

Remote Origins: Translation, Genealogy, and Alterity in Medieval Castile (1252–circa 1390)

by

Luis Miguel dos Santos Vicente

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Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Ryan Szpiech, Chair
Associate Professor Hussein Fancy
Professor Enrique García Santo-Tomás
Professor Peggy McCracken

Luis Miguel dos Santos Vicente

luism@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-1958-0346

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Dedication

A mi abuelo Vicente, quien alimentó mi curiosidad infantil con paseos, rimas, canciones e historias sobre el pasado.

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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes selected examples of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century written culture to show their engagement with the religious alterity of Islam as an integral part of the origins of the kingdom of Castile. Following an interdisciplinary methodology, it addresses how medieval ideas about astrology, geography, history, medicine, race, and religion participated in creating discourses about origins that recognized the intellectual and political authority of al-Andalus. It argues that early Castilian vernacular texts conceptualized the translation of Arabic sources as an instrument for creating, transforming, and superseding the alterity of Islam while recognizing the cultural and political authority of Andalusí traditions.

The first chapter serves as an introduction explaining the historical and theoretical framework of the dissertation. To do so, it provides an overview of Castilian ideas about genealogy, historiography, authority, and *translatio*, and translation. Then, through close reading and ample historicization, chapters two, three, and four analyze the impact of Andalusí textual traditions, cultural practices, and human population in three interrelated fields of medieval science, literature, and history.

Chapter 2 explores the political implications of King Alfonso X's (r. 1252-1284) dedication to the translation of Arabic sciences by focusing on the translation of a treatise of astrology titled *Libro de las cruces* (1259). The chapter traces the cultural and political context that accompanied the transmission of the book in al-Andalus alongside the content of its Arabic and Castilian prologues. In light of ideas about the transference of knowledge (*translatio studii*)

shared by Christian and Muslim scholars, I conclude that deployment of a twofold origin in the *Libro de las cruces* illustrates the strategies and motivations of Alfonso X's broader engagement with Arabic sources.

The third chapter turns to the early fourteenth-century romance *Libro del caballero Zifar* with a double focus on its forged origin as a translation from *caldeo* (Chaldean) and the prominence of cursed lineages. Regarding lineage, the chapter explores the representation of exemplary virtues by the protagonists of the romance as enacting ideas about the transformable character of lineage and the capabilities of the individual to unmake inherited negative traits. Likewise, the textual strategy of the forged translation enables the inclusion of Arabic and Asian referents at the origin of a profoundly Christian text.

In chapter 4, literature meets historiography in the analysis of the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*. Being the result of intertwining a Castilian chronicle—Alfonso X's *Estoria de Espanna*—and a French romance, this text narrates the love story between an Andalusí Muslim prince and the daughter of a captive Christian noble. The chapter focuses on Berta, the captive woman, to show the implications of her decision to nurture Flores and Blancaflor with her milk. Considering Christian and Muslim ideas about milk and wet nursing along with the tenets of Castilian historiography, the chapter shows the limits of dominant ideas about dynastic origins among the Christian elites of Castile while evidencing the existence of an alternative discourse that—coming from within Castilian historiography—incorporates maternal and non-Christian kinship as an essential part of the origins and possibilities of the kingdom. A short final chapter serves as a conclusion, suggesting paths for expanding the results of this dissertation within and the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries covered by its contents.

Chapter 1 Introduction

María Rosa Menocal starts the prologue to her popular 2002 history *The Ornament of the World*—probably the most widely read book by a specialist in the literatures and cultures of the medieval Iberian Peninsula published in the last fifty years—with the journey of the ‘Abd al-Raḥmān from Damascus to al-Andalus. With this trip, the young Umayyad prince evaded the attempt of the Abbasids to eradicate his lineage to become an undisputed caliphal dynasty. Menocal’s evocative account of the event serves as the foundational moment of what she calls a “first-rate place” (15), characterized by the intellectual exchanges of the Christians, Jews, and Muslims living within the Iberian Peninsula.

For Menocal, the significance of that “first-rate place” exceeded the temporal and spatial constraints conventionally assigned to al-Andalus. She writes: “The very heart of culture as a series of contraries lay in al-Andalus, which requires us to reconfigure the map of Europe and put the Mediterranean at the center, and begin telling at least this part of our own story from an Andalusian perspective” (*Ornament* 11). Menocal’s characterization of Andalusian culture as a “series of contraries” has several implications. In her own account, it results in an idealized description of the Umayyad Córdoba as space where the coexistence of diverse linguistic and religious communities prompted creative adaptations under the protective rule of the caliphs. Meanwhile, the Almohad and Almoravid forces from North-Africa that took control of much of al-Andalus after the dissolution of the caliphate much less positive light (*Ornament* 43–45). This antithetical approach to the Andalusian rulers aligns the idea of a “series of contraries” with the

reference to “tolerance” in the subtitle of Menocal’s book discussed here: “How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain.”

Recognizing the relevance of Menocal’s approach as a response to the post-9/11 world, I am less persuaded by implications of approaching al-Andalus as a place of “tolerance” than by the consequences of reading the textual sources of Christian Iberia with her suggestion of “telling at least part of our own story from an Andalusian perspective.” The scope and goals of this dissertation aim to respond to this calling from the sphere of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castilian written culture.

The limitation of this study to the kingdom of Castile is a consequence of the emphasis of its medieval and post-medieval historiography in presenting its rulers as direct inheritors of the pan-Iberian kingdom of the Visigoths conquered by the Muslims after the incursion of mostly Berber forces led Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād in 711. Following this conquest, the Iberian Peninsula became a place of daily contact between Christians, Jews, and Muslims with shifting relationships of power affecting the interactions between each group. The period covered by this dissertation starts right after the greater territorial expansion by a Christian realm in medieval Iberian history, the reign of Fernando III between 1216 and 1252. This temporal framework corresponds to the period between the consolidation of the Castilian language as a vehicle of written culture and the emergence of ideas about “purity of blood,” whose consolidation during the fifteenth century reshaped earlier ideas about alterity based on religious difference.¹

The analysis of the construction of Muslim alterity in the Castilian works discussed below focuses on the elaboration of ideas about translation and genealogy that problematize the

¹ The development of the idea of “pureza de sangre” (“purity of blood”) in fifteenth century Iberia has been frequently linked with the emergence of race as a systematized category of segregation. On this issue, Hering Torres, María Elena Martínez (25–60), and Nirenberg (“Was There Race”).

interplay between monocultural and multicultural conceptions of the origins of Castile and the Christian worldview of their elites. In this context the term “multicultural” functions as a counterpart of “monocultural”, without suggesting any positive ethical value akin to Menocal’s “tolerance” or Américo Castro’s famous “Convivencia.”² Rather, I claim that this engagement with Andalusí cultural referents aimed to transform the perceived alterity of Islam into an instrument of the Christian hegemony over Castilian lands.

By approaching Castile as a multicultural realm, this dissertation addresses the conflicting views about the origins and character of the kingdom by its Christian authors. As discussed below, a part of its elites conceived the kingdom of Castile and its noble lineages as being founded over a single Visigothic heritage. Under this monocultural lens, Jews and Muslims were considered foreign to the kingdom and the Andalusí realms the result of a transitory invasion. The context of coexistence and intermixing of Christian and non-Christian communities gave rise to a series of discourses that addressed ideas about alterity in ways that diverged from the rest of Western European societies.³

This dissertation claims that these Castilian authors aimed to lessen the significance of the non-Christian origins of Castile they discussed through a series of textual strategies that relied on the displacement of Andalusí referents from to remote spaces and temporalities. The works discussed below engage with Andalusí realities through a reconstruction of ancient times and distant places. These remote referents articulate the transmission and transformation of

² For an overview of the polemics surrounding Castro’s approach to Spanish history, see Szpiech “Convivencia.” Fancy discusses more recent developments of the debate about the role of Islam in Spanish historiography in “New *Convivencia*.”

³ A parallel situation in terms of religious multiculturalism occurred in the kingdom of Sicily. There, the recent Norman conquest made discourses about origins detached of the emphasis of Castilian aristocracy on nativist discourses. For a study of the construction of Sicilian culture around religious and linguistic exchanges, see Mallette’s *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250: A Literary History*.

intellectual and family lineages across spaces, languages, and religious communities through textual strategies that create an ambivalent representation of the alterity of Islam.

This “ambivalence” is manifested through a series of textual strategies detailed in each of the following chapters that result from emphasizing temporal and/or spatial distance with al-Andalus to mediate the perceived alterity of Andalusí literary traditions, courtly practices, and dynastic lineages. My use of the term “ambivalent” throughout this dissertation is informed by yet not equivalent to Homi Bhabha’s formulation in “The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism.” For Bhabha, ambivalence functions as a tool to repeatedly emphasize the duplicitous character of Asians and Africans according to colonial stereotypes. According to him, this practice creates “processes of subjectification” that ultimately discriminate against non-European subjects.

My approach to the ways that thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castilian writing addressed the perceived alterity of Islam shares the goals of Bhabha’s theoretical intervention in the construction of what he describes as “racial/cultural/historical otherness” (67). However, the cultural context of thirteenth and fourteenth-century Castile differs significantly from the modern British colonialism addressed by Bhabha. In the works discussed in this dissertation religious and linguistic difference appear as the two major areas where the alterity of Islam is simultaneously created and mediated by the ambivalent discourses of the Christian authors discussed below. The articulation of this dissertation around genealogy and translation—two issues discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter—focuses the analysis of Castilian processes to creating alterity around non-Christian Andalusí peoples as well as cultural practices.

Without engaging explicitly on postcolonial theory, Menocal addresses the conception of Islam as an “Other” of European identity as part of her 1987 book *The Arabic Role in Medieval*

Literary History. Focusing on the resistance among European literary historians to consider the impact of medieval Arabic traditions, Menocal writes:

As the entity that in many different ways supplied the locus and texture for a sense of Other in medieval Romance literature, the Arab world must thus be reckoned a potent influence. If it had not been there in Europe, challenging in so many ways the sense of the European's identity and place in the larger scheme of things, medieval texts would be very different indeed. (*Arabic* 53)

Menocal's suggestion of an Islamic alterity at the heart of the construction of European identity is at the heart of the long-lasting allure of the medieval crusades and the engrained Islamophobia in modern European nations that perceived themselves as participants in the defense of their alleged Christian roots. Like their Iberian counterparts, literary historians specialized in nations beyond the Pyrenees have since become more attentive to the "role" of Muslim alterity in constructing national identities. However, interest in medieval Iberia remains marginal compared to the more "canonical" English, French, and Italian medieval literatures.⁴ Responding to Menocal's criticism of the "[t]he resistance to a consideration of this different story of our parentage" (*Arabic* 3), this dissertation addresses the construction of genealogical continuities between al-Andalus and Castile. It claims that, among the early works written in Castilian, there was a thread of ambivalent textual strategies and conceptual frameworks that aimed to find a place for the perceived alterity of Islam as an integral part of the kingdom's history. As the following chapters show, this thread did not aim to accept Islam as equal to Christianity but to transform it in ways conducive to the consolidation of a Christian worldview among the multicultural Castilian society. Thus, ambivalence is at the heart of the texts discussed

⁴ Some examples of books notable for their engagement with the impact of ideas about Islam in medieval French, English, or Italian literature are Akbari's *Idols in the East* (2009), Heng's *Empire of Magic* (2003), Khanmohamadi's *In Light of Another's World* (2014), Kinoshita's *Medieval Boundaries* (2006), Mallette's *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250* (2005), Phillips's *Before Orientalism* (2014), and Ramey's *Christian, Saracen and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (1999). Kinoshita and Mallette are among the medievalists who have dedicated significant attention to Iberian literatures in their publications without being trained as specialists in the history and culture of the region.

below, as they create a limited place for Islamic and Andalusí legacies one in which they are recognized as a source of authority only to be transformed from their Arabic and Islamic context into a fully Christian worldview expressed through the romance vernacular language.

In this way, this dissertation's approach embraces a post-colonial framework, aiming to begin the process of reassessing the multicultural character of medieval European societies from a perspective that goes beyond a dichotomous opposition between the historical and cultural scholarly frameworks developed around ideas like "Reconquista" and "Convivencia."⁵ From the specificity of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile, this analysis of the construction of an internal other as temporally and spatially remote may illuminate the study of other medieval European societies (whose scholarship is only now fully embracing the significance of alterity through the study of ideas about racialized difference), if not contemporary discourses about migrants and descendants of migrants as occupying ambivalent spaces both internal and external their country's society and history.

Framework and Methodology

Scholars such as R. Howard Bloch and Zrinka Stahuljak have studied medieval European kinship resorting to the study of literary and artistic sources. Bloch's *Etymologies and Genealogies* departs from the study of the relationship between kinship and rhetoric. According to him, early medieval theories about grammar and lineage share "a common representational model and a similar set of representational practices" (83). Bloch characterizes this shared ground around the notions of linearity, temporality, verticality, fixity, and continuity (83–87). From these characteristics, he derives a literary anthropology that investigates a variety of

⁵ For an assessment of postcolonial approaches to medieval Iberia, see Altschul.

literary genres to assess how the linguistic model he delineates “is sustained by certain aristocratic practices of the sign (e.g., heraldry, patronymics)” as well as “representational fields encompassing the visual arts (stained glass and manuscript illustration), genealogical narrative, ‘literary’ genealogies, and epic poetry” (28–29).

Stahuljak’s *Bloodless Genealogies* similarly offers a literary anthropology of the kinship arguing that “in medieval representations of genealogy, filiation between fathers and sons does not begin in the so-called natural relationship of blood, but rather in the act of linguistic alliance” (2). Understanding the presence of blood in medieval genealogies metaphorically, Stahuljak discusses instances where medieval patrilineal genealogy is disrupted as points that evidenced an “inherent bloodlessness of lineage” (2). For Stahuljak the representation of sin in medieval narratives allow us to read how “perversions of genealogy are integrated into a narrative as totalizing as genealogy” (10). This focus on sin allows Stahuljak to point to the fracture of what she describes as a “genealogical totality” based on the idea that “[b]lood assures the continuity and the sameness of one lineage” (10–11). By doing so, Stahuljak adds to Bloch’s approach an important discussion on how gender affected the construction of medieval lineage as patrilineal or—following Spiegel—“based in the father’s semen” (11). Thus, by focusing on the “bloodlessness” of medieval lineage, Stahuljak effectively addresses the position the woman within the framework of patrilineal genealogy—an issue that this dissertation address in Chapter 4 from the perspective of milk-based kinship.

By approaching the issue of kinship from literary sources, Bloch and Stahuljak are able to discuss the role of narrative in the creation of authoritative models of Christian behavior in the realm of the family. Yet, their anthropological approach ends up projecting a universalizing character of a restrictive conception of lineage at odds with my own approach to this subject. In

Bloch's case, the emphasis on the correlation between literary genres, grammar theory, and kinship results in a compartmentalized approach to genealogy that contrasts with the emphasis on transmission and transformation on the Castilian sources I discuss.

My approach to genealogy does not aim to characterize a system of kinship but to explore the implications that thinking genealogically had for the relationship between the Christian cultural produces discussed in this dissertation and their creation of Islamic alterity as both a source and a religious "other." Meanwhile, Stahuljak understanding of "blood" as a metaphor—frequently read metaphorically according to preestablish family relationships—leads her to propose generalized conclusions about the nature of medieval kinship, even if her focus on "bloodlessness" and sin evidences the limits of the universalizing character of medieval patrilineal genealogies.

Besides the differences on approach between my research and that of Bloch and Stahuljak, their focus on the French Middle Ages limits the usefulness of their conclusions in the context of my analysis of genealogy as part of Castilian engagement with the alterity of Islam. The absence of broad studies about genealogy in Castile says something about the conflictive approach of Spain to the question of kinship in the period generally considered as the foundation of the modern state. Interestingly, studies on the matter regarding the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are more abundant than those addressing the century and a half covered by this dissertation.

Focusing on the fifteenth century, Ruiz refers to the poetry of Jorge Manrique (ca. 1440–1479) to introduce the importance of blood and Visigothic origins in medieval Castile: "his association of blood, lineage, nobility, and Gothic descent is crucial to my remarks on the topic below. Effectively, the words *blood*, *lineage*, and *nobility* serve as a verbal map for tracing the

different discourses of blood” (106). The emphasis on Gothic descent signaled by Ruiz is also a part of medieval narratives of origins discussed later in this chapter. Nevertheless, only with the emergence of ideas about “purity of blood” that exclude and racialize non-Christian ancestry have pushed scholars to think thoroughly about the question of genealogy.

To find an influential study of literature and genealogy in Castile before the fifteenth century, it is necessary to go back to the work of Américo Castro in the first half of the twentieth century. Castro’s foundational work brought cultural and family intermixing between Christians and non-Christians in medieval Iberia to the fore creating strong reactions among a Spanish intellectual tradition which had long emphasized the Christian character of the Spanish Middle Ages as fully separated of Jewish and Muslim influences.⁶

More recently, Harney’s 2001 book *Kinship and Marriage in Medieval Hispanic Chivalric Romance* studies kinship from the perspective of literary anthropology. His narrower focus on chivalric romance also pushes his conclusions towards the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, Harney includes the *Libro del caballero Zifar*—the early fourteenth-century text discussed in chapter 3—as one of the four main sources of his study. Harney indagates on the content of those romances to identify and characterize a series of kinship relationships such as lineage, kindred, cousinship, and marriage.

While the work of scholars as Castro and Harney relies on literature to describe the wider social reality, this dissertation addresses literary and non-literary sources to identify some of the limits of discourses that emphasized a monocultural root at origin of the kingdom Castile.

Therefore, the goal of this dissertation is not to define a coherent system, but to point to some of

⁶ Despite its influence, Castro’s approach to mixed genealogies is unsystematic and convoluted by temporal jumps and the intermingling of multiple issues, sometimes more akin to an essayistic articulation than to the standards of modern scholarship. See, for instance, his chapter “Islam and Hispania” in *The Structure of Spanish History*, originally published in Spanish as *España en su historia*. Castro famously popularized the use of the word “convivencia” to characterize the relationships between Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

the interruptions and contradictions of embedded within Castilian narratives of origin that propose reconstructions of the past based on the tenets of medieval genealogical thinking.

The following chapters follow a methodology of literary analysis to interrogate the limits of linearity, temporality, verticality, fixity, and continuity identified by Bloch as characteristic of medieval genealogy, as already noted (83–87). This methodology leads to an analysis of how the Christian elites of Castile engaged with the alterity of al-Andalus and its non-Christian subjects as created by their own works. To do so, each chapter spans from the case study of a text that approaches the alterity of Andalusian origins from a different discipline. Chapter 2 focuses on a treatise on astrology titled *Libro de las cruces*, Chapter 3 on the romance *Libro del caballero Zifar* (henceforth *Zifar*), and Chapter 4 on the intermingling of literature and historiography in the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* (*CFB* from now on).

