outright theft of their property occurred in the Guadalquivir just off the port of Barrameda, in Seville. While their vessel, a laden carrack bound for Flanders, was waiting to depart, a storm arose and scattered a good deal of the cargo into the river and surrounding port area. The Ardimentos claimed that the property was taken without authority by many different people, at times under the direction of others who “ordered it to be loaded,” and that the same thing had happened at other times in that particular port. The Armimentos add that when they demanded that such pilfering cease, those taking the property replied that “the said merchandise and ships could not be salvaged nor rescued and that they are free and apparently abandoned, according to the privilege they have over it they have from the kings my ancestors and from me.”³⁸¹ Juan assented to their request and ordered the merchandise or its value

³⁸⁰ “A esto respondemos que nos plaze e es la nuestra merced que los tales usos e previlegios commo éstos que non valan, por quanto es razón e derecho que los dichos mercadores que non pierdan sus mercaderías ante que las cobren e se aprovechen dello asi commo de cosa suya.” *Libro de los privilegios Genoveses*, 359. For a broader legal analysis of the relationship between the perceived rights of all parties to salvage relying on recourse to the *Lex Rhodia*, see Rose Melikan, “Shippers, Salvors, and Sovereigns: Competing Interests in the Medieval Law of Shipwreck,” *The Journal of Legal History* 11, no. 2 (1990).

³⁸¹ “Aran e Iohan Ardimento la qual diz que cargavan de ciertas mercaderias en el puerto de Barrameda, que es en el rio dela dicha cibdat, para enviar a Flandes, e estando la dicha carraca con ciertas mercaderias cargadas en ella con la mayor parte dela carga, diz qu, con la tormenta que fizo, la dicha carraca e mercaderias que en ella estaban fue todo ala costa enel dicho puerto de Barrameda; e por quanto otras vezes quando acaesce que algunos de sus navios e mercaderias por semejante quebraban en el dicho puerto de Barrameda e yuan ala costa con fortuna de tiempo, o en otra manera,diz que algunos de vos tomavades e an bargauades e mandavades enbargar e tomar las dichas sus mercaderias e navios non teniendo razón nin

returned immediately, though we do not know if that ever occurred. As with the earlier example of “salvaging”, the salvagers claim that they had the right by ancestral “privilege” handed down by successive Castilian kings, and, as in the earlier case, their reasoning reveals that they are resting their defense on an interpretation of law. In this case, they must certainly refer to the same law again, Partida II, Title XXVIII, Law V, allowing the taking of nearly anything found on the legally defined seashore, because there is no legal provision in the *Partidas* for salvage of vessels. In the end, the *Partidas* position is consonant with that of the older *Lex Rhodia* in assuming that goods lost at sea are in fact never truly lost, but merely separated from their owners for a time; if found later ashore, they remained the legal property of the owner.³⁸²

As these two examples demonstrate, there appears to have been a continuing belief on the part of some Castilians that they could take whatever they could find from the shoreline in the event of a shipwreck or other maritime mishap, despite any existing attempts to legislate against such practice. The continuing recurrence of the problem, and the explanations offered by those taking the goods involved, point to a willingness to interpret the law through a lens privileging local custom or broad interpretation of royal grants. By frequently reminding others of older “privileges” or “custom”, those engaged in this kind of activity displayed an understanding of a potential legal issue, but also that they had their own notion of what constituted “legal” conduct in that situation. Thus, we

justicia par lo poder fazer, por quanto dizen que las dichas sus mercadurias e navios non les pueden ser tomadas nin anbagadas nin rescatagas e son francos e quitos enlo semejante, segund que enel prvillegio que ellos sobre ello tienen delos rreyes mis antecesores e mios se contiene.” *Libro de los privilegios Genoveses*, 373.

³⁸² The temporary nature of loss as understood in this construction was also a fixture of Roman law (Corp. Jur. Civ. Dig. XLVII-IX-3), and “salvage” of this kind was indeed theft.

can conclude that there was a more widespread understanding of the nature of maritime law from the late fourteenth century forward, but a tendency to interpret that law through the lens of long-held customs and practices. In this regard, we must recall the laws against the deliberate wrecking of vessels by sailors, or the building of fires to lure vessels onto dangerous shoals by fishermen. Both of these laws seem to indicate precisely the sort of situation we see in these examples, where individuals eagerly benefit from the loss of cargo associated with either a shipwreck or a port mishap.³⁸³ Thus, just as the laws regarding military hierarchy sought to establish order in a disordered environment, so too did the laws regarding the delineation of the shoreline itself and the rights of individuals to property there seek to establish that same order, an order within which property rights retained meaning despite the involvement of the sea.