Despite the focus on divergent textual traditions, each of these chapters resorts to the methods of literary studies to discuss textual strategies that evidence the limits of a monocultural conception of genealogy in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile. Likewise, each of them brings into the analysis the importance of ideas connected to genealogy that were developed across religious communities, such as rulership and climate theory in Chapter 2, geography and sacred history in Chapter 3, or breastfeeding and conversion in Chapter 4. By turning those materials into instruments for the literary analysis, this dissertation offers a grounded historicization while highlighting how the narrative articulation of origins in the texts that center the analysis opens the possibility of ambivalent approaches to the alterity of Andalusian legacies.

If ‘Abd al-Raḥmān embodies the origin of Umayyad al-Andalus in Menocal’s *The Ornament of the World*, when it comes to Castilian vernacular culture that place is generally reserved for King Alfonso X, who ruled over the territories of the formerly separated kingdoms of

Castile, Galicia, and León between 1252 and 1284. The beginning of his reign sets the initial date in the title of this dissertation—even though there are frequent mentions and analyses of much earlier texts. Alfonso X’s determined sponsorship of Castilian as a language of culture has received much scholarly attention. Similarly, there has been much writing about his otherwise failed ambitions to become the Holy Roman Emperor. However, the Alfonso X discussed in this dissertation comes from the margins of those enterprises.

The temporal point of departure of this dissertation corresponds to what Márquez Villanueva referred to as “el concepto cultural alfonsí” (the Alphonsine cultural project) in his 1994 book of the same title. The vast sponsorship of textual culture by the Castilian king has allowed divergent conclusions about its relationship with Judaism and Islam ranging from the coercive language of the law in the *Siete partidas* to the celebration of non-Christian pious individuals in some of his *Cantigas de Santa María*, from the consideration of Muslims as alien to the Iberian Peninsula in his *Estoria de Espanna* to the reliance of Jews for the translation of Arabic written culture. While his commission of Arabic translations is at the center of Chapter 2, the next pages discuss the significance of his *Estoria de Espanna* for the construction of type of monocultural ideas about the origins of Castile during the thirteenth and fourteenth century whose scope and internal coherence this dissertation aims to put into question. Furthermore, they connect those ideas with modern historiographical ideas about the period around the notion of the “Reconquista” of Spanish lands from the Muslim rulers of al-Andalus.

Historiography and Genealogical Thinking

After the death of his Fernando III in 1252, Alfonso X inherited vast extensions of lands conquered during the reign of his father. Fernando’s rule corresponded to the largest territorial

expansion of the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. Furthermore, Castile and León were definitely unified under Fernando's rule after several earlier separations due to inheritance and the pressure of their respective noble circles. Fernando inherited Castile from his mother, Queen Berenguela, in 1217 and León—along with the formerly independent kingdom of Galicia—from his father, Alfonso IX, in 1230.

At the moment of Alfonso's ascension to throne, large Muslim populations had been recently incorporated into his realms through military expansion in former Andalusí lands. In the north, Christian nobles had different sensibilities, languages, and political goals. There were relatively small Jewish communities from north to south; some of them included highly educated physicians, translators, and other professionals with access to the elites, even though anti-Judaism was entrenched in the religious beliefs of their Christian neighbors. Maybe with fewer theological and more historical arguments, prejudices against Muslims were also engrained among the Christian elites. Despite occasional alliances and the use of Muslim militias, there were strong discourses about Muslims as not belonging to the Iberian Peninsula, their realms being the result of an invasion that Christian nobility must end by conquering their lands and overthrowing their rulers. These ideas are encapsulated in the modern historiographical construction known as the "Reconquista."

The historical paradigm of "Reconquista," a term first used in the eighteenth century, has been used for different purposes from the early twentieth to the current year of 2021.⁷ For some historians, it explains ideas and events behind the long history of warfare between Iberian Christian and Muslim realms. For some politicians and other public figures, "Reconquista" is a

⁷ Ríos Saloma traces origin and uses of "Reconquista" as a framework of interpretation of Spanish history up to the early twenty-first century. José Ortiz y Sanz was the first one to use the term in his 1795 book *Compendio conológico de la historia de España* (Ríos Saloma 20). See also García-Sanjuán, who criticizes the use of the term as an example of the impact of politically motivated nationalistic discourses in the study of medieval history.

shorthand and a model for a nationalistic idea about Spain as a militant white Christian state defined by its active opposition to Islam, Communism, or other enemies of the nation. For most Spaniards, “Reconquista” is something they learned about in their school years. It is part of their history. Given the political biases that have impacted the construction and use of the notion of “Reconquista,” this dissertation avoids using it unless referring to its impact in modern and contemporary Spain.

The dates and locations of Christian victorious battles and conquests in al-Andalus facilitate the perception of a linear progress according to which the origin of the modern nation-state was shaped by a triumphant opposition to the alterity of Islam. Imagined as a linear and uninterrupted succession of military victories, the “Reconquista” narrative of Spain’s medieval origins runs parallel to the continuity of the blood of its heroic Christian rulers according to the “Neo-Gothic” theory. The overlap between these two narratives projects into the Spanish past an image of uniformity around Christianity and a lineage that silences the multiplicity of voices in the medieval Iberian Peninsula.⁸ Feminine voices are particularly affected by that historiographical silence, an absence further reinforced by selective scholarly attention to the issue today.⁹

Despite the shortcomings of the idea of “Reconquista,” there is little doubt that Muslims were not, in any period, considered equals to Christians, nor Islam as valid as Christianity among most of the Castilian nobility. Medieval historiography contains some of the more influential

⁸ My emphasis on the incorporation of legacies of al-Andalus as a part of the narratives of origin does not imply a pacific and welcoming acceptance of Jews and Muslims but, rather, the result of an ambivalent attitude towards their perceived alterity as able to be transformed and assimilate. Likewise, I do not consider this attitude as universally accepted within Christian circles, but as an alternative discourse to the emphasis on a monocultural Christian Castile that filters into some of the extant materials from the period. In my view, the extent to which the support of continuity and transformation of non-Christian ideas and subjects among Christian communities is unmeasurable, given the embedded bias against religious others in the extant archives.

⁹ This tendency has been partially corrected in recent decades thanks to the work of scholars as Barton, Francomano, Grieve, Hamilton, Pick, and Ruggles, among others.

diatribes against the presence of Muslims and Islam in the peninsula and Alfonso X's *Estoria de Espanna* is the paradigmatic example of ideas about the origins of Spain as Christian and anti-Muslim, both for the ambitions it aimed to accomplish and its diffusion during the Middle Ages, as well as for the central position that has occupied in modern scholarship about the period. The content and scholarship on the *Estoria de Espanna* (henceforth *EE*), too vast to discuss in an introductory chapter, are considered in more detail in Chapter 4. The following pages will first offer a partial overview focusing on how ideas about the origin of Spain that emphasized a genealogical continuity between the kingdom of the Visigoths disappeared after the Muslim conquest of 711 and the Christian kingdom of Asturias, from which Castile, Galicia, León, and Portugal all derived.¹⁰

One of the most influential genealogical principles of the historiography of the Western Christian kingdoms of the peninsula postulated a continuity between Visigothic lineages and the nobility of the kingdom of Asturias. Modern scholars refer to this principle as “Neo-goticismo” (Neo-Gothicism). Escalona studies circumstances under which Neo-Gothic ideology was formulated, as part of the Latin chronicles composed during the reign of Alfonso III of Asturias (r. 866-910); in particular, the *Crónica de Alfonso III* (Chronicle of Alfonso III), the *Crónica profética* (Prophetic Chronicle), and the *Crónica albeldense* (Chronicle of Albelda).

According to Escalona, King Alfonso III's court fostered a realignment in the political identity of the Asturian kingdom, so that “by the 880s the former rejection of a Visigothic identity had been replaced by the notion that the Asturian kings were the biological, dynastic and

¹⁰ Portugal remained independent throughout the Middle Ages since the times of Enrique de Borgonha (c.1096–1112). Alfonso II of Castile and León, recognized Afonso Henriques, son of Enrique, as the first king of Portugal in 1143. Accordingly, its internal development falls outside of the scope of this dissertation.

historical continuators of the Goths” (233).¹¹ Escalona offers a compelling explanation of these changes as a response to the Carolingian influence over Asturian affairs since the reign of Alfonso II (r. 783, 791-782), when “history was narrated according to this anti-Visigothic, Carolingian inspired scheme” (251). Thus, looking into the local past served to legitimize the ruling dynasty as continuous with the former rulers of the whole Iberian Peninsula.¹²

Furthermore, this change towards the idea of a dynastic continuity linking Asturian nobility to that of the Visigoths occurred shortly after the consolidation of patrilineal inheritance for the Asturian throne. Before then, there were situations in which the daughters of previous rulers gave their husbands access to the throne, as discussed below in Chapter 4.¹³

The new stance toward the origins of Asturian kingship promoted by historians working under the patronage of Alfonso III was continued by major historiographical works produced later in Asturias, León, and Castile.¹⁴ These references in the historiographical sources correspond to the royal practices at the Christian Iberian courts. For instance, the Leonese royal dynasty had a long tradition of self-fashioning as continuators of the Visigothic rulers. Alfonso X resorted to this practice to sustain an authority based on the continuity between Visigothic Spain and his own rule. Beyond his historiography, he showed his connection to the Visigothic past by

¹¹ Archaeological evidence suggests the lack of centralized power in the area of the early kingdom of Asturias (Castellanos and Martín Viso 19–38). In view of the competing local powers and the expansive politics of Carolingian rulers, the dynastic authority of Visigothic nobility would have been pursued to legitimate the ruling Asturian dynasty.

¹² In particular, the direct link with the Visigothic ruling dynasties was established with Leovigildo and Recaredo and not with the last Visigothic kings, whose weakness was signaled as partially responsible for the success of the Islamic conquest (Escalona 238). Another strategy to annul the legitimacy of the Muslim conquest is the legend of the tradition surrounding Florinda la Cava. On the importance of this tradition in and beyond the medieval period, see Grieve (*Eve*).

¹³ The lack of direct patrilineal succession in the early Asturias kingdom made incoherent a direct transmission from the Visigoths for all Asturian rulers. This issue was solved by the alleged ancestry of Duke Pedro de Cantabria coming back to King Leovigildo and his son Recaredo (Escalona 252–55). Despite the significance differences in each case, McCracken observations about a the changes in twelfth-century France may help illuminate the absence of information about the importance of Asturian queens in this period: “As hereditary succession to the French throne became established, the symbolic importance of the queen's genealogy declined and her eclipsed status as a mother of exemplary lineage combined with other forces in the consolidation of royal authority to diminish her influence in the royal court” (6).

¹⁴ In León, Visigothic continuity is defended in the *Historia Silense* (twelfth century, see Escalona 248–49) and the *Chronicon Mundi* by Lucas de Tuy (d. 1249). Castilian examples include the *Chronica Nainerensis* (late twelfth century, see Christys) and *De rebus Hispaniae* by Rodrigo de Jiménez de Rada (ca. 1170–1247).

ordering the translation into Castilian of the *Forum Iudicum*, the legal code used in the Visigothic kingdom, before elaborating his own legal system with *Siete partidas*.¹⁵ Chapter 2 addresses this appeal to the Visigothic times along with other sources of legitimation based on Andalusí practices and traditions through his commission of a Castilian translation of an Arabic treatise of astrology, the *Libro de las cruces*.

When it comes to Alfonso X's historiography, Catalán considers *Neo-goticismo* a structural of the *EE* borrowed from *De rebus Hispaniae*, the influential chronicle written by the Archbishop of Toledo Rodrigo Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's (Estoria 31-35). Later scholars have analyzed different aspects of *Neo-goticismo* in the *EE*. For Bautista, reliance on Visigothic continuity creates a tension between the history of the *godos* (Goths) and the history of the territories of Spain that the *EE* solved by conflating them and projecting Visigothic history into Alfonso X's time (Estoria 61). This situation points to the conception of Spain as a timeless entity with its geographical limits fixed just before the arrival of Islam to the Iberian Peninsula and the conquest of much of its territories to be part of the Umayyad caliphate ruled from Damascus.

From the perspective of modern conceptions about what constitutes a written work, the references to the *EE* may suggest a stable content. However, what we call *Estoria de Espanna* accounts for a vast number of copies; some of them entailed major revisions, cuts, or additions. The references to the *EE* address the first conception of the chronicle as commissioned by Alfonso X. This first variant is commonly known as *Versión primitiva*. It was probably written between 1270 and 1274 and left unfinished in Chapter 801 of Menéndez Pidal's edition. The

¹⁵ These projects supported Alfonso X's claim to be recognized as "Emperor of the Spains" asserting his authority over all the Iberian Peninsula. King Jaume I of Aragon expressed his concerns about Alfonso X's claims as "Emperor of Spains" a few days apart from the date when the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* was finished. Alfonso VII of Castile and León had previously fashioned himself as "Imperator de tota a Hispania." On the imperial claims of the Leonese dynasty, see Iturmendi Morales, Socarrás (15–38).

Versión primitiva was later modified during and after Alfonso's reign. It was also copied as such or used to create late variants, as the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* analyzed in Chapter 4 below.

The textual transmission of the *EE* has received much scholarly attention. Catalán offers a detailed analysis of its most important variants that continues to inform later studies on the *EE*.¹⁶ Despite the multiple manuscript testimonies, for much of the twentieth century scholarly approaches—particularly by those non-specialized in medieval historiography—were reliant on a modern version, the 1906 edition of Ramón Menéndez Pidal under the title *Primera Crónica General de España (PCG)*.¹⁷ Menéndez Pidal mistakenly thought that the two manuscripts he was using represented the original version of the work, i. e. the first finished redaction under Alfonso X's patronage. Thanks to the studies of Catalán, we know that Menéndez Pidal mixed materials from the first Alfonsine version, the *Versión primitiva*, with later variants produced during the reign of Sancho IV (r. 1284-1295).¹⁸

In 1282 Alfonso X suffered the rebellion of his son Sancho and the nobility. During the last two years of his reign, Alfonso X's collaborators worked in a new version of the *EE*, known as *Versión crítica*, left unfinished at Alfonso's death, covering chapters 365 to 996 in Menéndez Pidal's *PCG*.¹⁹ During the reign of Sancho IV, the *EE* was completed up to the death of Fernando III, without addressing the reign of his son Alfonso, against whom the Sancho had

¹⁶ See the studies listed in the bibliography. Catalán started researching the *EE* in the 1960s. His studies were revised and edited together in a 1992. The continued relevance of Catalán studies is particularly clear in the articles 2000 book edited by Fernández-Ordóñez (*Alfonso X*).

¹⁷ This unfortunate title was the first of multiple confusing titles that had become a modern scholarly counterpart of the multiplicity medieval transmission. A fourteenth century Portuguese version was designated as *Segunda Crónica General*. The order continued with the reference to Florian de Ocampo's version for the print in 1541 referred as *Tercera Crónica General*, but also as *Crónica General Vulgata*. Fernández-Ordóñez has compiled a useful synthesis of the major branches of the *EE* using the currently more accepted titles for each version ("transmisión").

¹⁸ Menéndez Pidal followed the Lachmannian method of textual criticism, which had a long influence among Spanish philologists. The Lachmannian method postulated that editors should correct the mistakes produced by imperfect scribal transmission and reconstruct of the original text by tracing back "the family tree or genealogy of the text as it has come down to us in its surviving manuscript copies" (Mallette 9).

¹⁹ For a synthetic exposition of the two Alfonsine versions, see de la Campa.

rebelled.²⁰ When it comes to the idea of the Visigothic continuity, Bautista has shown its abandonment in the *Versión amplificada* (Estoria 57-84). Thus, *Neo-goticismo* is characteristic of the two versions produced during Alfonso's reign. Accordingly, it was part of the conceptual framework of the source materials used by the compiler of the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* (henceforth *CFB*). The discussion about breastfeeding and women's role in the creation of dynastic identities in that chapter addresses the limits and responses to the strong patrilineality behind *Neo-goticismo*.

Another aspect of the genealogical premises of Visigothic continuity formulated in Neo-Gothicist historiography—from Alfonso III to Alfonso X—is the conception of the Muslim realms of al-Andalus as the result of an illegitimate invasion. The corollary to this is the right of the direct descendants of the Visigoths to recover those lands and return them to the Christian rule. Fernández-Ordóñez summarizes this principle as follows:

According to Alfonso, the Arabs only had limited *sennorio* [dominion] over the peninsula. Indeed, the Astur-Leonese monarchy that originated in the North after the Arab invasion always considered itself the legitimate heir of the Gothic rights to the peninsular *imperium*, usurped by the foreigners coming from North Africa. This idea, present throughout the Middle Ages in the Christian kingdoms of the North, provided the legal base for the Reconquista, since the heirs of the Goths were fighting for the recovery of their legitimate possessions, and it clarifies the reasons why the *Estoria de España* never recognized the existence of an Arab *sennorio* structurally.²¹

This quotation shows the blurred limits between the contents of medieval historiography and the historical realities of the period. There is a fine line between interpreting medieval historiography and carrying out its ideological premises into that interpretation. The foundational figure of

²⁰ Also known as *Versión amplificada de 1289* and as *Versión retóricamente amplificada*.

²¹ “los árabes sólo tuvieron, según Alfonso, un *sennorio* limitado sobre la Península. En efecto, la monarquía astur-leonesa que nace en el Norte después de la invasión árabe siempre se consideró legítima heredera de los derechos godos al *imperium* peninsular, usurpados por los advenedizos provenientes del Norte de África. Esta idea, presente a lo largo de la Edad Media en los reinos cristianos del Norte, proporciona la base legal de la Reconquista, ya que los herederos de los godos luchaban por recuperar sus pertenencias legítimas, y aclara el motivo por que la *Estoria de España* nunca reconoció estructuralmente la existencia de un *sennorio* árabe” (*estorias* 20).

Alfonso X as *the* sponsor of the Castilian vernacular in Spanish philological studies may have made that line even thinner than usual. According to the idea of Visigothic continuity, the Asturian nobility inherited the right to occupy the Iberian Peninsula from the blood of their Visigoth ancestors, and the royal dynasty had a legitimate claim to rule over all its territories. From this perspective, dynastic relationships articulated a genealogical approach about the origin of Spain that excluded the alterity of the “foreign” Muslims.