Cargo was one thing, but the importance of both the owner and master's responsibility regarding the safety and security of those aboard a vessel received strong emphasis in a statute governing the liability of sailors.³⁸⁴ Partida V, Title VIII, Law XXVI, which equates seamen and the masters of their vessels with Innkeepers and keepers of lodging-houses of their responsibility for property entrusted to them by travelers, presents another facet of the legists attempt to extend order to a seemingly disordered environment.³⁸⁵ In paralleling the activities of shipmasters with those of innkeepers, the legists used an analogy defining the predicament of knights and

³⁸³ Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*. V.IX.X and XI

³⁸⁴ For the late-medieval English perspective on the issue of legal liability and the role of the shipmaster, see Robin Ward, *The World of the Medieval Shipmaster: Law, Business and the Sea, c.1350-1450* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010). Ward finds that English shipmasters were largely the center of the industry and their decisions regarding trade in most cases formative to law.

³⁸⁵ Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.VIII.XXVI.

merchants who might find themselves in a situation where they entrust their property to “those whom they find there, confiding in them without any witnesses, and without any other security.” The law warns that “among these two kinds of men,” operating taverns, inns, and vessels, one may encounter “some who are very dishonest.” Thus, “all property deposited by travelers by land or water,” duly placed in said localities with knowledge of the owners or their representatives, is their responsibility, even if stolen by “anyone accompanying said travelers,” which in effect extended liability to the master of a vessel for maintaining order among his dishonest passengers as well. Complicating the issue was the fact that the owner of the vessel, “accustomed to entertain men publicly, receiving from them pay or hire for their service,” was liable. What this shows is that the owner was ultimately liable for the misconduct of those hired to man and captain his vessel, and that the master also shared liability for direct supervision while on board the same during a voyage.³⁸⁶ Such liability again underscores the expectation that owners would exercise great care in the selection of the masters who would sail their vessels, and that masters would likewise exert careful control over those chosen to operate their crews. However, it is critical to note that the legists included a possible defense to the above liability, one familiar from and consistent with the collective evidence thus presented; whether by land or sea, physical disasters could serve as an exculpatory factor. For example, if the property was lost via an “unavoidable accident,” or a “ship being damaged,” or via the “violence of public enemies,” here meaning common criminals operating without any color of authority, the statute provides that “they will not be bound

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

to pay.”³⁸⁷ In this respect, an unforeseen disaster, whether occurring at land or sea, could serve as a mediating circumstance. Yet, a difference between land and sea in this provision was that the financial obligation for the loss of property from a vessel, if the fault of the master himself, would fall squarely upon his shoulders.

Concern for the potentially treacherous and unsavory nature of sailors pervaded the preceding statute and served as the foundation for the analogous relationship established between innkeepers and shipmasters. Indeed, as the many examples I have offered in this chapter attest, the nature and performance of shipmasters varied greatly and was nearly entirely unpredictable. This is a fact stressed in *Cifar* when Cifar, unaware of the danger into which he was about to commit his wife, trusts the word of locals and the crew themselves when deciding to allow his wife to board their vessel, only to discover later that they were a bloodthirsty and ruthless band.³⁸⁸ Several examples in the *Cantigas* show unscrupulous crews preying upon passengers, or at the very least, others engaged in criminal activities without any intervention or apparent interest on the part of the crews themselves.³⁸⁹ It seems clear that this mistrust of sailors generally was an essential element in the construction of the maritime laws of the *Partidas*, and these statutes governing the responsibility and legal liability of shipmasters demonstrate that the legists imagined that a rigid and unforgiving accountability was the remedy to that concern. Yet, the same examples show that in nearly every case involving some instance of poor performance on the part of a master, an exculpatory condition was also present.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Wagner, *El caballero Cifar*, 95.

³⁸⁹ *Cantigas* 8, 193, 287.

By providing a way out for masters by allowing for “unavoidable accidents” or “the violence of public enemies,” the legists acknowledged the unpredictable nature of the sea itself, granting the recourse to the excuse that conditions at sea were ultimately to blame for any mishap.

Lost and Found

The legists of the *Partidas* relied on both custom and innovation in attempting to circumscribe the legal obligations and liabilities of crews, and they did the same when considering passengers and the liability all aboard shared equally for damages sustained to the vessel or its cargo at sea. Although nearly all of these statutes come directly from the *Lex Rhodia* with no especially important variation, they reflect the same motivation to impose order in a disordered environment as do the sections governing the military marine hierarchy, and the evidence is just as convincing for their relative lack of effectiveness. Yet, the question as to why they were included at all is an important one. Here, in the midst of the compilation of a massive comprehensive law code governing virtually all aspects of life in Castile, we have two different approaches to maritime topics. Where the fleet hierarchy was concerned, the Castilians created a system from whole cloth, in many ways commensurate with their concern for the clear definition of social boundaries and responsibilities articulated elsewhere in the legislation. As I have noted, they might well have sought easily accessible sources to serve as the framework for that legislation, but they did not choose to do so; yet here, when addressing the issue of merchant liability for damages at sea, they borrowed nearly verbatim from existing tradition. One possible explanation for this wholesale borrowing lies in the vision of

Alfonso X to recreate a Roman law code, an activity he believed was appropriate for an Emperor. The use of Roman law had an *imprimatur in se*, and thus, its inclusion in the *Partidas* only served to strengthen its claim to primacy amongst the myriad laws of the kingdoms of Castile and Leon. This possibility has merit, but fails to explain the significant approaches to military and mercantile law in the *Partidas* and, as I have shown in Chapter IV, the formulation of that law reflects Castilian concerns and their perceived needs. The answer, in my estimation, lies in a rather vague understanding of the functioning of such customary practice in the real world, and the concern for standardization and order which was the impetus for the creation of the *Partidas* from the beginning. In essence, the section on merchant marine matters illustrates a dichotomy between military and mercantile concerns entirely reflective of thirteenth century Castilian realities. Ultimately, however, the inclusion of the Rhodian provisions, like the selection of individual miracle stories for inclusion in the *Cantigas*, grants us extraordinary insight into the legists' perception of need and their assumption as to the best strategy for meeting that need at sea. Thus, an analysis of these statutes has genuine relevance to the issue under discussion, despite their provenance.³⁹⁰

³⁹⁰ This is especially true when considering the position of Wolfgang Graf Vitzthum, who establishes a clear lack of continuity between the archaic origins of Rhodian law and its subsequent adoption in the medieval period. Despite the fact that we must acknowledge it as one of the primary foundations of modern maritime law, he argues, it did make the transition from the ancient to medieval world intact in terms of its understood utility in the era of the creation of the *Codex Justinian*. This was primarily owing to the lack of the overarching legal infrastructure assumed in the *Codex* that leant the statutes meaning in a larger legal context. The efforts of the jurists of the *Partidas* reflect an effort to reconstruct that context, and in the case of the Rhodian statutes, they do so by inserting them into a code that does include the foundational elements necessary to approximate the Roman structure missing when they were simply adopted elsewhere. See Peter Ehlers et al., eds., *Marine issues: from a scientific, political and legal perspective* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002).

Collective response to disaster at sea lies at the very heart of this ancient, customarily observed legislation involving merchant liability, for it spread that liability equally, acknowledging the shared danger, and thus liability such danger created. Given the terrific amount of responsibility for safe operation of vessels already assigned to masters and pilots elsewhere in the statutes, these laws seem almost an afterthought, included because of their generally recognized importance and not because they served a particular legal vision. They are in many ways contradictory with the carefully delineated sections on the responsibilities of the vessel operators, brimming as they are with confidence in agency, experience, and a presumption that the two could prevail when needed. There is a certain retreat in this section from the broader presentation of agency and order as primary, one that nearly bows to the same kind of communally shared obligation we have already witnessed repeatedly in the actual practice of life at sea. An analysis of the shared liability of masters and passengers for damages to or loss of a vessel, covered in Partida V, Title IX, laws 4 and 5, illustrates this retreat well.³⁹¹ Here, we see echoes of the shared experience so common in the historical records illustrating the ways Castilians faced danger at sea; and indeed, as these statutes deal directly with consequences arising *from* those dangers, a very similar dynamic appears to be at work. The law tells us that collective liability will apply to all aboard in the following situation:

When a strong wind arises and causes a storm at sea, so that those in charge of a ship fear they may be lost, and, with the intention of avoiding this, cut down the mast of the ship or intentionally throw away the yard,

³⁹¹ Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.IX.IV.

and it falls into the sea and is lost; *the merchants and other persons in the ship will pay for whatever is thrown overboard with the intention of lightening the vessel.*”³⁹²

On its face, this is a straightforward application of collective liability, pairing shared financial obligation with an expectation of a certain display of skill and experience on the part of the master, for a hasty decision could result in a substantial financial loss, as it might well include the jettisoning of cargo. Couched within the wording of the statute, however, we find an expectation of a severe emergency *warranting* the action described. By specifying that the master must *first* order a dramatic action taken in aid of meeting dangerous weather conditions *before* jettisoning of cargo becomes a collectively shared expense, the law is specific in pointing toward an immediate or proximate sense of disaster as an element triggering shared liability. The legists again emphasize the master’s prudence as primary here, for in their construction, it would fall to him to make the decision to order the mast cut down or cast the yard away. In this respect, the preeminence of hierarchy remains sound, even within a statute that focuses on collective liability.