Besides the tenets of Visigothic continuity and *Neo-goticismo* discussed above, non-biological genealogies are also a central part of Alfonso X’s ideas about the origins of Spain. They are addressed in Chapter 2 through the study of Alfonso X’s translation of the *Libro de las cruces*. This work is just one among a relatively vast number of translations of Arabic sciences commissioned the Castilian king. The existence of scientific discourses is contested by scholars who consider science a modern phenomenon resulting from the development during the early modern period of a set of methods strictly based on logic and empiricism. Even though a book as the *Libro de las cruces* evidence the impact of religious ideas and aprioristic non-falsifiable principles, it may still be considered science for its attempt “to organize and theoretically systematize knowledge of the physical world, involving a shared methodology of technique, and advance in technological knowledge and use, and some kind of testing that includes the control of variables and the repetition of results” (Szpiech “From Mesopotamia” 28-29).²²

In the case of the *Libro de las cruces*, the scientific approach to the natural world is devoted to two disciplines that would not pass as science nowadays, astrology and climate theory. In the Islamic world, most authors used the expression “Science of the Stars” (*ilm al-*

²² Szpiech—whose definition of medieval science I borrow here—expands on the problems around the existence of scientific ideas in the medieval Iberian Peninsula outlining its relationship with Islamic traditions in a concurrent way to my approach to the transmission of knowledge from the East apropos of the *Libro de las cruces*.

nujūm) to refer jointly to astronomy and astrology. Meanwhile, there was no clear distinction between them in the Christian Middle Ages there until the association of astronomy with mathematics and astrology with the applied sciences during the thirteenth century (Saliba 66). Alfonso's translations predate this academic distinction. Cardenas's study of terms used in them suggests that they tend to contradict modern semantics emphasizing the practical use of this type of knowledge ("Undersanding"). Regarding climate theory, the scientific character of this type of knowledge result from its attempt to describe the diversity of human populations through a systematized conception of the effects of the environment over their minds and body. Medieval climate theory explained phenotypical and behavioral differences among groups of humans living in a specific place as a direct result of the climatic and geographic conditions of the environment.

My analysis of the construction of scientific discourses around astrology and climate theory in the *Libro de las cruces* shows how Alfonso's translations participated of a genealogical conception of the transmission of knowledge with roots in Islamic courtly practices while emphasizing Alfonso's allegiance to the recovery of Visigothic pre-Islamic culture. This ambivalent engagement with Andalusí science opens the way to a discussion of dynastic genealogies in chapters 3 and 4. Addressing genealogical thinking in relation to kinship, these two chapters discuss the construction of ideas about nobility and aristocratic lineages with two different but complementary emphasis.

Chapter 3's analysis of the *Libro del caballero Zifar* focuses on the intersection between translation and patrilineal genealogies in light of the decision of its anonymous author of presenting the romance as a translation from *caldeo*. The mention of this language ambivalently refer Arabic, but also to a remote Asian region of Chaldea. A part of the chapter discusses the

significance of Chaldea for ideas about alterity shared by Christians, Jews, and Muslim around the lineages of Noah and the “Curse of Ham.” Meanwhile, Chapter 4 addresses the creation milk-based kinship relationships that allow the intermixing of Christian and Muslim lineages in the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* as an interruption of the monocultural patrilineal logic of Alfonso X’s *Estoria de Espanna* outlined in the previous pages.²³

***Translatio(n)* and Andalusī Alterities**

During the last decades, translation studies have gained traction among scholars who pursue an analysis of cultural contact during the Middle Ages. In the multilingual context of the Iberian Peninsula the practice of translation was instrumental for the transmission and transformation of literature and knowledge, with scholars such as Alvar, Girón-Negrón, and Wacks offering a variety of approaches to the breath of Castilian translation initiatives and its consequences for the development of the vernacular culture of the kingdom.

Copeland’s 1991 *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* has become a point of reference for scholars’ attention to the wide implications of translation for medieval culture. Her study acknowledges the use of translation as an instrument from the creation of ideologically charged discourses. Nevertheless, the selection of her sources leads to a very limited conception of translation in what is presented as a general studio of “translation in the Middle Ages.” Focusing solely on translations from Latin, Copeland limits her study to English, French, and German sources leaving aside spaces like Iberian Peninsula that would push for the consideration of non-Latin traditions. As part of the transition from a Latin to a

²³ Alfonso’s historiography also displays the type of non-biological genealogies I discuss in relation to his scientific translations. See for instance, Martín’s description of Alfonso X’s historiographical projects as a resulting on a “complicado entramado genealógico” (“complex genealogical grid”) whose objective was “orienting” a *translatio imperii* towards his own legitimacy (“modelo” 49).

vernacular written culture, Copeland addresses the significance of the idea of *translatio studii*—to which I return below—in relation to ideas about authority (*auctoritas*).

Minnis’s seminal work on medieval authorship addresses the significance of authority in Latin written culture through the importance of those considered *auctores*. These *auctores* were a selected group of long dead male authors whose works were deemed a valuable transmission of truth. This status gave authority (*auctoritas*) to the texts authored or attributed to *auctores*, making those works worthy of being copied and commented on by educated scholars. In Minnis’s words, “the term *auctor* denoted someone who was at once a writer and an authority, someone not merely to be read but also to be respected and believed” (5). An implication of this respect from the *auctores* is the absence of an idea of authorship equivalent to that dominant in modern times.

Medieval authors conceived themselves as participants in a chain of knowledge transmitted from the past to future generations. As Cerquiglini puts it: “The medieval corpus is composed of innumerable *Continuations*” (35). This approach to knowledge emphasized the transmission of previously existing materials produced by recognized authors from the past instead of originality and innovation. With this framework in mind, translation was crucial for the transmission of authoritative knowledge. Limiting the study to translations from Latin to vernacular in studies such as Copeland’s foster the notion of a continuity of Christian European culture closed to external traditions. This approach to translation may be approached *genealogically* as akin to the monocultural principles of Visigothic lineages in Castilian historiography. Accordingly, one of the main goals of this dissertation is criticize this parallel construction of genealogy and translation as a universal principle of medieval Christian

discourses from the specificity of an Iberian context in which Arabic rivaled Latin as an authoritative language of culture.

Embracing a poststructuralist critique, Evans vindicates the study of medieval translations writing that “[t]he discussion about hybridity and hybrid identities in border zones [...] is *potentially* enormously valuable for rethinking some of the questions about vernacularity, *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* as zones of *cultural* transaction in the Middle Ages” (“Translating” 22-23, her emphasis). Throughout this dissertation, the literary analysis of Castilian engagement with Andalusí traditions pursue a reading of the foundation of Castilian vernacularity from its condition as a border zone between Latin- and Arabic-based authoritative cultures. In this context, the study of translation becomes central to address the emergence of the Castilian vernacular as part of the wider interest of this dissertation on questioning the limits of monocultural ideas about the origin of Castilian culture.

This dissertation centers its attention on the construction of Castilian texts that create a narrative that emphasizes an Arabic and/or Muslim authority at the origin of exemplary Christian models and values. Each of the texts that center the analysis on the following chapters rely to the practice of translation—either factual or forged, explicit or implicit—to present its Arabic origin as a source of authority. Thus, the resulting vernacular texts implies a transference (*translatio*) from a Muslim to a Christian worldview. In discussing these transferences, the use of the concept of “hybridity” is limited to instances in which there seems to be an emphasis on the concurrence of separate traditions into a new one. For the most part, I favor the analysis of ambivalence that result from these processes of cultural transformation.

My approach to Alfonso X’s sponsorship of the translation of Arabic sciences evidences a deliberate continuation of Andalusí practices that trace a genealogical continuity between

Arabic culture and Islamic rulership and the cultural and political ambitions of the Castilian kings. The analysis of the *Libro de las cruces* proposes that Alfonso's translation result on an ambivalent conception of the role of Andalusí traditions as a source of Castilian culture. This ambivalence derives from the textually stressed twofold origin of its contents as both Arabic and non-Arabic, locally pre-Islamic, while also originated in remote Asian lands. Ultimately, the focus on Alfonso's translations from Arabic challenges the emphasis on monocultural and northern-European paradigms that—being emphasized in other parts of Alfonso's vast cultural production—led to the dominance of a partial view of his project among medieval and modern intellectuals alike.

Minnis's erudite and influential study emphasizes the Latin genre of academic prologues to *auctores*, which he identifies as “vehicles for the advancement of literary theory” since the twelfth century (39). Agreeing with Minnis in the relevance of analyzing the prologues to understand the scope of a writer intervention over preexisting materials, Chapter 2 discusses the two prologues of Alfonso X's *Libro de las cruces*. The first prologue corresponds to the Castilian translation and presents King Alfonso as a direct participant in recovering the Arabic source text. The second prologue appears as the first chapter of the translation he commissioned, but it corresponds to the prologue created by its Arabic author, named Oueydalla in the only preserved manuscript.

Alfonso's prologue mentions *auctores* such as Aristotle and Ptolemy along with a wise man named Oueydalla, who himself looked into the authority of the ancient past to recover the knowledge presented in this astrological treatise. The Arabic prologue here offers a chain of transmission that identifies the origin of its knowledge among the Romans who used to live in Spain and North Africa instead of the more “authoritative” wise men from the East. Thus, these

two prologues articulate Alfonso's conception of the role of translation and textual transmission in order to elaborate on the intellectual authority of al-Andalus and, in so doing, to present Alfonso as a legitimate ruler according to Andalusí and Castilian paradigms alike.

The analysis of the *Zifar* in Chapter 3 approaches its prologue in two separate but related directions that correspond to the apparent separation between its two parts. This prologue starts narrating the relocation of the cadaver of Cardinal Gonçalo Pérez Gudiel from a Roman Church to the Cathedral of Toledo. Then, it addresses the content of the romance that follows claiming that it is a translation from a *caldeo* ("Chaldean") work. All indicates that the romance was written by an unknown writer from early thirteenth century Toledo, most probably from the same Mozarabic community of Cardinal Pérez Gudiel.

As discussed above, modern scholarship has dedicated a vast amount of research to understanding what the Visigothic past meant for Castilian ideas about the kingdom's origin. In comparison, the impact of the Christian communities living within al-Andalus has received modest attention. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Mozarabs of Toledo established a genealogical continuity between Andalusí and Castilian Toledo around multicultural Christian families who used Arabic for their daily and religious affairs and were familiar with Islamic Andalusí culture. My analysis of this prologue discusses the implications of the social changes witnessed by the Mozarabs as their Andalusí legacies were increasingly challenged by pressure and acculturation into a less Arabized environment.

In dealing with the alterity of al-Andalus, all the works that center the textual analysis in this dissertation engage with translation from Arabic. However, they do it in quite different ways. Only the *Libro de las cruces* results from a bonafide translation of an Arabic source. The *CFB*, by contrast, derives from an Old French poem. Yet the existence of earlier references in

Castilian and Aragonese makes unclear the language of the version used by the compiler, who blended it with a version of the *EE*. The compiler refers to Sigiberto as the author of an Arabic *estoria* (story/history) that, he suggests, gives credibility to his account of the events. Meanwhile, the *Zifar* presents itself as a translation from *caldeo*, thus referring ambivalently—as detailed in the analysis below—to a source that implies both an Arabic and a pre-Arabic origin.

A corollary that comes from the analysis of the relationship between *translatio(n)* and alterity in following pages is that the authors who produced the works discussed below did not collectively respond to an internally coherent view of the role of Andalusí culture or the role of Arabic and Muslims within Castile. The ambivalence towards Islam in the texts analyzed in this dissertation points to a variety of ideas that do not fit the narrative of Arabic and Muslims as “foreign” to the Christian kingdom. Nevertheless, the all the sources discussed in detail are tied by the consequences of medieval ideas about *translatio* as a transference from a group to another, including the conception of the receiving group or language as superseding the previous one.

For Stahuljak, translation is at the core of medieval ideas about transference or *translatio* that included the notions *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii*: “the linguistic is the key to the transfer: transfers of power, learning, relics and text are shown to be operated by means of language, while *translatio* as metaphor addresses the very means of operation of that language which performs the transfer of objects” (“Epistemology” 38). Stahuljak’s understanding of translation as *translatio* accounts for the centrality of the textual authority of the past in medieval Christian Europe. In this sense, translation creates a symbolic relationship with the original at odds with the conceptual framework of textual literalism.

Strict literal translations were uncommon in a manuscript culture rich in glosses, commentaries, *florilegia*, and other forms of textual interventions. Yet, what I mean by “literalism” exceeds medieval theories of linguistic translation to encompass the broader notion of *translatio*, wherein the symbolic relationships between source and receptor include not only the text but its community of potential readers. Thus, my interest in translation is not primarily philological but is, rather, cultural. As a tool to deal with the authority of al-Andalus vis-à-vis Christian Castile, *translatio(n)* becomes a profoundly political instrument.²⁴

The textual genealogies that translation produces are not independent of Castilian ideas about its origins but mediate the position of Andalusí legacies within the multicultural reality of the kingdom during the period covered by this dissertation. By doing so, *translatio(n)* creates narratives of origin that approach the alterity of the non-Christian population of the Iberian Peninsula in ways that do not necessarily concur with those offered by other discourses, as the historiographical traditions outlined in the previous section.

In his influential 1948 book *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Curtius proposed that the notion of *translatio studii* was first used as an instrument of political legitimation by Charlemagne’s adviser Alcuin of York (ca. 735-804; 28-29). Alcuin conceived *translatio studii* as a transfer of knowledge from the Athenian philosophers of Classical Greece to the Carolingian Empire. Alcuin’s conception of *translatio studii* became an influential literary and political model in medieval Christianity.²⁵ However, the idea of Greece as the origin of intellectual authority had a long history before Alcuin. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), probably

²⁴ I use *translatio(n)* in contexts in which *translatio* and translation are inextricably associated. For more details on the close association between them in medieval Mediterranean cultures, see Kinoshita “translatio/n.”

²⁵ For the political history of *translatio studii*, see Briggs (396–99), Curtius (27–30), Rodríguez de la Peña (“*Translatio*” 30–34). A paradigmatic case of literary work that referring to *translatio studii* in Alcuin’s terms is Chrétien de Troyes’s *Cligès* (ca. 1176), on this, see Kelly. Gracia suggests that notions of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* in thirteenth century French historiography were known and used in the conception of the Alfonsine *General estoria*.

the most influential Christian *auctor* during the European Middle Ages, wrote about this issue in his *The City of God*:

This city [Athens] also acquired no small fame from literature and from the philosophers, since such studies (*studia*) as these flourished there to an exceptional degree. Now, as far as imperial power (*imperium*) is concerned, there was none greater in early times than that of the Assyrians [...]. But since Greek history is much better known among us than Assyrian, and since those who have traced the descent of the Roman people back to its ancient origins have followed a chronological scheme that comes down through the Greeks to the Latins and thence to the Romans, who are themselves Latins also, for this reason we must name the Assyrian kings when occasion arises.²⁶

Augustine shows that Greece was predominantly regarded as the origin of intellectual development during Late Antiquity. His mention of the Assyrians' *imperium* evidences how the debates about the worth of ancient peoples were centered on knowledge (*studia*) and imperial power (*imperium*). At the same time, the introduction of Assyrians widens the geographic scope of the discussion about each people's fame. From Augustine's perspective, it is necessary to include the peoples at the East of the Mediterranean, avoiding the tendency among his contemporaries only to recognize the worth of the more familiar and geographically close peoples of the past.

The emphasis on Alcuin's preference for Greece among modern scholars narrows the geographical scope of ideas about *translatio* in his design of a discourse of political legitimization based on a transmission of knowledge and imperial from the past that also implied a trajectory between different regions and peoples. Recent scholarship has started to show that

²⁶ "Accedit huic civitati non parva etiam ex litteris et philosophis gloria, quod ibi potissimum talia studia vigerunt. Nam quantum adinet ad imperium, nullum maius primis temporibus quam Assyriorum fuit [...]. Sed quoniam res Graecae multo sunt nobis quam Assyriae notiores, et per Graecos ad Latinos ac deinde ad Romanos, qui etiam ipsi Latini sunt, temporum seriem deduxerunt qui gentem populi Romani in originis eius antiquitate rimati sunt; ob hoc debemus, ubi opus est, Assyrios nominare reges" (vol. 5, bk. 18, ch. 2, 366–67).

Augustine's broader conception of non-European *studii* and *imperium* was also appealing in European Christian circles as an alternative origin of knowledge and power.²⁷

My analysis of Alfonso X's engagement with Arabic knowledge in Chapter 2 participates in this approach proposing that the Castilian king conceived *translatio studii* as a tool to integrate Andalusī authoritative knowledge as part of his self-representation as a legitimate ruler.

Furthermore, my analysis of the *Libro de las cruces* underscores how this *translatio(n)* also aimed to transform how the authority of Islamic science was received by showcasing its reliance on local pre-Islamic practices along with those coming from remote Asian regions. As part of that analysis, the chapter discusses *translatio studii* from Asia to the Iberian Peninsula, which included both *auctores* recognized by higher Latin culture and ancient Persian and Indian literary and scientific works. Mainly, I address the corpus known as *'ulūm al-awā'il* (Sciences of the Ancients) transferred into Arabic by the translating movement sponsored by the Abbasid Caliphs in ninth-century Baghdad. The arrival of that corpus to Córdoba under the Umayyad Emir 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822-852) exemplifies dynamics parallel to the Christian notion of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii*, its counterpart for the legitimization of exercise of rule.

The notion of *translatio imperii* was used in medieval Europe to explain the succession of political power—understood as recognized influence and authority of an independent nation beyond their controlled territories—from one people to another. According to Rodríguez de la Peña, the central role of *imperium*—frequently translated as “power” or “dominion”) in European Christian narratives of political renovation “guided medieval founders of political structures to continuously search for the legitimizing referent of Rome under the fiction of a

²⁷ See, for instance, Kinoshita's rich study of the transmission of the Arabic *Kalila wa Dimna*, whose framework for the study of the relationship between transmission, *translatio*, and translation is one of the inspirations for this research (“Translatio/n”).

basic and uninterrupted continuity.”²⁸ Justinian (r. 527-565) and Charlemagne (r. 768-814) are two paradigmatic examples of rulers who aimed to found imperial structures in Europe after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. For both rulers, *translatio imperii* was defined as a source of political legitimacy that situated them over other European rulers as emperors who recovered and renovated the legacy of the vanished empire. In this context, the model was rooted in the idea of the Roman Empire, and specifically Rome, as the locus of a legitimate rule progressively transferred and displaced to subsequent places that symbolized imperial power: Byzantium for Justinian, and Aachen for Charlemagne.²⁹

This conception of *imperium* was developed in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages in a context where exegetical readings of the Bible influenced Christian conceptions of history. Augustine’s commentary on a passage of the *Book of Daniel* (2:38-40) is an example of such readings. The passage details Daniel’s explanation of Nebuchadnezzar II’s dream as a message from God. Alfonso X’s *General estoria* offers a Castilian version of these verses:

[O]nde tu rey Nabuchodonosor eres la cabeça de oro daquela ymagen. E despues deti se leuantara otro regno menor que el to regnado. & este sera la plata.

E empos esse. otro regno tercero que sera como de cobre. & este sennorara toda la tierra. El quarto regno uerna empos este. & sera de fierro. E assi como el fierro desmenuza & doma. alo que fiere. assi desmenuzara & crebantara este todas las cosas (fol. 61v, retrieved from *Corpus Biblia Medieval*)

Where you, King Nebuchadnezzar, are the golden head of that image. And after you, another lesser kingdom than your kingdom will rise. And this will be of silver.