There is, however, an interesting addition to the communal model of the *Lex Rhodia* adopted by the Castilians involving the recovery of cargo jettisoned in such

³⁹² “Levantándose viento fuerte que feciese tormenta en la mar, de manera que los guardadores de la nave temiéndose de peligrar et con entencion de storcer cortasen el maste della, ó derribasen á sabiendas el antena con la vela, et cayese en la mar et se perdiese, tal pérdida como esta tenudos serien los mercadores et los otros que fuesen en la nave de la compartir entre sí, et de la pechar todos de so uno al señor de la nave, bien asi como deximos en las leyes ante desta quedeben pechar lo que echan en la mar con entencion de aliviar la nave.” Ibid. The provision is nearly identical to that contained in the *Corpus Juris Civilis*: “Si levandae navis gratia iactus mericum factus est, omnium contributione sarciatur quod pro omnibus datum est.” Paul Krueger et al., *Corpus juris civilis*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1954).

circumstances. In the event of recovery of all or part of the goods thus jettisoned ashore, the “owners of the same are bound to assist the others in bearing the loss incurred by reason of said property being thrown overboard, which was done for the common benefit of all.” Here, the burden *must* be shared equally even in the case of partial recovery because of the mutual danger and benefit accrued from the action of jettisoning the cargo.³⁹³ However, in the event of later recovery of any of the jettisoned cargo, those recovering that cargo which they had previously jettisoned were not obligated to “give any portion of it to the other parties who lost their own property on account of an accidental misfortune.”³⁹⁴ In other words, while a passenger might sustain accidental losses during the voyage, they could not count on any recompense of those losses from those fortunate enough to recover any of the property they may have jettisoned in aid of communal salvation.³⁹⁵ The inclusion of this provision in the statute, particularly as it does not appear in the *Lex Rhodia*, suggests that there were occasionally attempts to broadly interpret the collective danger of a sea voyage, thereby including a collective obligation to share in *any* losses occurring there. Indeed, the evidence demonstrates that

³⁹³ “Los señores dellas, tenudos son de ayudar á cobrar á los otros l pérdida que ficieron por razón del echament que fue fecho á pro de todos comunamente.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.IX.VI. The procedure was to apportion damages based on jettisoning *specific to the event*, a critical distinction in this case.

³⁹⁴ “Pero si aquellos que echaron su cosas en la mar por aliviar la nave asi como desuso es dicho, cobrasen despues deso algunas coasa de aquella que hobiesen echadas, non serien tenudos de dar parte dellas á los otros sobredichos que perdiesen las sus cosas por razon del peligro que avino por ocasion.” *Ibid.* The statute does not specify the nature of the “accidental misfortune,” but given the attention it receives here in protecting those later recovering their own jettisoned goods, it is clearly meant to distinguish a loss unrelated to losses directly suffered in aid of lightening the vessel.

³⁹⁵ The particular qualification does not have roots in the Roman tradition; it appears to be an intentional addition meant to discourage requests for compensation for *any* losses while at sea. The statute is quite specific about those able to make a claim of any kind (eliminating slaves, for example), as well as noting that the risk of one’s own life was not actionable in an attempt to recover damages.

there were significant differences in expectation of ownership for goods lost in precisely this manner.

Despite the fact that one could be held liable for damages to goods or the vessel itself even in the midst of a collective action to save a vessel, such liability did not pertain to environmental damage sustained in a similar situation. If the loss of the “mast, sail, or yard” was *not* the consequence of the master’s order, and instead occurred “because the wind broke it, or a thunderbolt from the skies did so,” then no one aboard the ship would be obligated to share its cost, which would then fall entirely upon the owner of the vessel.³⁹⁶ In this respect, the law is consonant with the helplessness before the violence of nature so frequently referred to in both the artistic and literary evidence, and reminds the reader of the precarious nature of any security a vessel might offer. More importantly, it also serves to highlight the limits of the agency of the shipmaster, regardless of his qualification and experience, given that in such a situation his abilities would serve no real purpose in overcoming the common situation of those at sea in peril. However, the signal point of departure in the legal approach to this familiar situation – an “act of God,” occurring in a storm – is that in this case the focus on attempting to provide shelter from liability to passengers for damages to the vessel, rather than highlighting their perilous situation and the loss of agency such a situation engendered by definition, is of paramount importance. Indeed, such concern for limiting the liability of passengers extended to the loss of an entire vessel as well, providing that it was lost accidentally.

³⁹⁶ “Mas si acaescies quell maste, ó el antena ó la vela non mandase cortar nin drribar á sabiendas el maestre de la have, mas lo quebrantase el viento, ó el tormento de la mar ó ray que cyese del celo, ó se perdiese por alguna otra razón semehante destas que veniese por ocasión, entonce los mercadores nn los otros que feusen en la nao, non serien tenudos de pechar en alo ninguna cosa, maguer sus cosas fincasen en salvo que so non perdiesen; ca pues que ellos dan loguero de la nave, la pérdia que desta manera aveniese, al señor della pertenesce et non á los otros.” Alfonso X, *Siete Partidas*, V.IX.IV.

Such limitation did not pertain, however, if “the merchants, through fear that their property would be lost, directed the owner of said ship to let it go ashore,” in essence granting their approval for an intentional beaching – though only with a view to later salvage possibility. In such a case, the passengers involved assumed the responsibility for any losses incurred, by calculating the loss after taking all salvage goods into account, and compensating all involved based on loss versus recovery, with those salvaging nothing obligated to pay nothing. Ultimately, if all aboard agree to a common action, they share the risk of that action and any potential pecuniary losses, an idea entirely consistent with the spirit of the *Lex Rhodia*. Yet, the fact that the owner of the vessel could not hold the merchants liable for the loss of the vessel itself attests to the greater responsibility assigned to him and his Master by the legists. Even in the face of the caprices of nature causing circumstances beyond his control, where the sea threatened all in equal measure, it was the Master upon whom the legists placed the greatest burden in terms of the agency expected of him in influencing the outcome of an emergency

Thus, the legists used the provisions of existing customary law to unite their vision of a framework of carefully crafted liability to the sea. In practice, however, things were never so neat. From the earliest to the latest examples we can find, communal action remains a constant throughout the late medieval period, and this pertained to situations such as those described here in the mercantile section as well. In *cantiga* 112, for example, the occupants of a vessel “reluctantly” abandon a sinking ship in lifeboats, not at the order of anyone in particular, but by mutual consent, leaving behind the entire

cargo of wheat.³⁹⁷ In both *cantiga* 271 and 313, collective agreements to engage in an act of pilgrimage include all aboard the vessel.³⁹⁸ The many examples I have provided up to this point of the intense terror of storms at sea and the communal response to those storms throughout the late medieval period suggest that actions taken in aid of mutual salvation tended to be largely collective affairs, with little influence of any hierarchy at work in their descriptions. Even in the case of Pedro Niño, the very symbol of the marriage of military hierarchy and maritime agency, example after example suggest collective action was the ultimate arbiter in emergency settings.

Conclusion

The confident assertions of the thirteenth century laws of the *Partidas* heralded a Castilian desire to create familiar environments at sea, closely ordered encapsulations of Castile itself, where social and legal norms could stand as bulwarks against the dangerous and disordered sea. In adopting the same vertical military hierarchy in use on land and assumptions about the concern for individual rights, liability regarding property rights, and agency so important in the *fueros* found in Castile, they sought to replace the perceived reliance on custom and collective action that marked maritime life with greater predictability. Indeed, the evidence shows that Castilian vessels at sea *did* exhibit some of the important characteristics of Castilian society ashore, particularly in the display of the same spirit of communal defense so critical to all living in the frontier areas of Andalusia. Yet, the vertical hierarchy the legists imagined, coupled as it was with an assumption of

³⁹⁷ ———, *Cantigas*, 32.

³⁹⁸ ———, *Cantigas*, 53,155.

the primacy of military leadership, never really developed until the early fifteenth century. Even then, the limits of hierarchy appear quite apparent; ironically, this too mirrored Castilian society to a degree, for it was at the onset of the fifteenth century that southern military actions waned and Castile began to look outward, as the expedition of Don Pero Niño so dramatically demonstrates. Elite consolidation and social stratification, always important, began to increase dramatically at that time, as the leveling influence of the collective danger of life on the frontier began to decline. While a simultaneous growth in the manifestation of hierarchy is evident at sea, it never fully retreated in the late medieval period owing to the unique dangers of the sea itself and the dependence of military men on their sailors.

The *Partidas* presumed and even celebrated the ability of Castilians to exercise agency at sea as a means of countering the disorder generally imagined to exist there in the thirteenth century, and this made it easy to imagine liability in neat and clearly defined terms. However, as the evidence shows, there was always a significant difference between the perceptions of those who made a living on or near the shore as to who made decisions regarding ownership and liability, and the notion of *usos y privilegios* always loomed large in the equation. Indeed, there is solid evidence for a much more liberal understanding of the rights of Castilians to things found on the seashore than the law would suggest, and a decidedly collective approach to shared liability aboard vessels that argues for a much less rigid application of liability than that presented in law. Individual liability, the very focus of the maritime laws of the *Partidas*, never supplanted communal action as the means of meeting challenges at sea. Though the law was unable to create reality by presumption, the fact is that agency eventually seemed to triumph by the

fifteenth century, as Castilians increasingly displayed skill and experience at sea, and more and more Castilian military men earned reputations as able naval commanders. Thus, while the carefully constructed legal vision of the *Partidas* never became reality in late medieval Castile, the islands of Castile they imagined did indeed take form from the very beginning.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Now it still ripples,
Now it still murmurs,
Ripples, it still sighs, still hums,
And it is empty under the sky.