And after that one, another third kingdom will be of copper. And this one will rule over the whole earth. The fourth kingdom will come after this one. And it will be of iron. And just as the iron crumbles and masters what it strikes, this one will crumble and break everything. (My trans.)

²⁸ “llevó a los fundadores medievales de nuevas estructuras políticas a buscar continuamente el referente legitimador de Roma bajo la ficción de una continuidad básica e ininterrumpida” (“*Translatio*” 28).

²⁹ See Curtius seminal work (24–30), Rodríguez de la Peña (“*Translatio*” 25–29).

Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream forecasts the evolution of his *imperium* into a succession of kingdoms of decreasing value. Origin is located in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonia without reference to geographical displacement. In his *Civitas Dei* (City of God), Augustine refers to the same region when writing "as far as imperial power (*imperium*) is concerned, there was none greater in early times than that of the Assyrians."³⁰ This reference to the region of Mesopotamia—which also includes Chaldea, the place behind the alleged *caldeo* source of the *Zifar*—expands the ancient *imperium* beyond the Roman-European referent of Alcuin and other medieval thinkers according to ideas shared by the three major Abrahamic religions that coexisted the Iberian Peninsula: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Despite discrepancies about religious truth, all three shared cultural and historical referents derived from overlapping sacred histories derived from the Hebrew *Torah* and other shared religious texts.

Religious difference provided a vocabulary to express ideas about alterity in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile. However, the shared aspects of sacred history made that alterity not incommensurable but dependent on the exegesis of religious texts and the social ramifications of difference in religious beliefs and practices. In this context, ideas about *translatio* do not correspond to the Latin-European referents of Alcuin, but to the broader geographical and cultural referents of Augustine exegesis and the Arabic translators working in Abbasid Baghdad sponsored new caliphal dynasty. There is little doubt of the Christian and European worldview of the nobility in the kingdoms of Castile, Galicia, and León. Yet, Castilian culture was not restricted to those referents. My approach to *translatio(n)* proposes that translation functioned as an instrument to carry out the objectives of initiatives of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* by ambivalently relying on Arabic traditions and reinforcing the

³⁰ "Nam quantum adinet ad imperium, nullum maius primis temporibus quam Assyriorum fuit" (vol. 5, bk. 18, ch. 2, 366–67).

worldview of the Christian agents behind the elaboration of the works discussed in this dissertation. This approach accounts for a concurrent process of continuity and transformation in which the authority transferred by the translation from the source to the receptor language.

The study of *translatio(n)* in this dissertation serves a double purpose of dealing with the question of how the multicultural character of Castile manifest as polyglossia was canalized towards the use of Castilian while being dependent on trajectories to transmit the authority of the past beyond the Christian Latinate tradition. By doing so, it nuances Copeland's approach to the temporal relationship between cultures involved in medieval translation tradition for whom

[m]edieval hermeneutical practice defines its ideological relationship with antiquity in terms of continuity or of an organic and inevitable lineage: the pagan *imperium* can be subsumed within the larger compass of Christian culture.³⁸ This assumption of lineal continuity is directly expressed in the linguistic ties of medieval academic discourse with antiquity. The medieval *artes* curriculum devotes itself to nurturing and sustaining a textual culture of *Latinitas*. (103)

As detailed in the following chapters, the work of Christian Castilian authors evidences that their engagement “pagan *imperium*” of the peoples of antiquity was mediated by the Arabic textual culture of al-Andalus in ways that challenge the notion of an “organic and inevitable lineage.” Rather contrarily, I would suggest that their use of *translatio(n)* is indicative of the lack of “lineal continuity” between the “culture of *Latinitas*” and the vernacular culture of Castile, to use Copeland's terms. Thus, the use *translatio(n)* from Andalusian traditions runs parallel to the problem of genealogy, evidencing the unstable character of monocultural traditions at the very places of production of knowledge and power of thirteenth- and fourteenth-centuries Castile, from the royal court of Alfonso X discussed on Chapter 2 to the Mozarabic elites in the circle of the Archbishopric of Toledo in Chapter 3, and the transmission of Alfonso X's historiography in Chapter 4.

Remote Origins

Each of the following chapters addresses the relationships of power produced by the practice of *translatio(n)* and its ambivalent implications for the construction of al-Andalus, the Arabic language, Islam, and Muslims as simultaneously “others” and at the origin of Castilian culture. They engage with the study of textual strategies that create genealogical filiations between al-Andalus and Castile through the creation of trajectories of intellectual and dynastic continuity that trace back to what I refer as “remote origins.” “Remote” has here a twofold spatial and temporal sense.

The study of remote spaces and the “ambivalent” identities associated with them has been rarely considered relevant to understand the internal dynamics of the Iberian Peninsula. Michel Harney’s 2015 book *Race, Caste, and Indigeneity in Medieval Spanish Travel Literature* is a notable exception for its commitment to discussing how writings about remote regions of the world were instrumental for formulating ideas about alterity in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile. That insight was instrumental for the significance of remote spaces for the conceptual framework of this dissertation. This perspective is directly relevant in Chapter 2, in which the spatial dimension of “remote origins” comes from the transmission of courtly practices around science and translation from Bagdad to Córdoba and Toledo. Chapter 3 discusses the significance for the Iberian contexts of the exemplary deeds of two “Indian” knights who end up ruling over “strange” lands after wandering through Asia. Lastly, Chapter 4 discusses the formation in the domestic space of an Andalusí court of mixed lineage by the daughter of an enslaved French woman and Umayyad prince. His parents’ anxiety about intermarriage with a daughter of Christians ends up with both of them displaced, first to Egypt and then to an uncharted island in the middle of the ocean. Consequently, my analysis of the construction of

“remote origins” in the texts discussed below contends that Castilian narratives about collective origins cannot be confined to the northern shores of the Mediterranean. This dissertation redirects the question about the origins of European national identities from a strictly Roman-Latin genealogy to north-African and Arabic routes towards Eastern spaces. These spatial coordinates are addressed below to underscore the importance of Asia in Castilian ideas about Islam as an ambivalent—remote and transformed—component of the Castilian past.

Parallel to the analysis of remote spaces is the linked idea of “remote” temporalities, which plays a role in all three subsequent chapters. This conception of distant temporalities in the texts analyzed below completes the ambivalent conception of Andalusī alterities as transformable into an integral part of the Castilian past. In Chapter 2, the remote past corresponds to the “ancient sages” who wrote and developed the sciences before the Islamic conquests. Chapter 3 addresses two separate temporalities genealogically continued through lineage, the biblical past of Noah’s immediate progeny, and a vague temporality between the time of Apostle Bartholomew and the spread of Islam. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses the first generations after the Islamic conquest of the Iberian peninsula in the eighth century as described in the *CFB*, whose approximate composition around 1390 explains the final date in the dissertation’s title.

Through the study of these temporally and geographically “remote origins,” this dissertation aims to disentangle two different strands of ideas about the origins of Spain concurrent in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile, the monocultural and nativist views promoted by the presence of Neo-Gothicist ideas in medieval historiography such as Alfonso X’s *Estoria de Espanna* and other Christian discourses of the period, and another view, also evident in texts of the Alphonsine corpus such as the *Libro de las cruces*, that proffers a less narrow view

of the role of Arabic culture in the Castilian past. As a first step toward separating these two competitive but intermingled views, the next pages outline the most frequently studied ideas about the origins of Castile in medieval historiography. Unlike the ones discussed in the following chapters of this dissertation, those origins stress the Christian roots of the kingdom and the “foreign” origin of the Muslim population of Iberia, championing what I have referred to as monocultural and nativist views about the origins of Castile.

The exploration of remote origins in this dissertation may show the relevance of more complex and diverse origins than those behind ideas such as *Neo-goticismo* and Visigothic continuity. However, this does not necessarily imply a more inclusive society in twenty-first-century terms. In the texts I examine here, *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* create a transference from one group of people—frequently singled out as the ruling dynasty—to another. The initial possessor loses its privileged position of superiority in favor of the recipient. Thus, as I hope to show, hierarchy is an intrinsic aspect of medieval *translatio*. Ultimately, what I refer to as an engagement with alterity it is so that that alterity is recreated in ways coherent with the Christian worldview of Castilian elites and under a defense of it as bearer of authority, power, and truth.

One of the undercurrents crossing the following chapters is the discussion of aspects of the works that evince what can be called racializing principles as ideas about and embodied character of some forms of alterity. While this is not a dissertation about race in medieval Iberia—which has been amply studied elsewhere³¹—nevertheless, my analysis will demonstrate

³¹ The bibliography about race in the Middle Ages has grown enormously in recent years. Among the multiple publications on this topic Heng’s 2018 book *The invention of race in the European Middle Ages* received the more ample attention, even if its emphasis on race as a medieval European “invention” has resulted in mixed reactions in a field that traditionally refused to consider “race” a meaningful category for studying the period. For an overview of different critical stances before the recent scholarly attention, see Bartlett’s rejection of the use of the term “race” in the European Middle Ages as anachronistic approach to ideas about differences between human groups, Jeffrey J. Cohen’s exploration of the benefits of thinking about race according to specifically medieval ideas about embodiment (“Race”), and Holsinger’s approach to the

how these racializing agendas are one aspect among others of how alterity was conceived in the thirteenth and fourteenth-century Castile. Those racializing ideas essentialize alterity as part of individual and collective qualities. However, they also evidence a perception of racialized difference as transformable along the lines of the textual and conceptual strategies of *translatio(n)* discussed throughout this dissertation.

Each of the three following chapters focuses on an emblematic case from different areas of medieval textual production: the *Libro de las cruces* studied in Chapter 2 pertains to astrology and the sciences, Chapter 3 focuses on the literary form of the *Libro del caballero Zifar*, whereas Chapter 4 discusses the intermixing of literature and historiography in the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*. Besides these areas, each chapter offers a detailed historicization of the cultural context that informs each of the works studied in more detail. As part of that emphasis, this dissertation addresses the significance of other types of discourses regarding intellectual exchanges and ideas about alterity that impacted the relationship between Castile and the legacies of al-Andalus. Thus the following pages discuss in different degrees materials that correspond to disciplines such as anthropology, geography, law, manuscript studies, medicine, racializing ideas, and religion.

Chapter 2 addresses the translations of Arabic science commissioned by King Alfonso X focusing on the case of the *Libro de las cruces* (1259). Following Fierro's suggestion of Alfonso X as a continuator of Andalusí courtly practices, it starts tracing the transmission of the astrological method contained in the book with a double focus on the findings of specialists on Andalusí sciences and textual analyses of the content of the Arabic and Castilian prologues to the work. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the construction of trajectories of *translatio studii* and

significance of skin color in medieval Christian thought. As already mentioned, Harney was an early defendant of importance of considering the existence of racializing ideas in thirteenth and fourteenth century Castilian literature (particularly in *Race*).

translatio imperii in the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* to show how the unstable character of Iberian ideas about collective hierarchies and racialization is a direct consequence of the importance of genealogical thinking to legitimize political power.

The analysis of the *Libro del caballero Zifar* (ca. 1300-1305) in Chapter 3 includes a broader range of ambivalent strategies to mediate the alterity of al-Andalus. They range from the forged presentation of the work as a translation from *caldeo* to the names of the character, the significance of the sites where the actions take place, or the importance of the dead body of the Mozarabic cardinal Gonçalo Pérez Gudiel in its prologue. In addressing the significance of remote origins in the *Zifar*, this chapter shifts from the intellectual lineages discussed regarding the *Libro de las cruces* to the patrilineal genealogy of the two main protagonists of the “Indian” knights Zifar and his son Roboán. Informed by the work in progress on father-son relationships in the cultural production of Alfonso X’s descendants generously shared by Ryan Szpiech, this chapter focuses on the implications of the forged “caldeo”—literally “Chaldean,” but ultimately “Arabic”—origin of the *Zifar* as paradigmatic of the romance’s representation of Andalusí culture as simultaneously integral and remote, displayed and hidden.

The chapter discusses the circumstances that lead Zifar and Roboán to rule over “strange lands” and escape the curse inherited from his dynastic ancestor Tared and unmake the evil actions of Ham and his grandson Nimrod. The intersection between individual/dynastic transformation, spatial relocation, and access to rule articulates my reading of the romance in relation to the Castilian control of the former territories of al-Andalus. This emphasis on the transformable character of lineage is framed by the ambiguous allusions to the “Curse of Ham,” a popular medieval legend based on shared aspects of the sacred histories of Christians, Jews, and Muslims closely tied to medieval ideas about embodied racialized alterity. Given the

romance's participation in the genre of exemplary literature and its direct engagement of *Zifar* with Arabic and Jewish textual materials, I conclude that representing its main protagonists as able to transform their dynastic heritage provides a model for engaging with the cultural history of al-Andalus to promote a strictly Christian worldview. The chapter ends with an analysis of the prologue of the romance, suggesting that the authorial call for keeping the memory of the past brings together the remote space and temporality of the *caldeo* book and the "Indian" knights with the recent developments of a Mozarabic community struggling to preserve its Andalusí heritage in early fourteenth-century Toledo.

If the chapter on the *Zifar* discusses the impact of dynastic origins within a patrilineal conception of lineage, Chapter 4 addresses the limits of patrilineal genealogies by looking at the implications of breastfeeding in the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* (ca. 1390). My approach to the *CFB* focuses on the intersection between genealogy and alterity in medieval Iberia in the practice of breastfeeding. I discuss medical and anthropological ideas about milk in Christian and Muslim contexts concerning the opposition to women's practices of nurture and education across religious communities that may create cross-cultural forms of kinship and affiliation.

Moving into the analysis of the romance, the chapter discusses the impact that Christian captive Berta has in disrupting the continuity of the Umayyad lineage of a fictional Muslim kingdom of Almería after breastfeeding her daughter Blancaflor and Prince Flores. Breastfeeding enables a space of intimacy between two children whose disparate origin is viewed as problematic by Flores's parents, the Muslim rulers of Almería. Participating in the textual tradition of Alfonso X's *EE*, the *CFB* challenges the emphasis on a lineal dynastic continuity based on blood articulated by the reliance of Alfonso X's chronicle on *Neo-goticismo*, as outlined above. In the *CFB*, Berta's milk facilitates a bodily change in the male protagonist,

leading to his conversion to Christianity and subsequent conquest of the Andalusí territories as an Umayyad Christian king, fulfilling what the northern kings who claimed to descend from the Visigoths failed to bring back to a Christian rule.

The implications of wet nursing in the *CFB* reveal the perceived limits of a Castilian kingdom monoculturally conceived. It brings two groups—formerly set aside in the dominant discourses among Castilian nobility—to the fore, a nursing woman and a converted Muslim. Thus, this version of the *EE* bears witness to the limits of the patrilineal historiography it participates in, emphasizing the complexity of Castilian communities profoundly shaped by the multicultural and multilingual character of the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, in the absence of direct sources with details about the role of those women, the representation of gendered relationships such as wet nursing offers a perspective on the period that enlarges the limited view of ideas about the origins of Castile in the extant record. Doing so elaborates on the problem of finding a place, at the end of the fourteenth century, for the cultural and demographic legacy of al-Andalus that had remained unresolved since Alfonso attempted to engage with the multicultural character of his kingdoms.

The brief conclusion in Chapter 5 invites further exploration of the issues addressed in this dissertation in light of the changes in the conception of religious alterity in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Castile. These centuries have been frequently studied as the origin of systematic racializing agendas based on genealogical origin. Nevertheless, the results of this dissertation challenge the notion of a radical change in conceptions about alterity between both periods. I would venture that, during those periods, the transformable character of alterity—racialized and otherwise—traced in the following chapters was still a significant factor in the development of later ideas about the belonging of Jewish and Muslim communities and history

to the Castilian and present. However, such a claim would require further research on issues that lie beyond the temporal scope of this dissertation

Chapter 2 Alfonso X's *Libro de las cruces* and the Translation of Arabic Knowledge

All hidden and sublime science
Is found in an inaccessible place
That only gradually can be climbed
By him below whom are dangerous seas and abysses;
None reach its extreme dwellings
Except he who knows the texts translated into Arabic.
Sā'id ibn 'Abd Rabbihi (Córdoba, d. 953–967)³²

The reign of King Alfonso X of Castile, León, and Galicia (r. 1252–1284) is one of the periods most discussed by literary and cultural historians of the Iberian Middle Ages. Alfonso's deliberate sponsorship of textual culture in the vernacular of Castile is rightfully considered a turning point in developing what would become modern Spanish. He commissioned some of the most influential works for medieval and modern ideas about Spain, its origins, limits, and projections. For Alfonso X, Spain was a geographical and historical entity that encompassed the whole Iberian Peninsula and witnessed a succession of external attacks and invasions up to his time. The *Estoria de Espanna*, considered in Chapter 4, encapsulates this conception of Spain. This chronicle traces the history of Spain—as its title indicates—from the beginning of time to Alfonso's reign. Until the twentieth century, historians considered it a major source of information about the origins of Spain. Yet, the *EE* is only one among multiple works commissioned by King Alfonso that conceptualize Spain's past.

³² My translation from Kuhne ("La *ur̥yūza fī-l-ṭibb*" vv. 53–55, Spanish 312, Arabic 327).

This chapter aims to broaden our understanding of ideas about the origins of Spain in the works commissioned by Alfonso by addressing ideas about cultural transmission and translation in the *Libro de las cruces*. This work is part of a series of translations of Arabic knowledge commanded by the Castilian king that deal with disciplines such as astronomy, astrology, properties of stones, and magic. Even though these works have not been considered relevant for Alfonso's ideas about history, their prologues and contents include significant information about cultural groups across the world, displacement of people and knowledge to remote spaces, and the implications of transmitting knowledge across languages and societies. Together, these themes and ideas trace and intellectual genealogy does not correspond to the monocultural roots favored by the other medieval discourses—including aspects of Alfonso's *EE* discussed in Chapter 1—and a part of modern scholarship and general views about the period.