*Popul Vuh, the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life*³⁹⁹

In spring of 1492, Isabel I of Castile (1451-1504), together with her husband Fernando II of Aragon (1452-1516), granted the Genoese mariner Cristobal Colón their joint support as rulers of the Spanish kingdoms for an expedition he sought to undertake in aid of discovering a shorter route to the riches of the Indies. His subsequent accidental encounter with the western hemisphere would literally transform the world, resulting in the largest transfer of wealth in history up to that time and inaugurating a century in which Spanish land and sea power would stand nearly uncontested – known to the Spanish as the *siglo de oro*, or golden century. Indeed, until the foundering of the massive Spanish *Armada* in the midst of a terrific storm off the coast of England in 1588, the Spanish galleon was the very symbol of riches, glory, and maritime power in Western Europe. While Fernando would later seek to take the lion's share of responsibility for the decision, even claiming he was "the principal cause why those islands were discovered", Isabel's involvement in the expedition stands as a testament to the great transformation in

³⁹⁹ Dennis Tedlock, *Popol Vuh: the Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

Castilian perception of the place of the sea in the realm laid out in the preceding chapters.⁴⁰⁰

The quest for new lands and riches by sea implicit in the contract granted to Columbus reflects the great change Castilian assumptions had undergone about what was possible in a place so entirely “other” in the thirteenth century. Artistic imagery provides dramatic visual evidence of that change, particularly when considering the issue of confidence as suggested through the relationship between land and sea. In presenting the sea as a vast, barren expanse and juxtaposed that imagery with the vibrancy and plentitude of scenes depicting the land, the imagery of the thirteenth-century *Cantigas* evoke a strong sense of the sea as outside the normal bounds of Castilian society. The employment of sharply abrupt transitions in the majority of such images, underscoring the perception of going to sea as leaving behind civilization itself, accentuated a perceived boundary between the familiar and the foreign. Thus, the seamless integration of land and sea by *Cifar*'s artist is a visual demonstration of significant change in the perceived relationship between land and sea over the late medieval period in Castile. The ease and fluidity of his blending of the two environments contextualize the sea within the land itself. Castles and towns no longer serve a contextual purpose of beckoning the terrified traveler to shore, but instead add depth to an image that draws the eye to the land

⁴⁰⁰ William D Phillips and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 132. Fernando's influence was undoubtedly a significant factor in the final acquisition to Columbus' petition, which he had initially presented to the Catholic monarchs nearly two years earlier and repeatedly sought thereafter without success. Fernando's own experience as the ruler of Aragon and its long history of lucrative international maritime trade was certainly informative to his policies. Mark Meyerson's study of his generous treatment of Jews and Muslims within the Crown, for example, demonstrate that those policies were primarily aimed at maintaining extensive home-based mercantile trade networks within the kingdom of Aragon tied to the lucrative Mediterranean trade taking place along Aragon's coastline. See Meyerson and English, eds., *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change*.

even as it contemplates the subject under consideration at sea. Horizons, characterized by a sense of isolation and emptiness in the thirteenth-century *Cantigas*, now beckon with the familiar in the form of the pennant-bedecked towers of distant city walls. Overall, the artistic change is one moving from a graphic depiction of the sea as “other” to one embracing it as part of a comfortable relationship between land and sea.

The composition of fifteenth-century imagery demonstrates other important conceptual changes in addition to the visual representation of the perceived relationship between land and sea. The first of these is the representation of the sea itself, which served as an antagonist in its own right in the imagery of the *Cantigas*, but appears far less formidable in the imagery of *Cífar*. In place of the frequent use of artistic devices meant to accentuate the wild and tempestuous sea employed in the former, relatively tranquil, even inviting waters typify the appearance of the sea in the latter. The sea as an enemy in its own right appears to have lost much of its capacity to evoke the dread so implicit in the imagery of the *Cantigas*, a remarkable change that reflects an increasingly familiar Castilian experience with the sea, and particularly the benefits that might derive from activities there. Yet, despite the overall increase in confidence and familiarity evoked by the body of images contained in *Cífar*, we still find that serious reservations regarding the loss of personal agency while at sea loom large in both the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Treachery remained a dreaded possibility, exacerbated by isolation in a potentially deadly sea. Divine intervention remained a necessary and sometimes essential recourse despite the visible presentation of increased confidence. Ultimately, there is no denying the much more comfortable, accessible, and even inviting visual

transformation in the presentation of the sea between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The written record provides strong evidence for precisely the same trend as that reflected in the visual: a distinctly differentiated view of land and sea in the thirteenth century giving way to a much more integrated view in the fifteenth. Largely polarized early views of the sea as either dangerously volatile or calm prevailed well into the late fourteenth century, giving way to the kinds of varied descriptions present in both *Tafur* and *Victorial* in the fifteenth century. An important bridge between these two points of comparison was the adoption of a chivalric model by the chronicler Fernán Sanchez de Valladolid, which he employed as a means of recognizing military action in the absence of tangible territorial gains. In adopting this chivalric model, his work began a process that shattered the polarized model of the sea articulated by Manuel and implied by nearly all early accounts, offering a framework for the exercise of individual agency and prowess so essential to the acquisition of honor. Integrating land with sea in the treatment of agency followed a similar trajectory, abandoning the polarized earlier model granting nearly no agency to Castilians in peril at sea in favor of one in which a variety of possible outcomes marked nearly any potentially disastrous situation. From the mid-fourteenth century forward, written accounts of reveal an increasingly important role for experience and skill in avoiding or mitigating maritime danger. As navigators, masters, and seaman, both anonymous and named, began to people the literary accounts of Castilians at sea, one can sense a burgeoning confidence in their ability to meet its unique challenges and opportunities. Finally, with the penning of Díaz de Gámez' tribute to the exploits of his

master in *El Victorial*, the sea as reflected in Castilian literature became an appropriate locus for martial glory.

The pattern of development traced in art and literature appears in an analysis of late-medieval Castilian law as well. From the place of the sea in the larger world to the specific point at which it began on the seashore, the statutes of the *Partidas* offer us a clearly articulated perspective on the relationship between land and sea as understood in the mid-thirteenth century Castile. This perspective combined a highly differentiated spatial definition, an integrated conceptual framework that fused land and sea, and a detailed approach to the assignment of skills and responsibilities necessary for those seeking to go to there. At the same time, through persistent use of comparative conflation between land and sea, the law laid out a conceptual framework for the extension of Castilian legal authority to a sea already declared as outside the realm in both physical and legal terms. The integration of these two environments found in the creation of the military hierarchy, the perceived similarities between fortresses on land and sea, and a hands-off attitude toward the activities of those who left the physical realm combined to create conceptual islands of the vessels themselves. This insular model would prevail for nearly a century and a half, until events recorded in the fifteenth-century records of the *Cortes* reveal that practical realities required a tangible implementation of what had been a conceptual integration in the thirteenth-century law by extending direct protection of the crown to those at sea. Vessels at sea remained autonomous in most respects, but the crown's agreement to create permanent fleets and to use them to patrol and protect its coastal areas meant that they no longer operated in a sea exclusively considered outside

the realm. If these vessels sailed as islands, they now sailed in seas considered Castilian by their rulers.

This dissertation has presented several perceptions of the sea in late medieval Castile, each bounded to a degree by the nature of the means of perception involved. The visual perspective reflected in miniature painting is the product of a particular way of seeing, one oriented toward an ultimate reproduction using pigment and parchment. The skills employed by the artist include acute observation of objects in the world, but also relied upon the expectations and demands of stylistic considerations influencing the overall approach to reproduction. All of these considerations certainly influence what we can conclude from the imagery of the sea they produced. When the artists approached the construction of the miniatures of the *Cantigas*, for example, they brought their own experience and expectation regarding the subjects they painted and executed that within the restrictions of the medium itself – in this case, the six panel series. Thus, the medium itself dictated the construction of images to a degree, because each panel represented only one specific step in a sequence of events meant to illustrate the entire tale. Each of these images offer some glimpse at the underpinning of perception at work in the representation of the subject, but because of the panel series format, broad conclusions are only possible when considering a plurality of evidence pointing toward a particular view of the subject at work. Finally, the fact that we know of Alfonso X's intense interest in the composition of every element in the *Cantigas* must also factor into any conclusions of the perceptions reflected in the imagery it contains.

On the other hand, we can say with confidence that the patron of *Cifar* probably had little to do with the direct composition of the imagery, which we know was the product of a team and often reflected only a cursory understanding of the text it illustrated. Thus, we can speak of its imagery as closer to the artist's perception of the subject. However, there is a stylistic consistency to the Paris *Cifar* that reflects an imposition of similar methodological constraints to those influencing the construction of the *Cantigas* miniatures. Thus, the imagery reveals something of the artist's perception, and given that the artist was part of a larger team, does reflect the perception of a group of artists to an extent. Yet, the relationship between land and sea reflected in the imagery may be as much a reflection of a unified stylistic decision by the team's leader than the sum total of a group of otherwise independent artists. Yet, in both cases, the collections of images from two different centuries reveal a common presentation of the relationship between land and sea at the core, one supporting the larger premise of this dissertation.