Moreover, translations of Arabic science have received comparatively less scholarly attention than other areas of Alfonso's cultural production. Much of what we know about them is indebted to the circle of scholars of the history of science founded by Juan Vernet at the Universitat de Barcelona and continued by Julio Samsó and their disciples. In this chapter, I rely on the historical and linguistic expertise of historians of the science like them to address the significance of Alfonso X's commission of a Castilian translation of the *Libro de las cruces*, a work that deals mostly with astrological prognostication.³³

Tracing the evolution of astronomy and astrology in al-Andalus through the textual history of the Arabic *Libro de las cruces*, this chapter argues that Alfonso's interest in the work

³³ Muslim authors used the expression “Science of the Stars” (*‘ilm al-nujūm*) to refer jointly to astronomy and astrology. The distinction between both was reaffirmed during the thirteenth century with astronomy falling within the sphere of mathematics and astrology within applied sciences (Saliba 66). The works translated during Alfonso X's reign predate this academic distinction showing an unstable use of both terms. Cardenas has concluded that the texts produced by the king's *scriptorium* tend to exchange the semantics associated with ‘astronomy’ and ‘astrology’ nowadays emphasizing the practical use of this knowledge (“Undersanding”).

emerged from two separate but related aspects concurrent in this treatise. First, the *Libro de las cruces* is an example of a decided promotion of knowledge among Andalusí rulers that followed the Umayyad enterprise of translating a vast corpus of works associated with the so-called “Sciences of the Ancients.” Additionally, this work claims to recover a local astrological method practiced in Spain before the Islamic conquest of most of the peninsula. Doing so promotes an alternative theory about the origin of ancient knowledge in place of the common view tracing all learning to more authoritative Eastern sciences. The context and content highlight the political implications of the transmission of knowledge in the medieval Mediterranean. Likewise, it allows us to look at ideas about history and transmission that, by elaborating on Andalusí traditions, offer an alternative view of the origins of Spain and its relationship with Islam other than that deriving only from the historiographical and legal texts produced under the patronage of King Alfonso’s patronage.

Sā‘id ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s assertion in the epigraph of this chapter is a powerful example of the appeal that ancient knowledge had in al-Andalus.³⁴ He was a physician in Córdoba during the years following the foundation of the Umayyad Caliphate in 929. This was a moment of Andalusí political affirmation vis-à-vis the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad and the Fatimid Caliphate recently founded in Cairo. Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi is mentioned sporadically in biographical literature as an introverted and ruminative man who refused to work for the powerful at the caliphal court. For Kuhne, he represents the Andalusí ideal of the learned man thanks to his dedication to medicine, meteorology, and poetry. He studied the medical treatises of the ancients—he knew the work of Hippocrates and Galen—while contributing with his writings to a

³⁴ An *urjūza* is a poem written in the *rajaz* meter. This is considered the oldest type of Arabic meter but was not highly regarded for its simpler structure (Hammond “rajaz,” “urjūza”). Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s *urjūza* is a didactic poem about the theoretical premises of the practice of medicine. For more details, see Kuhne.

medical discipline that he practiced successfully. His *urjūza* poem underlines the importance of texts that originated in a tradition that predates Islam as necessary to reach the highest degree of medical knowledge. For this Andalusī physician, superior wisdom is located in a remote and isolated temporality only accessible through the continuous study of texts originally written in a different language.

Roughly three centuries after the death of ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, the Castilian prologue to the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* (*Book of the Crosses*) describes Alfonso X’s discovery of the Arabic text translated in that same manuscript:

Leyendo que dos cosas son en el mundo que mientras son escondidas non prestan nada, et es la una seso encerrado que non se amostra, et la otra thesoro escondido en tierra. El semeiando a Salamon en buscar et espaladinar los saberes, doliendo se de la perdida et la mengua que auian los ladinis en las sciencias de las significaciones sobredichas fallo el Libro de las Cruces que fizieron los sabios antigos. (1, fol.2r)

Reading that there are two things in the world that are useless while hidden, one is enclosed wisdom and the other treasure hidden underground, he, resembling Salomon in searching and expounding knowledge, regretting the loss of the abovementioned science of the prognostications among the Latins (*ladinos*), found the Book of the Crosses that the ancient sages made.³⁵

Here, the Castilian king appears as an individual actively involved in recovering a knowledge characterized as lost, hardly accessible, and unreachable for those referred to as “ladinos.” After “finding” this “Book of the Crosses,” King Alfonso would sponsor its translation into Castilian, the Latin vernacular that his father Fernando III started to promote over the other languages of his realm. With this translation, the king would bring to light the *seso encerrado* revealing the once hidden treasure of an Arabic knowledge previously linguistically inaccessible to most of his Castilian subjects.

³⁵ All quotes are from Kasten and Kiddle’s edition. The editors modernize punctuation and expand abbreviations, that I transcribe without italics. There is a paleographic version by Kasten, Nitti, and Jonxis-Henkemans. The paleographic version corrects a foliation error in the manuscript preserved in Kasten and Kiddle’s edition. Consequently, references to location in folio may vary. All English translations of the *Libro de las cruces* are mine unless otherwise noted.

Separated by almost three centuries, language, religion, and social status, Sā‘id ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi and Alfonso X belonged to two hardly comparable spheres of the Iberian Middle Ages. However, the attitude towards old texts in foreign languages in the two texts quoted above underlines that they shared recognition of the intrinsic value of the past as a source of intellectual authority. This chapter addresses the significance of recovering knowledge from the past that was closely associated with remote Asian lands in both the content and intellectual tradition of the *Libro de las cruces*. To do so, it identifies the use of translation as a tool to present King Alfonso as a continuator of two separate but concurrent intellectual lineages. One corresponds to a pre-Islamic method of the astrology of the crosses related to historiographical narratives about origins of Castile and León in the Visigothic kingdom—as noted in the Introduction. The other origin stresses Eastern intellectual traditions later reformulated by Muslim Andalusī scholars. This twofold origin of the book found and translated by Alfonso converges on him to grant the king an intellectual and political authority recognizable for all his subjects, whether they come from Christian, Jewish, or Muslim circles.

The following pages take the *Libro de las cruces* as a case study of Alfonso X’s engagement with the translation and promotion of Arabic knowledge from the Muslim realms of al-Andalus. To do so, they focus on the continuity between Alfonso’s cultural project and the promotion of the so-called “sciences of the Ancients”—particularly astrology—among Islamic rulers from early Abbasid Baghdad to the Andalusī *taifa* period. The twofold origin of the astrology of the crosses—local and Eastern in spatial terms, Arabic and pre-Islamic from a linguistic and temporal perspective—points to an alternative to monocultural conceptions of Castile among thirteenth-century Christian elites. As outlined in Chapter 1, Alfonso’s sponsored works were not exempt from such approaches, particularly his *Estoria de Espanna*. Thus, instead

of envisioning the vast cultural production he promoted as internally coherent, this chapter addresses the *Libro de las cruces* as part of a continued promotion of Arabic knowledge with political implications for Alfonso as ruler of a multicultural realm with a significant presence of Jewish and Muslim communities. By reading key chapters coming from the now lost Arabic source along with the Castilian prologue prepared by Alfonso's collaborators, this chapter outlines an intellectual continuity between Andalusí intellectual and political practices fostered by King Alfonso. Such a reading complicates discourses about the alterity of Islam in narratives about a strictly Christian origin of Castile around the idea of a continuity of Visigothic lineages.

Transmission and Translation of the Astrology of the Crosses

Alfonso X's interest in Arabic knowledge is evidenced by his sustained patronage of translations, particularly in the fields of astronomy and astrology.³⁶ The Arabic works translated under his patronage elaborated on a corpus of knowledge known as "Sciences of the Ancients" (*'ulūm al-awā'il*). While scholars specialized in European cultural history have traditionally emphasized the importance of Greek and Latin currents among those sciences, the corpus of works that early Muslim scholars translated into Arabic came from multiple origins, including Syriac, Persian, and Indian works. Alfonso X's patronage of translations from Arabic relied on a team of scholars who worked predominantly in Toledo, his native city and one with a long-lasting tradition of translation from and into multiple languages.³⁷ In addition, Alfonso's

³⁶ As noted in Chapter 1, I refer to astronomy, astrology, and climate theory as sciences because their attempt to describe the natural world through a series of methods based on a systematized empirical observation. Nevertheless, the analysis of the *Libro de las cruces* in this chapter evidences the limits of this rudimentary empiricism when it comes to assess the attempt to situate the author's own group within a proposed "scientific" hierarchical classification of human groups.

³⁷ Márquez Villanueva addresses the significance of the particularities of the variety of Castilian vernacular of Toledo for the Alfonso X's cultural project (297–302).

translators worked along with a broader group of collaborators in what is frequently referred to as his royal *scriptorium*.

The royal *scriptorium* of Alfonso X produced a varied collection of works that included poetry, historiography, legislation, as well as translation from multiple Arabic works on astronomy, astrology, religion, and exemplary literature.³⁸ The king's interest in the Arabic corpus of the "Sciences of the Ancients" created a relationship with Islam that exceeded intellectual engagement with scientific knowledge. Alfonso's systematic patronage of translations of the "Science of the Ancients" established a continuity with Andalusí knowledge and cultural practices at the same time that it transformed them to fulfill the Christian values and worldview of Castilian elites. Transmitted across long distances, realms, languages, and creeds, these "sciences of the ancients" constituted a meeting point for the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities of medieval Iberia long before Alfonso's time.³⁹

The patronage of these disciplines from Andalusí rulers emulated that of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad (which has come to be described in popular summaries by the misleading term "House of Wisdom" (*Bayt al-Hikma*), perhaps deriving from the Sassanian term for a library).⁴⁰ The Abbasid dynasty sponsored this movement after its ascension to Caliphate, overthrowing the Umayyads in 750. The Abbasids moved the caliphate's capital from Damascus to the newly founded city of Baghdad in 762, starting an extensive patronage of translation.

³⁸ Besides the *Libro de las cruces*, the corpus of scientific texts commissioned by Alfonso X includes the *Libro conplido de judicios de las estrellas* (1254), *Astromagia* (sometimes referred to as *Picatrix*, 1256), *Libros del saber de astrología* (1278), *Lapidario* (1250–1279), and *Tablas de Azarquel* (1284). Paleographic editions of all these texts are available in the digital database of the Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies. Furthermore, Alfonso sponsored the influential *Tablas alfonsíes* (*Alfonsine Tables*), a data compilation of astronomical observation widely used across Europe for at least three centuries to calculate ephemerides and cast horoscopes.

³⁹ See the studies of Burnett, Chabás, Forcada, Goldstein, Samsó, and Vernet in the bibliography.

⁴⁰ Gutas addresses the circumstances leading to this decided patronage of translation by the Abbasid and its consequences. As part of his study, Gutas expresses a total skepticism about the existence of an organized "house" committed to the translation of Greek works into Arabic or other goals frequently associated with the translation of sciences under al-Manṣūr, who ruled the Abbasid caliphate between 754 and 775 (58–59).

From the Eastern location of Baghdad, the model of the Abbasid patronage of translation would be later imitated by the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba, whose rulers aimed to reinforce their authority vis-à-vis the rival Eastern dynasty. The new promotion of Eastern sciences among the Umayyads resulted in a westwards trajectory of knowledge strongly associated with pursuing a reinforcement of its political authority as rivals of the Abbasid caliphate. Alfonso's decision to emulate and continue the promotion of astrology inserts him into a strategy for exerting and consolidate rulership with a long tradition in Islamic contexts.

As part of the Abbasid promotion of the “Sciences of the Ancients,” the translation of Persian astrology into Arabic in ninth-century Bagdad introduced the notion of “astrological history” into Islamic political thought. Gutas defines this idea of Zoroastrian origin as “the account of dynastic history in terms of cyclical periods of varying lengths of time governed by the stars and the planets” (45). Political astrology was adopted by the Abbasids as part of their imperial ideology and used as propaganda for presenting the new arrival of the new caliphal dynasty at the beginning of a new historical cycle. This allowed the Abbasids to legitimate themselves as successors of both the overthrown Umayyads and the Persian rulers who formerly ruled over Baghdad's lands. The close bond between astrology and political power explains why caliph al-Mānşur (r. 714–775) considered astrology as “mistress of all sciences” when furthering its continuous support at the Abbasid court.⁴¹

Later on, Andalusí Umayyads adopted the Abbasid promotion of astrology in the Islamic West. During the middle of the ninth century, the Andalusí ruling dynasty facilitated the arrival of cultural products from Baghdad, giving rise to what Samsó describes as a “period of

⁴¹ For a more detailed account of Abbasid engagement with astrology, see Gutas (esp. 32–52, 108–110).

orientalisation of Andalusian culture.”⁴² For Samsó, this period was characterized by the development of travel to the Eastern Islamicate (*riḥla*) as part of the education of young men of wealthy families. In his *Kitāb al-Muqtabis* (Book of the Gleaner), Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1085) describes how the Andalusī emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (r.822–852) sent the erudite scholar Abbās ibn Nāṣiḥ (d. ca. 852) to Baghdad to collect all the ancient books he could find. Travels like this allowed the diffusion in al-Andalus of Eastern-produced knowledge that included the works of Ptolemy, astronomical tables to measure the movement of the stars, and contents derived from Indo-Persian astronomy.⁴³

After the fall of the caliphate of Córdoba, al-Andalus was divided among various small kingdoms known as *taifas*. Working as magistrate for the *taifa* of Toledo, Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī (1029–1070) supported the study of sciences turning the old Visigothic capital into an intellectual center for the study of astronomy and astrology among other sciences (Szpiech “From Mesopotamia” 42). Jewish scholars played a significant role among the group of astronomers sponsored by Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī. With his commission of the *Tablas de Azarquiel*—initially produced under the guidance of Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī—and the elaboration of the *Toledan Tables*, Alfonso X continued the support of collaboration between scholars across religious groups.⁴⁴

Between the lifetimes of Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī and Alfonso X, Toledo experienced significant political changes while maintaining its intellectual milieu. After King Alfonso VI of Castile and León conquered the city in 1085, Christian scholars from different places of Europe started to travel to Toledo, attracted by the prestigious philosophical and scientific knowledge of

⁴² The expression appears in “Andalusian” (2). Samsó titles one the chapters of *Las Ciencias de los Antiguos en al-Andalus* “La orientalización de la ciencia andalusí,” emphasizing the impact of initiatives to bring sciences developed by the Abbasids to al-Andalus during this period.

⁴³ See Forcada (“Astronomy” 8–20, “Books” 57–60); Samsó (“Andalusian,” “Astrology” 79–80, “Is a Social History,” *ciencias* 80–93), Meouak (“Ibn Ḥayyān”).

⁴⁴ See Llavero Ruiz 4(86–88). Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī wrote *Ṭabaqāt al-‘Umam* (*Categories of Nations*, 1068), an historiographical work that included anthropological views that relied on climate theory.

the texts preserved in its manuscript collections. This situation gave rise to a wave of translation activity from Arabic into Latin that has come to be referred to in modern scholarship as the *Escuela de traductores de Toledo* (“Toledo School of Translators”). While the notion of a “school” or any single organized body is factitious, many efforts in Toledo were associated with the protection and patronage of Archbishop Raimundo de Sauvetat (d. 1152).⁴⁵ Some individual translators were prolific. Gerardus Cremonensis (ca. 1114–1187), for example, translated the *Toledan Tables*, Ptolemy’s *Almagest*, and about sixty other works in collaboration with Jewish and Mozarabic scholars.⁴⁶

Translations into Latin carried out in Toledo helped disseminate the “Sciences of the Ancients” through Christian Europe. Likewise, they were of significant importance for disseminating knowledge among locals, as Márquez Villanueva underscores (293–96). Of particular significance for us is the translation into Latin of Abū Ma‘shar’s *Kitāb al-dalālāt ‘alā al-ittiṣālāt wa-qirānāt al-kawākib* (Book of the indications of the planetary conjunctions) by the Andalusī Jew Abraham ibn Daud (1110–1180)—also known as Johannes Hispelensis and Avendehut). Recurring to Greek, Indian, Islamic, and Persian traditions, Abū Ma‘shar (787–886) describes the birth and death of kingdoms according to Zoroastrian principles of political astrology. According to Pingree, Abū Ma‘shar’s defense of astrology “rests on an elaborate world history of the transmission of science which permits one to trace back the fragments of truth about nature scattered among the peoples of the earth to a pristine divine source: it is a sort of prophetology of science” (34). The work Abū Ma‘shar spread notions of political astrology

⁴⁵ See Burnett (“Coherence,” “Translating”), Foz, Gil Sangrador, Márquez Villanueva (179–90, 283–302), Vernet (*cultura* 149–51).

⁴⁶ During the centuries following the Alfonso VII’s conquest of Toledo, the Mozarabic population of the city continued to use Arabic as their language of culture and religion. Other important translators who traveled to Toledo include Michael Scotus (ca. 1175–ca. 1232) and Hermannus Alemannus (d. 1272).

throughout the Islamic world. For Vernet, its knowledge among Iberian Christians gave them “hope that someday they will triumph over Islam.”⁴⁷

Alfonso X continued to support scientific translation in his natal city of Toledo but shifted the receptor language of the translations from Latin to the vernacular of Castile. Castilian had been used during the first half of the century in literary works. Fernando III had introduced it into the Castilian administration, but Alfonso X was the first to promote its use as an alternative to Latin and Arabic in scientific, legal, and historiographical documents. The election of Castilian has been explained as an attempt to make knowledge and law accessible beyond intellectual elites.⁴⁸ Considering sociolinguistic studies, Salvador H. Martínez affirms that “Castilian was the only language used without reservation by the people of the three cultures.” For him, Alfonso X’s election of the Castilian aimed to “promote feelings of unity and cohesion among all his subjects, conscious that language, as an expression of a culture, was much more important than the military conquests.”⁴⁹ From this perspective, the Castilian vernacular appears as a language shared by the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim populations of Castile. Accordingly, it was a valuable tool to create a shared identity across religious differences.⁵⁰

The transmission of the principles behind the *Libro de las cruces* in al-Andalus is outlined in the first chapter of the Castilian translation, which corresponds to the prologue of its

⁴⁷ “esperanza de que algún día triunfarían sobre el Islam” (*cultura* 66–67).

⁴⁸ For science, see Burnett (“Transmission” 353–54). For legality, see Rojinsky (295).

⁴⁹ “el castellano era la única lengua hablada sin reparos por los pueblos de las tres culturas” (89). “fomentar los sentimientos de unidad y coexión [sic] entre todos los súbditos, consciente de que la lengua, como expresión de una cultura, era mucho más importante que las conquistas militares” (104).

⁵⁰ The scarcity of archival evidence about a generalized use of Castilian vernacular by Jewish and Muslim Castilian population leaves Salvador H Martínez’s argument up to debate. As the case of Christian Mozarabs evidences, there was no correlation between religious identification and language use during this period. The presence of the brief poetic composition in romance vernacular known as *jarcha* after some Arabic and Jewish Andalusí poems has been presented as evidence of the use of Castilian in al-Andalus. However, it is misleading to identify the language of this texts as Castilian given the independent development of the ibero-romance language used in al-Andalus. See Burnett (“Translating” 1036).

Arabic source. Furthermore, Samsó and other scholars have identified extratextual information that allows presenting this book in relation to both local pre-Islamic astrology and Eastern-based developments of this science transmitted to al-Andalus as part of the patronage of the sciences by Umayyad caliphs and *taifa* rulers.

The Castilian title *Libro de las cruces* refers to the practice of representing visually the planets and stars necessary to conduct a prognostication as three intersecting lines that create the image of a cross or asterisk. The royal manuscript produced by Alfonso’s collaborators includes multiple “crosses” to facilitate the identification of the astral positions and help the astrologer determine a proper reading of them based on textual explanations for various circumstances.