Just as the artist brought a particular perspective to bear when creating images of the sea, so too did those involved with the construction of law throughout the period of this study. When the legists received an instruction to create a code governing maritime hierarchy, they approached this task using the tools of the legist. They presumed that the delineation of responsibilities and authority was a relatively universal concept, applicable to both land and sea, with only minor modifications as necessary to the peculiar requirements of maritime logistics. Similar presumptions applied when they turned their attention to liability. As legists, they approached this subject with a presumption of the ability to assess liability specifically and to levy appropriate sanctions for failures to meet the terms of responsibility laid out in the law. In other words, they assumed the

applicability of liability *a priori*, and it was in its own way a means of perceiving the relationship between land and sea. This assumption alone accounts for the apparent contradiction in the ease with which the law assumed that land hierarchies and liability rules would work at sea. At the same time, the acts of the king's court reveal that his subjects wished to combine the realities of maritime trade and life along the seashore with the conceptual framework of the law itself, which drew a solid line between land and sea with regard to royal authority. Above all, the law presumed that defining relationships between humans upon vessels and delineating boundaries between land and sea would serve to solve problems associated with liability. Thus, drawing conclusions about what legal scholars imagined about the sea and its relationship with the land must proceed with an understanding of that essential element. Ultimately, the legal perspective allows for a contrary view to that of the thirteenth century artistic vision, in that it cannot allow the sort of strict distinction between environments, particularly the loss of agency and liability the art portrays. Yet, despite the requirements of the legal perspective, placing the activities of men at sea beyond the reach of kings was an essential legal principle, one that would remain fixed until the fifteenth century.

The literary perspective presented in these chapters is perhaps the most complex of all. Chroniclers relate an account of events, privileging the activities of great men and kings, framed within historical contexts of their own choosing, and as such require careful use as historical sources. The perception revealed by the chronicler is a personal one, but often heavily influenced by the writer's concerns for satisfying the chronicle's patron. Thus, consistency becomes the single most important factor when considering whether to draw conclusions about perception in any case. In the matter of chronicles

presented in this dissertation, such consistency is present. From the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, a variety of chronicle accounts combines to present a unified perspective on the place of the sea in the larger Castilian worldview. Even as these accounts elevate their primary subjects within various settings, the often incidental anecdotes involving the sea demonstrate a burgeoning importance within the larger context of the chronicle itself. One way of imagining that development is to say that the increased prominence of the sea in the chronicle is reflective of its larger role in the tales of the primary subjects of the chronicles, and thus serves as a staging element familiar to the audience of the time. That is entirely true, and supportive of my conclusions – for the sea was increasingly important, and even if its appearance in chronicle marks a stylistic choice for emphasis or variety, it reflects a genuinely increased sense of its importance.

In the end, we hear remarkably little from those who spent their lives at sea in the various sources presented in these chapters. The voices that speak to us either are elites themselves – warriors or clerics -- or are themselves closely associated with those who are. Although they were increasingly important in the larger unfolding history of Castile, mariners did not appear as the centerpiece of any of the art or literature of late medieval Castile. They certainly did not write histories or chronicles. However, it is clear that those who did were beginning to show greater interest in the mariner's contribution to the great deeds they were recording in the names of their patrons. Great confidence in the ability of land warriors to go to sea and succeed is a fixture of the fifteenth century literary record, and frequent references to the skill and experience of sailors of all kinds becomes more and more common. Notwithstanding this fact, we cannot speak of anything approaching a “common maritime culture” in Castile, certainly not on the order of that envisioned by

Professor Cunliffe. Old and New Castile experienced vastly different sets of economic, military, and social conditions, all combining to create entirely different maritime communities in each part of the realm. Despite the disparity, however, the record shows that by the fifteenth century a wave of confidence and a sense of a collaborative approach to the sea generally was beginning to make its way into the royal consciousness. Yet, some of the old fears remained constant. The sea was no less dangerous or treacherous than it had been two hundred years earlier; storms were still terrifying, and the prospect of drowning still loomed large. There were moments when only calls for divine intervention stood between disaster and salvation. Yet, the artistic, literary, and legal evidence shows that by 1450, Castilians were increasingly confident in their ability to go to sea and meet its challenges – and to seek out and exploit its opportunities. At the threshold of the *siglo de oro*, the sea had become part of the Castilian worldview, perhaps outside the realm, but a beckoning gateway to limitless possibilities.

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