Figure 2.1 corresponds to the manuscript explanation of the location of each Zodiac constellation in a plane created by one of these crosses. In figure 2.2, Jupiter and Saturn appear in various situations that explain how to interpret the sky following the information in the crosses.⁵¹

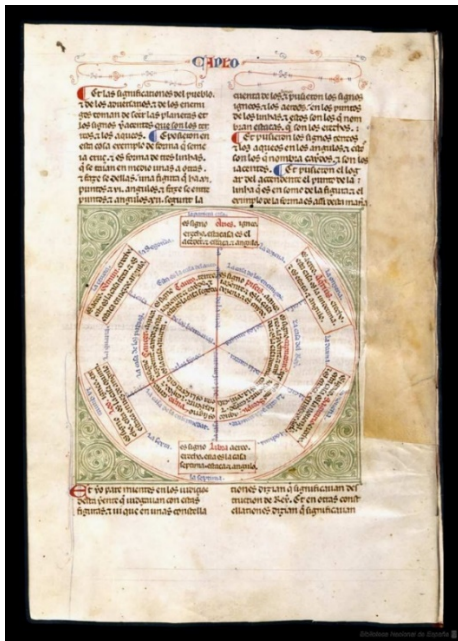


Figure 2.1 Zodiac constellations in the *Libro de las cruces* (fol. 5v)

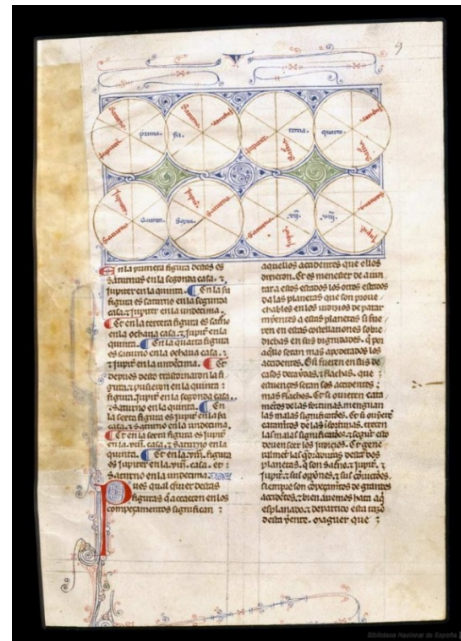


Figure 2.2 Positions of Jupiter and Saturn according to the system of the crosses (fol. 9r)

⁵¹ The manuscript refers to the situation of celestial bodies in each cross as “constellation” or “figura.” For details about the astrological principles of the work see Muñoz (“origenes” 156–59), Poch, Samsó (*Alfonso X* 28–36, *Ciencias* 30–35).

The royal manuscript prepared for Alfonso X is the only extant copy of the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* before the seventeenth century. The small dimensions of the codex suggest that it was conceived for frequent reference and practical use, something emphasized by the diagrams explaining how to interpret the position of the celestial bodies used to forecast the future, as exemplified by figures 2.1 and 2.2.⁵² The material conception of the manuscript highlights Alfonso X's intention of putting this astrological knowledge into practice continuing the support of its use among Andalusí sovereigns. This is particularly clear after reconstructing earlier stages of transmission of the astrology of the crosses in al-Andalus.

The Castilian version of the *Libro de las cruces* attributes the work to an author called Oueydalla, whom Millás Villacrosa first identified as Abū Marwān 'Ubayd Allāh b. Khalaf al-Istijī, an Andalusí astrologer who flourished during the eleventh century.⁵³ In the Castilian manuscript, Oueydalla explains the characteristics of a simplified type of astrology based on the positions of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and the Sun across the Zodiac constellations. According to Oueydalla's explanation in the *Libro de las cruces*, this type of forecasting was used in the Iberian Peninsula during Late Antiquity and later forgotten after the Muslim conquest.

When al-Istijī (Oueydalla) wrote his Arabic text, Andalusí astrology was dominated by more sophisticated practices that evolved from intellectual exchanges among traditions from the Eastern Mediterranean, Persia, and India. In the Castilian manuscript, Oueydalla refers to this Eastern discipline as a "science" (*scientia*), linking it explicitly to the "Sciences of the Ancients" that Islamic scholars obtained and developed from Greek, Persian, and Indian authors. This type of astrology was introduced in al-Andalus under emir 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r.822-852) as part of

⁵² For a full description of the manuscript, see Kasten and Kiddle (Introducción xv–xx).

⁵³ For the rest of this chapter, I use Oueydalla when strictly referring the content of the Castilian translation and as al-Istijī (Oueydalla) when in describing the transmission of the astrology of the crosses in al-Andalus.

what Samsó describes as a period of “Orientalization of the Andalusian Science” (“Andalusian” 2), when the Andalusī Umayyads pushed for the adoption of the courtly practices and intellectual refinement of the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad. Despite the flourishing of the more prestigious Eastern astrology in Al-Andalus, Oueydalla favors the translation into Arabic of the astronomical knowledge practiced in the Maghrib—a region that then encompassed both West North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula—before the Islamic conquest of the region.

Muñoz, Samsó, and Vernet have traced the trajectory of the content of the *Libro de las cruces* in al-Andalus. Andalusī historian Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (d. 977)—who claimed to be a descent of the Visigothic king Witiza⁵⁴—wrote that the emir Hisām I (r. 788–796) summoned the renowned astrologer ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Ḍabbī (fl. 788–860) to his court at Córdoba to prognosticate the future of his reign. This anecdote from his *Ta’rīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus* (History of the Conquest of al-Andalus) was later included in the *Estoria de España* and demonstrates that the members of Alfonso’s *scriptorium* were aware of the long bond between astrology and the courtly practices of al-Andalus.⁵⁵ According to the *Kitāb al-Muqtabis* (Book of the Gleaner) by Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1085), al-Ḍabbī worked for the emirs of Cordoba until the period of Muḥammad I (r. 852–886) witnessing the promotion of the “Sciences of the Ancients” by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (r.822–852). ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II understood the promotion of this type of knowledge as part of a dynastic policy that aimed to educate and reform his court following the Abbasid model (Forcada “Books” 57). Ibn Ḥayyān wrote that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II appreciated the ancient books to the point that he “himself studied them, together with the Islamic treatises, obtaining a thorough knowledge and refining his natural talents” (quoted and translated by Forcada “Books” 57).

⁵⁴ For more details, see Monferrer Sala.

⁵⁵ Chapter 608 in Menéndez Pidal’s edition (vol. 2, 345–46). See Samsó (“Astrology” 80n9).

In this moment of opening to courtly practices and knowledge from Baghdad, al-Ḍabbī wrote an *urjūza* poem containing some guidelines for astrological prognostication. Vernet discovered the only extant excerpt of al-Ḍabbī’s *urjūza* in the MS Arabic 916 of the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio del Escorial (Muñoz “Orígenes” 154). The content of the *urjūza* corresponds to information in Chapter 57 of the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* constituting the earlier extant fragment of its textual tradition.⁵⁶ A manuscript containing the extant section of al-Ḍabbī’s *urjūza* was copied in fourteenth century Morocco by Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Baqqār (fl. ca. 1418), who describes its content as composed “according to the ancient method of judgment common in the Maghreb—that is, the system of prognostication of the crosses—in times of al-Hakam.”⁵⁷ This dating situates an earlier version of at least part of the *Libro de las cruces* during the early Umayyad period of al-Andalus, just before the adoption of cultural practices coming from Baghdad.⁵⁸

Besides al-Ḍabbī’s *urjūza*, the manuscript discovered by Vernet contains astrological excerpts attributed to Abū Marwān ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Khalaf al-Istijī that correspond to various chapters of the *Libro de las cruces* as well.⁵⁹ Vernet concludes that “al-Istijī wrote a treatise on judicial astrology that followed the same system expounded by al-Ḍabbī who, for his part, rested on older texts that dated back to Late Antiquity.”⁶⁰ The inclusion of al-Istijī’s work confirmed

⁵⁶ In light of the astrological techniques used, Samsó suggests that chapters 60–64 of the *Libro de las cruces* may have originated during the same period (“Development” 235). The *urjūza* has been edited and translated into Spanish by Samsó (“primitiva”).

⁵⁷ “de acuerdo con el procedimiento judicial antiguo corriente en el Magrib, es decir, el sistema de predicción de las cruces, en tiempos de al-Hakam” (Samsó “primitiva” 151, Arabic 157).

⁵⁸ Al-Hakam I (r. 796–822) was the initiator of the adoption of Abbasid courtly practices in al-Andalus. An example of this interest is his invitation to the famous singer Ziryāb to move from Baghdad to Córdoba. Eastern astrology reached al-Andalus under his son ‘Abd al-Rahmān II (Samsó, *Ciencias* 49–56).

⁵⁹ Muñoz provides a list of equivalences between these excerpts and the chapters of the Alfonsine text concluding that they contain materials of chapters 1, 4, 5, 57, 60, 61 y 62 (“orígenes” 155). Muñoz discovered new excerpts corresponding to chapters 60–62 of the *Libro de las cruces* in another manuscript of the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio del Escorial, MS Arabic 918 Muñoz suggests that Arabic versions circulated “generously” (“Textos” 179–80).

⁶⁰ “Al-Istijī redactó un tratado de astrología judiciaria que seguía el mismo sistema expuesto por al-Ḍabbī quien, a su vez, reposaba en textos más antiguos que remontaban a la baja latinidad” (“Tradición” 347).

his identification with the Oueydalla (=‘Ubayd Allāh) in the Castilian version.⁶¹ Millás

Villacrosa had proposed this identification in light to a reference contained in Šā‘id al-Andalusī’s

Ṭabaqāt al-‘Umam (Categories of the Nations, 1068):

Among the young scholars of our time, we have Abū Marwān ‘Abd Allāh b. Khalaf al-Istijī, one of those who studied astrology well and understood the old and the new books that treat the subject. I do not know anyone in al-Andalus, past or present, who has known all the secrets and marvels of this science as well as he does. He has written an excellent treatise on *Tasyrāt wa Maṭāriḥ al-Shu‘ā‘āt* [The Directions and Projections of Light Rays] and some explanations on the foundation of this science. No one wrote anything like it before him. He mailed it to me from the city of Cuenca. (78)

Šā‘id al-Andalusī’s reference to al-Istijī’s study of both old and new astrology aligns with the Oueydalla’s defense of the astrology of the crosses in the first chapter of the Castilian version that corresponds to the prologue of its Arabic source. The *Ṭabaqāt al-‘Umam* also includes al-Istijī (Oueydalla) among the group “young scholars who distinguished themselves in the study of philosophy” at Toledo (69). At this time, al-Andalusī himself was the leading scholar in the patronage of astrology under the rule of Toledo’s *taifa* ruler al-Ma’mūn (r. 1043–1075). This situation makes his praise of al-Istijī’s expertise particularly informed. Likewise, it shows the value that Toledo’s intellectual elites gave to the study of “the old and the new books” mastered by the historical al-Istijī and his textual voice as Oueydalla in the *Libro de las cruces*.

The reference to al-Istijī (Oueydalla) in the manuscript 918 of El Escorial serves to situate during al-Ma’mūn’s rule over the Toledo *taifa* a second moment in the transmission of the astrology of the crosses, following al-Ḍabbī’s work around the turn of the ninth century.⁶² Given the centrality of prognostications related to the kingdom’s future in the *Libro de las cruces*, it is plausible that al-Istijī’s work was commissioned or at least offered to al-Ma’mūn’s court. It is also possible that the Arabic manuscript used to elaborate the Castilian version was

⁶¹ Some authors refer to al-Istijī as ‘Abd Allāh instead of ‘Ubayd Allāh.

⁶² For a detailed description of the transmission, see Samsó (Development”).

part of the royal library of Toledo. However, there is not archival evidence of the trajectory of the now lost Arabic manuscript used by Alfonso X's translators. However, the proximity of both al-Ḍabbī and al-Istijī to Andalusī courts links the development of the astrology of the crosses with the promotion of political astrology among the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad, even if the touches coming from the "old" books of the Maghreb—the *ladinos* of Oueydalla in *Libro de las cruces*—would give it a distinctive local flavor. The later translation of the work into Castilian creates a continuity with the sponsorship of astrology by Andalusī rulers. As I discuss below when addressing the Castilian prologue, the local origin of the astrology of the crosses was emphasized by King Alfonso to underscore the authority of a pre-Islamic knowledge directly linked with the alleged genealogical origins of Castile among the Visigoths.

The translation of the Arabic text of the *Libro de las cruces* was commissioned to Yehuda ben Mose ha-Kohen, a Jewish scholar expert in medicine and astronomy who frequently collaborated with Christian clergy members within and beyond Alfonso X's *scriptorium*.⁶³ For this translation, he partnered with a Christian named Johan D'Aspa.⁶⁴ Ha-Kohen was likely from Toledo, where he had collaborated with Guilelmus Anglicus in a Latin translation of al-Zarqalī (Gil Sangrador 47–48). A good connoisseur of the scientific tradition of Toledo, ha-Kohen continued a long pan-Iberian tradition of Jewish scholars working across religious boundaries to facilitate the transmission of scientific knowledge.⁶⁵

⁶³ He is mentioned in the *Libro de las cruces* as "hyuhda fy de mosse alchoen Mosca, su alfaquim" ("hyuhda son of mosse alchoen Mosca, his physician"; 1, fol.2r). His name appears with other variants in the Alfonsine works he worked on. It is in the *Lapidario* is referred to as "su judio que era su fisico et dizien le Yehuda Mosca el Menor" ("another Jew, who was his physician and was called Yhuda Mosca the Younger"; 19, fol.1v; Bahler and Gyékényesi Gatto 20). He is mentioned as translator in the *Tablas alfonsies*, *Libro conplido en los iudizios de las estrellas*, *Libros del saber de astronomia*, and the *Libro de la ochava espera*. Furthermore, the translation of *Astromagia* is attributed to him.

⁶⁴ The only extant information about Johan D'Aspa is his participation in the translations of the *Libro de las cruces* and the *Libro del Alcorá* (Gil Sangrador 46).

⁶⁵ Andalusī Hebrew scholars had been involved in the study of "Sciences of the Ancients" as authors and translators for at least two centuries. The Ebro Valley and Barcelona became places of cross-religious scientific collaboration at mid-eleventh century. There, authors such as Judah ben Barzillai al-Bargeloni (ca. 1065–ca. 1136) and Abraham Bar Ḥiyya (1070–1136/1145) articulated Islamic astrology according to esoteric and exegetic Jewish tradition. The prolific Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–1167) was one of the most active scholars of his period, helping to disseminate Islamic Science in Latin after leaving the Iberian Peninsula

Alfonso X was in Toledo when the royal manuscript of the *Libro de las cruces* was completed, on 26 February 1259.⁶⁶ This circumstance raises the possibility of some degree of involvement on the part of the king, if we give some credit to the long scholarly debate about Alfonso's participation in the conception of the works he sponsored.⁶⁷ One of the quotes more frequently referred to in these debates comes from the *Libros del saber de astronomía*, a collection of Arabic treatises on astronomy translated into Castilian:

Et despues lo endreço et lo mando componer este rey sobredicho; et tollo las razones que entendio eran soueianas et dobladas, et que non eran en castellano drecho; et puso las otras que entendio que complian, et quanto en el lenguaje endreçolo el por si se. (quoted in Solalinde 287)⁶⁸

And then the abovementioned king rectified it and ordered its arrangement. And he took the reasonings that he thought were excessive and duplicitous, and that were not in correct Castilian, and he put other ones that he understood were adequate; and regarding the language, he himself rectified it. (My trans.)

Whereas much of what has been written about this passage refers to Alfonso's direct involvement in the correction of the Castilian vernacular, the quote also underscores his intellectual understanding of the highly technical information (*razones*) contained in these astronomical treatises. This representation of the king as learned in the "Sciences of the Ancients" suggests an interest in promoting knowledge like that of Andalusí rulers such as emir 'Abd al-Rahmān II and al-Ma'mūn of Toledo. Likewise, the emphasis that the quote from the *Libros del saber de astronomía* puts in the correction of the Castilian language indicates a desire to make the content understandable for his subjects.

to escape Almohad prosecution. Abraham ibn Daud (ca. 1110–1180) translated works on political astrology. See Chabás, Goldstein ("Astronomy among Jews," "Astronomy as a neutral zone"), Guidi, Márquez Villanueva (71–77), Rodríguez Arribas, Sela ("Astrology," "El papel").

⁶⁶ The date is indicated according in the last folio of the manuscript according to the era of Caesar and the Islamic era (168, fol.201r). The era of Caesar corresponds to the so called "era hispánica" that starts on the 38 BCE. This dating system was the standard in the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula until the fifteenth century.

⁶⁷ For different critical stances, see Cardenas ("Alfonso's").

⁶⁸ The royal manuscript is now lost. I transcribe and translate Solalinde's quotation from an extant manuscript produced after Alfonso's death.

With the translation of the *Libro de las cruces* Alfonso continues to support knowledge about the stars among Andalusí rulers. The Castilian manuscript starts with a Prologue to the translation that underscores the reasons for the king to command the translation, the names of those who made it, along with references to Alfonso's parents and classical authors as Ptolemy and Aristotle. The brief prologue is followed by a table of contents and a note underscoring Oueydalla's authorial voice:

Et aqui se acaban los capitulos deste libro de las Cruces. Et Aqui compieça el texto del libro, segont fue trasladado del arauigo.

[Long blank space]

En el nombre de Dyos. Este es el Libro de las Cruces en iudizios de las estrellas que esplano Oueydalla. (5, fol. 4v)

And the chapters of this book of the Crosses end here. And it starts here the text of the book, as it was translated from the Arabic.

[Long blank space].

In the name of God. This is the Book of the Crosses on the judgment of the stars that Oueydalla explained.

This quote delimits the content added by Alfonso's collaborators from the materials translated from the Arabic work. The manuscript mise-en-page emphasizes the transitional character of the quote by using red ink and keeping eleven blank lines between its first and second parts (Figure 2.3). This blank space allows for the disposition of a big initial D at the top of the second column of the folio while also visually suggesting that the second part is already part of the Arabic source. As the reader gets into the content presented as a translation from Arabic, there is an immediate reference to God that follows a formulaic Christian enunciation. Whether or not these sentences came from the lost Arabic source, their presentation as translated indicates the reworking of the Arabic materials to the Christian worldview promoted from the royal court. Likewise, the big initial D points to a decision to underscore the protagonism of Oueydalla as author by calling attention to him along with his enunciative action: "*Dixo Oueydalla,*" that is 'Oueydalla said.'



Figure 2.3 Transition to the translation in the manuscript of the *Libro de las cruces* (fol. 4v)

The decision of Alfonso's collaborators to highlight the figure of Oueydalla underscores the value given to the type of cultural intervention he produced. The following sections address what Oueydalla's work means for the articulation of a knowledge that intertwines local pre-Islamic astrology with the more authoritative tradition coming from the East. First, I look at the conceptualization of human and intellectual hierarchies in the second chapter of the Castilian translation, which corresponds to the first chapter of the Arabic source. Then, I address the Castilian and Arabic prologues of the work to suggest that Ouydalla's work models Alfonso's position towards Arabic knowledge within and beyond the *Libro de las cruces*.

Climate Theory and *translatio*

The second chapter of the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* precedes the general astrological content of the treatise with a description of different groups of people who inhabited the ancient world before the spread of Islam. The reference to those groups scattered throughout the world follows the principles of climate theory, one of the “Sciences of the Ancients” developed by Muslim scholars from preexisting materials translated into Arabic. Deriving in part from Greco-Latin sources, climate theory was also known by European Christians with figures as influential as Isidore of Seville (ca 560-636) writing according to its principles. Rather than offering a strict description of those groups according to the principles of climate theory, the *Libro de las cruces* connects them with a historical analysis that elaborates on the principles of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* described in Chapter 1. The disagreement between the North-South axis of climate theory and the East-West axis of *translatio imperii* is resolved through the overarching logic of a hierarchical classification that results in different nobility degrees.

The analysis of the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* that follows moves away from Alfonso X’s position towards Arabic knowledge to address an example of the content elaborated in al-Andalus in the translation he commanded. Nevertheless, the resulting translation turns the content into part of Castilian discourses directly associated with the analysis of Castilian ideas about transmission and alterity addressed by this dissertation. Ultimately, I argue that the treatment of these issues around the principles of climate theory and *translatio* provides a scientific framework to the presentation of Oueydalla and Alfonso X as individuals capable of synthesizing disparate but concurrent remote origins through their respective writing and support for the translation of the *Libro de las cruces*.

Formulations of climate theory by Greek thinkers as Aristotle, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, and Strabo were little known among Early Christian thinkers. However, Macrobius's (395–436) *Commentariorum in Somnium Scipionis* (Commentary on the Dream of Scipio) allowed the diffusion of Greek ideas about the environment based on climate theory (Metzler 70–72).⁶⁹ Living under Visigothic rule, Isidore of Seville wrote in his widely known *Etymologiae* that “people’s faces and coloring, the size of their bodies, and their various temperaments correspond to various climates” (bk. 9, ch. 2, 105).⁷⁰ Climate theory reached predefined conclusions about human collectives. In this sense, it can be characterized as a type of environmental determinism that grounded the idea of bodily inscribed and recognizable collective differences.

With some differences among authors medieval climate theory divided the earth in seven climate regions from the Equatorial line to the northern regions of the globe. People living in each of the seven regions were expected to have certain features shaped by the influence of the environment. Temperature was considered the main factor in defining the characteristics of each zone. Hotter regions closer to the Equator and colder regions in the northern regions were considered increasingly unbalanced. Meanwhile, the middle climate was considered ideal. There, mild temperatures favored balanced bodies. Other climatic factors could adjust the general framework affecting a region. Different degrees of humidity complemented the fixed temperature to cause distinctive complexions for the humans living in any given zone. Arabic, Greek, and Latin medicine considered that the combination of humors associated with the four mentioned qualities determined individual health and personality. Theoretically, a change of place could alter the distribution of each humor in an individual making the consequences of

⁶⁹ On classical environmental theory and its influence in medieval European thought, see Isaac (esp. y 55–109). Biller studies the transmission of Hippocrates as an example of the development of medieval “proto-racial thought.”

⁷⁰ Quoted by Jeffery J Cohen (“Race,” 118). “Secundum diuersitatem enim caeli et facies hominum et colores et corporum quantitates et animorum diuersitates existunt” (vol. 1, 358).

environmental determinism transformable and not strictly determined by birth or ancestry. Nevertheless, this theoretical postulate was rarely emphasized or exemplified in writing.⁷¹

In al-Andalus, climate theory was part of the Umayyad promotion of the “Sciences of the Ancients.” The trajectory of Ziryāb (789–857) exemplifies its early development in relation to the intellectual traditions from the Eastern part of the Islamicate. The fame of Ziryāb as a virtuous musician at the Abbasid court in Baghdad, led emir al-Ḥakam I to invite him to Córdoba, where he remained under the protection of al-Ḥakam and his son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II. About two centuries after his death, ibn Ḥayyān (987–1085) wrote about Ziryāb beyond his musical virtues:

First of all was his study of cosmology and his knowledge of the spheres and their movements, the stars and their paths, the computation of their rising times and the kind of advice they give concerning their influence and decrees, the division into seven climates, their natures and weather, the ramification of their seas and rivers, the classification of their nations and populations. (Quoted and translated by Forcada, “Astronomy” 24).

Later on, climate theory was addressed by some of the most notable Andalusī thinkers across different religious backgrounds, including Ṣā’id al-Andalusī and Moses ben Maimon (commonly known as Maimonides, 1138-1204).⁷² The emphasis that climate theory puts on embodied difference makes it akin to the use of race as a category to affirm the existence of bodily-based hierarchies. This strong connection between climate theory and racialization makes its filiation and evolution particularly troublesome.⁷³

⁷¹ I follow Olsson in the characterization of the general principles and varieties of Islamic climate theory. Akbari assesses the use of climate theory in Christian contexts (20–66). Ziegler addresses the instability of bodies in climate theory.

⁷² Climate theory notions appear in Moses ben Maimon’s *Moreh Nevukhim* (Guide for the perplexed). For more details, see Goldenberg. I address the work of Ṣā’id al-Andalusī in more detail later in this chapter.

⁷³ My emphasis on the use of climate theory across religious communities aims to underscore the inappropriateness of attributing to any of them sole responsibility for its development. Instead, I favor the idea of a co-created discipline that emerged from a series of exchanges between individuals with different linguistic and religious backgrounds but some shared religious and secular intellectual referents. Nevertheless, the following pages concern more the intersection between racializing ideas and transmission of knowledge than a genealogical reconstruction of the origin of race.

Elaborating on the intellectual tradition of climate theory, the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* describes physical appearance, climate, and intellectual faculties as tightly related to create hierarchies among human groups. These ideas trace a geographical and temporal trajectory of authority from East to West that elaborates on the principles of *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii* described in Chapter 1. At a first stage, the intersection of these two independent traditions points to al-Andalus, where the efforts of Oueydalla to compile Eastern and Western knowledge result in the creation of the Arabic *Libro de las cruces*. The translation of the work into Castilian corresponds to a second Iberian stage on this trajectory. The chapter on climate theory discussed in this section outlines a framework for transmitting content from diverse origins that combines a science-oriented discourse from climate theory with a historically informed trajectory of *translatio*. We shall start by addressing climate theory, which Oueydalla describes according to these principles:

[G]eneral ment fallamos las differentias entre una yente et otra segunt las diferencias de las tierras en que moran et segunt la temprança et la destemperança de los ayres et segunde lo que recibe la tierra et el ayre de las fuerças et de los fechos de los cuerpos celestiales, que segunde estas cosas parecen las aposturas et las desaposturas en los cuerpos de los omnes et en sus formas. (9 fol. 7r)

Generally, we find differences among one people and another according to differences in the lands they live, and according to the mildness or lack of mildness of the airs. And according to what the land and the air receive from the strength and the actions of the celestial bodies; since it seems that the attractiveness or lack of attractiveness of human bodies and in their shape results from these things.

According to this quote, mildness (*temprança*) is the distinctive characteristic of an ideal temperament. This quality depends on the temperature of the air and the influence of the celestial bodies. This celestial influence connects the model with the astrological content of the book. However, it does not affect the general framework of climate theory, which was independent of astrology principles. The intersection between climate, humoralism, and human collectives featured in the *Libro de las cruces* follows the dominant views of medieval climate theory in

both Christian and Muslim contexts. Nevertheless, Olsson has pointedly described the absence of a “standard model for the relationship between the climes and human behavior” (493). The cases studied by Olsson show that Arabic authors of climate theory did not follow a fixed system of value for all peoples in the world. Instead, climate theory was an unstable model for interpreting human diversity with a fair degree of inconsistency across individual authors. Those variations may be partly attributed to the need to negotiate its conclusions and provide alternative discourses ranging from medicine to philosophy to religion.

The theoretical formulation of climate theory in the previous quote appears at the end of the chapter, summarizing remarks about various ancient “people” whose qualities and achievements are listed to create an all-encompassing hierarchy. Oueydalla presents those from Babylon and Persia among the privileged groups who “son otrosy temprada yente por que son en medio de los climas en el logar o son las naturas et las complexiones tempradas” (“are also temperate people because they are in the middle of the climates, in the place where the temperate natures and complexions are”; 8, fol. 6v). The reference to Persia and Babylon as ideal place situates within the proposed framework the central territories of the Abbasid caliphate, including its capital, Baghdad. With this reference, the *Libro de las cruces* exemplifies a displacement of the ideal place for human life from Greece—the place that Hippocrates designated as ideal—to Persia. This political arrangement of a discipline otherwise “scientific”—built in a set of principles that presume objective observations—follows the linguistic translation of its foundational texts from Greek to Arabic, its spatial displacement from Greece to Persia. Accordingly, areas of the world mostly under Muslim rule fall within the middle climatic zone, functioning as a point of reference for ideal complexions.

Since distance from the middle climate leads to less temperate zones, the coldest seventh climate at the north and hottest first climate at the south are considered unsuitable for the human population, thus giving rise to people severely unbalanced in physical, intellectual, and moral terms. The *Libro de las cruces* uses Ethiopians and Turks as examples of *yentes* from extreme climate zones:

[L]as otras yentes que son dentro en la parte septemtrional, que son los turchos et los que se aiuntan a ellos, non an regnado ordenado, nin decrietos, nin leyes, nin se entremeten de sciencias nin de saberes.

Et otrossi las yentes que son dentro en la parte meridional que son los ethiopes et los que se aiuntan a ellos, otrossi no an regnado, nin decrieto, nin ley, nin scientia nin saberes. Pues estos tales son por demas en el mundo, que non an departamento delas otras animalias. (8, fol. 6r–v)

The other people inside the Northern part are the Turks and those close to them. They do not have an ordered kingdom, nor decrees, nor laws, neither do they devote themselves to the sciences or knowledge.

And furthermore, the peoples who live in the Southern part are the Ethiopians and those close to them. They neither have a kingdom, nor decrees, nor laws, nor science, nor knowledge. There are many like them in the world that do not separate themselves from other animals.

People from the Northern and Southern regions of the world are described as unable to sustain an ordered society in terms of government, legality, and intellectual production. These social achievements are referred throughout the whole chapter to evaluate each *yente*'s relative worth within a global scale of humanity. Lacking each of the elements necessary to order their society, the bottom position assigned to Turks and Ethiopians leads to their dehumanization. According to the quote, they cannot differentiate themselves from "other animals" (*delas otras animalias*). There is no need to emphasize on the ethnocentric character of this knowledge presented as scientific. However, a closer examination of the implications of how the *Libro de las cruces* racializes collective physical features clarifies how this phenomenon functioned differently from the construction of racialized groups during and after the early modern period. The description of the effects of geography and climate on physical appearance is consistently

associated with intellectual faculties and social development. Peoples north to the Romans are denigrated associating their extreme whiteness with the colder weather:

[S]on en la grant friura et en la grant humidat, et por esto son de grandes cuerpos et mucho blancos et ruuios; et por esto son botos et de poco entendemento, et non an sennorio, nin decretos, nin leyes nin sectas, nin se entrameten de ciencias nin de saberes. (8–9, fol. 7r)

They live in great coldness and great humidity. And for this reason, they have big bodies, and they are very white and blonde. And for this reason, they are obtuse and of little understanding. And they do not have rule, nor decrees, nor laws, nor sects, neither do they devote themselves to the sciences or knowledge.

Here, references to cold and humid climate correlate to ancient medical theories about the consequences that the internal balance (or lack of) between the four humors produced by the human body. The generalization of such bodily matter into collective groups leads to collective racialization. Along with ideas about the seven climate zones, humoralism leads to a racialized hierarchy of people based on the effects of the environment over human bodies. As shown in the quote, extreme white skin and big bodies are negatively racialized as indexes of lack of intellectual abilities and social achievements. An equivalent yet opposed situation is assigned to those south of India:

Et la gran calentura non se tempra en aquel lugar, et pareçe en ellos, que an su color et sos queros negros et crespos cabellos. Et por esto non se entienden sus espiritos por la grant sequedat et por la grant calentura que los quema, et por esto non an sotil entendemento. (8, fol. 6v)

And the great hotness does not cool down in that place and it is perceptible in them, who have their own color, and their black skin and curly hair. And their minds are not comprehensible for this reason, because of the great dryness and the great heat that burn them. And for this reason, they do not have a sharp understanding.

The conflation of body appearance and intellectual inferiority turns the description of Turks and Ethiopians into a racializing discourse that systematizes and naturalizes certain physical attributes as indexes of predefined collective inferiority. According to the stricter view of environmental determinism expressed in these quotes, racial hierarchy is geographically and

bodily oriented from the middle to the extremes. However, the environmental determinism of the *Libro de las cruces* introduces certain atmospheric phenomena that—coming from within its scientific discourse—dismantle the possibility of a univocal association between physical appearance and collective inferiority. The impact that seas and winds have on the temperature results in better intellectual and social development conditions, even if it completely changes external physical appearance. Particularly relevant is the description of the people of India:

[S]on so la linha equinoctial. Et maguer la su tierra es de grant calentura, las mas de sus uillas son en Riberas de mar, que todas son yslas, et por esto recibe el ayre humjdat de la mar; con que se temprá la sequedat de la calentura, et con esto se fizieron de fermosos cuerpos et de apuestas formas, et de leznes cabellos, et non les faze al la calentura si non que los faze baços de color. (8, fol. 6v)

They are over the equinoctial line. And, although their land is very hot, most of their villages are on the shores of the sea—for all are in islands—and, for this reason, the air receives humidity from the sea that moderates the dryness of the heat, and because of this they have beautiful bodies and handsome shapes, and soft hair, and all the heat does is make them dark of color.

The positive description of Indian bodies results from the influence of the sea to moderate the hot and dry characteristics that correspond to the southern position of their land.

Nevertheless, the strength of the sun is associated with their dark skin. The mention of skin color detaches this bodily feature from the moral, social, and intellectual consequences of previously quoted passages. Even though skin color tends to be associated with unbalanced temperaments and peoples set as inferior in a profoundly hierarchical view of alterity between human groups, it does not impede the possibility of a different position should dark-skinned people live under favorable environmental circumstances. This case of India shows how the racializing principles of climate theory—and particularly of the *Libro de las cruces*—operated within a conception of

embodied difference that does not overlap with modern European racial discourses and yet tends to project into them inferior intellectual capabilities.⁷⁴

Šā'id al-Andalusī, contemporary and familiar with the work of al-Istijī/Oueydalla, included notions of climate theory in his *Ṭabaqāt al-'Umam* (Categories of Nations, 1068).⁷⁵ Al-Andalusī's work divides the peoples of the world into two different groups of nations (*ṭabaqātayn*) according to their attitude towards scientific development. Turks and Chinese people are considered the more advanced among those from the *Ṭabaqāt* without interest in science. Other groups of people in this group include Berbers from North Africa and Galicians from the Iberian Peninsula “in spite the fact that these peoples did not inhabit the far North or the far South to be punished by severe climates” (8).⁷⁶ As in the *Libro de las cruces*, the hierarchy proposed by the *Ṭabaqāt al-'Umam* situates those in the northern and southern regions of the world in the lower ranks, associating bodily features—such as extreme whiteness and blackness—with lesser customs and abilities.

Despite proposing different organizations, both al-Andalusī's *Ṭabaqāt al-'Umam* and al-Istijī/Oueydalla's *Libro de las cruces* propose a form of environmental determinism based on the climate that associates body features with collective hierarchies of intellectual capabilities and social achievements. Given the circulation of the works of both authors in Toledo, it is not

⁷⁴ Akbari offers a more detailed analysis of notions of race in medieval humorism and climate theory asserting that there was not a dichotomic opposition between blackness and whiteness during the period (*Idols*, sp. 1–19, 140–54). Texts like the *Libro de las cruces* further complicate the idea of such dichotomy, given that both extreme whiteness and extreme blackness were negatively viewed from the perspective of an ideal middle that does not correspond to modern generalized conceptions about who is to be considered white.

⁷⁵ There is evidence al-Istijī's dispatched one of his works to Šā'id al-Andalusī. Samsó postulates that al-Andalusī could have sent part of his *Ṭabaqāt al-uman* to al-Istijī, counting him as possible influence for the *Libro de las cruces* (“The Early Development” 239). However, there are notable discrepancies in how both works address climate theory.

⁷⁶ To explain negative views on these group that escape general trends in climate theory, al-Andalusī resorts to religion writing that “Allah provides generously for whomever He chooses” (8). Other theological views had a strong influence in attitudes towards difference in climate theory, including the distribution of Noah's offspring across the world and the association of the color black with sin in some Islamic traditions. On Noah's offspring and the so called “Curse of Ham”, see Akbari *Idols* 38–44, Braude, Goldenberg (*Black*). I return to this issue in Chapter 3. On the symbolic meanings of blackness in Islam and its repercussions for climate theory, see Olsson 502–08. Olsson demonstrates that theology allowed the diffusion of a more negative view of extremely black than extremely white people in Islamic anthropology.

implausible that Christian scholars working there were familiar with the principles of Islamic climate theory in Arabic, particularly given the use of Arabic among Christian Mozarabs before and after the Christian conquest of the city in 1085.⁷⁷ The racializing principles of climate theory reveal strong prejudices against certain groups based on their bodily features. Skin color is of particular relevance here for two reasons. First, as a point of contrast with later ideas developed in and beyond the Iberian Peninsula, both authors point explicitly to skin color in descriptions that dehumanize groups of people. Alternatively, the description of the people of India points to a collective of black-skinned people viewed positively. Even lacking a universal conception about what bodily features imply, the examples of climate theory quoted above evidence a racializing system that works along with evaluations of social organization and intellectual achievements to sustain a universal hierarchy of *yentes*.

Besides conclusions derived from climate theory, the *Libro de las cruces* discusses collective achievements of four groups of people from ancient times elaborating on the medieval ideas about *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* discussed in Chapter 1. Following a historical and geographical trajectory, the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* situates peoples at the Easternmost parts of the world at the origin of a trajectory of transmission that ends in the Iberian Peninsula. The relative worth of these four groups is measured according to an idea of “nobility” (*nobleza*) described in the following terms:

Digo que la la razon por que dizen de los pueblos et de las yentes que fulana yente es mas nobla que fulana otra son dos cosas: La una es que ayan decrietos & leyes et que se guien por sennorio et per regnado, et la otra es que ayan scientias et saberes. E aquellos en que se cumplen estas dos cosas que se guien por sennorio et por rey, et que se entrametan de estudiar en las scientias et en los saberes, et ouieren scientia et sennorio, por derecho ellos seran llamados nobles.

⁷⁷ I return to the issue of the familiarity of Mozarabs with Arabic knowledge in the last section of Chapter 3.

Et quando pararemos mientes en este departamento, fallamos que las yentes noblas que son en el poblado son quatro yentes de antiguedat.

La una es los de la tierra dAçin.

Et la segunda es los de tierra de Yndia.

Et la tercera es los de babilonia con los persios.

La quarta es los romanos. (6–8, fol. 6r)

I say that the reasons why it is said about peoples and collectives that any one people are nobler than another are two; the first one is that they have decrees and laws, and they guide themselves by estates (*sennorio*) and rule, and the other one is that they have sciences and knowledge. And those who fulfill these two things—that they guide themselves by estates and a king, and that they devote themselves to the study of the sciences and knowledges, and that they have knowledge and a social order—they will be called nobles by right.

And when we pay attention to these points, we find that in the settled region there four peoples from ancient times:

The first one is those from the land of China.

And the second one is those from the land of India.

And the third one is those from Babylon along with the Persians.

The fourth one is the Romans.

As outlined in this passage, “nobility” does not correspond to the privileged social estate.

Rather, the *Libro de las cruces* understands “nobility” as collectively measured. This understanding of “nobility” includes the existence of a social organization in estates (*sennorio*) under the rule of a king—that is, the more general use of “nobility” in medieval European societies—but also collective intellectual achievements. This conceptualization of “nobility” reconducts the genealogical basis of the more general term away from the family dynasties. Rather than transmitted from individual to individual, “nobility” is here transmitted from people to people—with a significant inclusion of the word “pueblo” to the more frequently used “yente.” Thus, genealogy results in the creation of intellectual lineages. The conjunction of family-based *sennorio* and the collective *nobility* is supervised by the figure of the king, mentioned as a necessary feature of noble societies. The ordered reference to China, India, Babylon/Persia, and the Romans complements the North-South axis of climate theory with an East-West trajectory of transmission of nobility. Historically inscribed in ancient times, this

trajectory complements the observation-based hierarchy of climate theory. Thus, this explanation for the identification of the people of China as the noblest:

Et los dAçin merecieron la nobleça sobre todos; por que son en el compeçamento de oriente del poblado, et las mas de sus uillas et las sus grandes cibdades et el logar o es la rayç de su regnado todos son en el clima de medio o son las naturas tempradas, et tempran se y los cuerpos et los helemientos, et alegran se y, et estienden se y los espiritos, et por esto an meiores entendementos et mas sanas memorias, et por esto mereçieron la mayor nobleza. (8, fol. 6v)

And those of China merited nobility over the rest; because they are at the most oriental point of settlement, and most of their villages, their big cities, and the root of their realm are all in the middle climate, where natures are mild, and bodies and elements are moderate there. And there they are happy, and the spirits expand there, and for this, they have a better understanding and healthier memories. And for this, they deserved the greatest nobility.

As in sections about people living in unfavorable climate zones, the effects of environmental conditions are manifest in the body features of the people of China. Here, the middle climate results in mild natures and moderate bodies contrary to the excess of northern and southern people. References to moderate climate are closely tied to space, with a repeated emphasis on the deictic “y” (“there”). China’s location in the Easternmost inhabited region of the world determines the qualification of its people as nobler than any other. This defense of the climatic benefits of the East shares the opinions of geographers from the Eastern regions of *Dar-al-Islam*.⁷⁸ Yet, the *Libro de las cruces* does not single out China’s people at the top of the hierarchy of *yentes*. Instead, it presents the region as the point of reference of a trajectory of decreasing nobility from that includes the four remarkable peoples of Antiquity. The subsequent reference to the people of India shows how such continuity is textually constructed:

Et depos destos son los yndios, et an todas estas scientias et estos saberes que dixiemos, et annaden sobre los otros que an entendementos profundos, et entrameten se de sciencias espiritales, et de poridades celestiales, et de obras de las estrellas et de magica (9, fol. 7r).

⁷⁸ Examples of this include al-Mas‘ūdī (Baghdad c. 896–Cairo 956) and Ibn Buṭlān (d. Antioch 1068).

And after them, there are the Indians, and they have all the sciences and knowledge we said. And they add to those that they have profound understanding, and they devote themselves to spiritual sciences and celestial secrets, and the work of stars, and magic.

The initial reference “*depos destos*” points to the people of China and India as contiguous, establishing a relationship that can be understood in terms of geography, temporality, or relative standing in the hierarchy of *nobleça*. All these possibilities stress a continuity reinforced by their shared virtues. The additional types of knowledge listed as practiced in India emphasize disciplines closely related to the *Libro de las cruces*. With the intellectual authority of the Indians in the study of astronomy and astrology, Oueydalla finishes the description of the only two groups that do not receive a remark about the limits of their *nobleça*, both in a region denominated “*el medio oriental del poblado*” (“the oriental half of settlement”; 9, fol. 6v). After them, the description of the two Western noble people of Antiquity notes the lesser value of their achievements as directly related to their location:

Et los otros dos son regnados que son en la partida occidental del poblado, el primero dellos es en la tierra de Babilonia et the Persia, et son otrosy temprada yente porque son en medio de los climas [...]. Mas por que son en la partida occidental, mengua les la calentura ya quanto, et por esto son en segundo grado de la nobleza de los orientales.

Et de pos de estos los romanos, et son el clima quitno et ya quanto del sexto, et an otrosi sennorio et sectas, et scientias, et saberes, et leyes, et decietos, empero menos que los otros. (8, fol. 6v–7r)

And the other two are kingdoms that are on the occidental part of the settlement. And the first of them is in the land of Babylon and Persia, and they are also temperate people because they are in the middle of the climates [...]. But because they are in the occidental part, heat already decreases in them somewhat, and for this reason, they are in the second level of nobility to the oriental ones.

And after them, the Romans. And they are in the fifth climate and part of the sixth. And they also have estates, and sects, and sciences, and laws, and decrees, but less than the others.

The relative cold of Persia in spite of being in the fourth climate zone elaborates on the notion that the Sun is most powerful in the Eastern region from where it rises daily.⁷⁹ Once under Roman rule, the Iberian Peninsula remains unnamed even though the attribution of the work to al-Istijī (Ouieydalla) would suggest a special interest in the region. The relative inferiority of the people of the Iberian Peninsula is solved by redefining the westwards trajectory of declining nobility into the trajectory of transferred nobility. Shifting the focus from decline to transfer transforms the hierarchies of peoples described in the second chapter *Libro de las cruces* into the notions of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* used by other medieval European courts, as described in Chapter 1. The temporality needed to put transference in motion irrupts through a reference to the spread of Islam:

Et en este nuestro tyempo fallamos que los alaraues et los que con ellos se tyenen conquiereron la tierra de Persia et de Babilonia et lo que se tyene con ellas adarredor. Pues segund estas razones que diximos ellos son la mas noble yente de la partida occidental del poblado en este nostro tyempo et los que son cerca dellos. (9, fol. 7v)

And in this our time we find that the Arabs and those with them conquered the lands of Persia and Babylon and what is contained in them. Then, according to the reasons we said, they are the noblest people of the occidental part of settlement in this our time, and those who are close to them.

Breaking away from the ancient framework that has dominated the chapter, the conquest of Persia by the *alaraues* introduces the present temporality of the *Libro de las cruces* giving them the previously noblest rank among “occidental” people previously held by the Persians. As a result, the hierarchy of peoples resulting from applying climate theory to a combination of Middle-Extreme and East-West axes evolves into an interpretation of historical events. According to this historical framework, the nobility of Babylon and the Persians was transferred to the *alaraues* after they conquered their region. Likewise, emphasis on spatial and

⁷⁹ For the Persian author Sharaf al-Zamān Tāhir Marvazī (d.1120), the incidence of sunbeams at dawn in China was one of the phenomena that moderated its climate (Olsson 497–503).

environmental classifications fades away. Following the conquest of Persia, the *alاراues* are presented as the noblest people of the *partida occidental*. Spatial considerations about climatic zones do not limit the status given to the *alاراues*. Instead, they are presented as “the noblest people” wherever they rule. Even more, Oueydalla implies that they disseminate *nobleça* into neighboring populations.

As the *Libro de las cruces* addresses its present time, military power—an essential component of *imperium*—makes its appearance as an instrument for transferring *nobleça* from conquered people to their conquerors. Given the emphasis that Oueydalla puts on science and knowledge as a component of collective *nobleça*, *imperium* and *studium* converge as the spread of Islam introduces temporality and transference into the hierarchical conception of bodily and cultural alterity proposed by the book. From the standpoint of Alfonso’s translation into Castilian, this reference to conquest fits into the historical evolution of his kingdoms. However, its underlying genealogy of transmission falls outside of discourses about the origins of Castile, León, and the people considered part of them among the Christian elites of his kingdoms.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the idea of a genealogical continuity between the elites of the Visigothic kingdom and those of the Asturias, León, and Castile played a crucial role in historiographical narratives about the origin of the Western Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, they are central to the conception of Islam as a temporary external presence in Alfonso X’s *Estoria de Espanna*. Yet, scientific translations from Arabic like the *Libro de las cruces* elaborate on alternative trajectories of transmission. Even though these trajectories focus on the transmission of knowledge, the personal involvement of Alfonso brings

together blood and intellectual dynasties in a way that challenges monocultural ideas about the origin of his kingdoms.⁸⁰

The intersecting scientific and historical analysis in the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* exemplifies the multidisciplinary character of the works promoted by Alfonso. Salvador H. Martínez's erudite study of the impact of those disciplines resorts to the idea of a "vernacular humanism" (*humanismo vernáculo*) promoted by King Alfonso as a way to "integrate" the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim culture.⁸¹ Bringing Arabic science to the vernacular of Castile expanded the views taken from the Latin tradition, which profoundly shaped ideas about the origin of Spain in the *Estoria de Espanna*. The trajectory of transmission outlined in the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* functions as a conflicting alternative view to highly influential ideas about a monocultural root of Spain in the *Estoria de Espanna*. Bridging together Latin and Arabic ideas about transmission/*translatio* the *Libro de las cruces* complicates those views evidencing Alfonso's active involvement in recognizing, continuing, and reshaping the legacy of al-Andalus.

Within the scientific framework of astrology and climate theory of the *Libro de las cruces*, the translation of al-Istijī (Oueydalla)'s work into Castilian follows a logic of transference that presents Alfonso as a ruler according to a combination of Andalusí and Christian practices. In light of the trajectories of transmission of the *nobleça* and the astrology described above, the following section addresses the representation of Oueydalla and Alfonso

⁸⁰ Other translations from Arabic commissioned by Alfonso back this approach. Particularly relevant is the case of the *Lapidario*, which I expect to address in future publications resulting for this dissertation.

⁸¹ "El humanismo alfonsí *fue integrador* de las tres culturas existentes en la península, y sobre todo *fue vernáculo*, planteando una doble barrera, cultural y lingüística, insuperable en la Europa latina de los siglos IX al XIV en la que operan los 'críticos'" (*Humanismo* 27). This conception of the cultural project of Alfonso intriguingly advocates for a humanism that goes beyond the limits of Latin culture to integrate Jewish and Muslim traditions.

focusing on what their actions and origins imply for a genealogical reconstruction of Spain based on the intellectual lineage of the *Libro de las cruces*.

A Twofold Origin

So far, we have addressed two ways transmission is part of the Arabic origin of the work translated in Alfonso X's *scriptorium*. The first section of this chapter offered a philological and historical reconstruction of the trajectory of materials from al-Dabbī and al-Istijī that ended in the *Libro de las cruces*. The second one addressed ideas about the transference of *nobleça* that the Castilian translation presents as coming from the work of Oueydalla (al-Istijī). Together, these sections show that Andalusī knowledge can only be partially understood if kept in isolation from the East—a vague geographical referent that can range from political and intellectual developments in Baghdad to ideas about India and China.

The first chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* expands on the interrelation between local and global spaces through Oueydalla's explanation of the characteristics of the particularities of the astrological method of the crosses. This chapter—corresponding to the prologue of the Arabic text—includes information about the origin of the materials used by its author, alluding to the differences between a local pre-Islamic tradition and another one of Eastern origin. Oueydalla's promotion of the local practice resorts to translation to recover knowledge to recover a piece of lost knowledge at odds with the more prestigious Eastern astrology that had become dominant in al-Andalus. From the perspective of Alfonso's promotion of the decision of a Castilian version, Oueydalla's preference may have been perceived as an endorsement of practices associated with Roman and Visigothic Spain, thus linking together this Andalusī piece of knowledge with ideas about the Visigoths as remote ancestors of the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula

Stahuljak theorizes the implications of translation in multicultural contexts in relation to medieval ideas about *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii*. From this perspective, “translation becomes a *locus* of tension between the *imperium* and the *studium*, the place of conflict between power and knowledge. A certain knowledge about power and the issue of power over this knowledge reveal themselves to be in conflict” (“Epistemology” 48). Relying on post-colonial theory, Stahuljak proposes that the multicultural character of medieval translation establishes a type of colonial relationship between the source and receptor language. Furthermore, she calls attention to prologues writing that “to translate an *imperium* or a *studium*, then, is to make tense the prologues, the *locus* of their translation” (“Epistemology” 49). As a *locus* of translation, the prologue encapsulates how translators envision the tension between cultures created by their work.

Stahuljak’s approach is particularly intriguing to discuss Alfonso X’s promotion of translations of Arabic knowledge into Castilian. In the case of the *Libro de las cruces*, the inclusion of Oueydalla’s prologue along with the one prepared in Alfonso’s *scriptorium* outlines a double intervention over two traditions of different origin, the local astrology of the crosses and the one developed by those referred to as “Oriental sages” (*sabios orientales*). The following pages address how each of the prologues addresses the relative significance of these traditions separately and in light of Oueydalla’s decision to combine elements from both in his Arabic work. After analyzing of Oueydalla’s work in light of his prologue, I address the presence of Alfonso in the Castilian prologue, suggesting that the Castilian king’s promotion of Arabic knowledge follows the model of Oueydalla in resorting to ideas and practices from both Christian and Muslim Iberian rulers. Ultimately, the twofold origin of the *Libro de las cruces* reveals the importance that the political and cultural authority of al-Andalus had in thirteenth-century Castile

and the scope of Alfonso X's commitment to participate in cultural practices that cross religious differences among his subjects.

As mentioned above, the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* highlights Oueydalla's role in creating the book through a large initial introducing his words as "Dixo Oueydalla" (Figure 2.3). Immediately after, the text changes to the enunciation in first person of his relationship with the work: "Esto es lo que falle en los libros antiguos del Libro de las Cruces en los iudicios de las estrellas, et transladel et esplanel por que ui que es mucho prouechable" ("This is what I found in the ancient books of the Book of the Crosses in the judgment of the stars, and I translated it and explained it because I saw that it is very valuable"; 5, fol. 4v). Oueydalla's finding of the book connects his work with Andalusí practices for transmitting the "Sciences of the Ancients." In light of the value he finds in those books, he decides to translate them into Arabic.

Oueydalla's action over the book he found is presented as part of a willingness to give access to previously unknown materials through his translation into Arabic and the explanation of its content. Thus, Oueydalla presents himself as both a linguistic mediator and a knowledgeable astrologer. According to him, usefulness justifies the translation of the work he found and recovers. However, his explanation of the role of the *Libro de las cruces* in the astrology of his time puts this usefulness into question. That distinction starts with an account of the different geographic origins between the astrology of the crosses and the one then dominant in al-Andalus:

[E]stos son los iudicios generales et antiguos, et son los iudizios que usauan los de las partidas de occidente del tempo antiguo, et los de tierra de Affrica, et los de Barbaria et una partida de los romanos dEspanna; todos estos solian iudgar por estas costellaciones generales.

Mas los persios et los griegos auian muchas sotilezas en esta scientia, et en departir las razones della [...] segund que todo esto es departido en los libros de los sabios orientales, et de los de Babilonia, et de los egiptios, et de los persios et de los

griegos, que todos estos sonsacauan los iudizios et las significaciones desta scientia. (5, fol. 5r)

These are the general and ancient interpretations. And they are the interpretations that the people of the parts of Occident used in ancient times, and those from the land of Africa, and Barbary, and a part of the Romans from Spain; all these used to interpret by these general patterns.

But the Persians and the Greeks had much subtlety in this science, and in explaining reasons from it [...] since all this is explained in the books of the oriental sages, and those of Babylon, and the Egyptians, and the Persians, and the Greeks; since all of them elucidated interpretations and reasons from this science.

Oueydalla's knowledge of astrology and its history allows him to contrast the astrological principles he found with Eastern traditions. That contrast includes a series of technical aspects I omitted from the quote for the sake of concision. The enunciation of the places where each branch of the discipline was practiced distinguishes between "the parts of Occident" and "the oriental sages" giving a clear favorable view to the one practiced in the East.

The distinction between the two "parts" of the world in the last quote follows the dichotomic tendency of the division among ancient people in the chapter discussed above. Nevertheless, there is no spatial equivalence in the areas that each region covers. Here, "Occident" is reduced to a much smaller area, leaving out Persia, Egypt, and Greece. This restricted conception of "Occident" seems to correspond to the region of "Maghrib." At the time, the area of Maghrib included al-Andalus, whose historical development was closely tied to that of North Africa. Thus, the inclusion of Africa, Barbary, and part of the Romans of Spain is coherent with the historical relationships between these regions both before and after the Islamic conquest. This restricted view of "Occident" underscores the local character of the astrology of the crosses situating Oueydalla's reasons to recover the *Libro de las cruces* with the use of astrology as a political tool by medieval Islamic rulers from Abbasid Baghdad to the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba and local *taifa* rulers as al-Ma'mūn of Toledo, where authors such as al-Andalusī and al-Istijī worked in various areas of knowledge.

In light of the cultural and historical background opposing al-Andalus to the Eastern caliphate, Oueydalla's decision to transfer into Arabic a branch of astrology less sophisticated than that of the *sabios orientales* suggests the reasons for its consideration as "very useful" (*mucho prouechable*) are not primarily justified for its scientific value, but for vindicating a locally originated "Science of the Ancients." Oueydalla's relationship with the ancient past inscribes him within the paradigm of access to knowledge from the past praised by Sā'id ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's *urjūza* in this chapter's epigraph: "All hidden and sublime science / is found in an inaccessible place [...] / only reaches its extreme dwellings / the one who knows the texts transferred into Arabic." This poetic formulation of *translatio studii* functions as a counterpart of the military *translatio* by which the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* justifies the higher *nobleça* of the Arabs (*alaraues*) beyond the limits of climate theory. As in the chapter on *nobleça* and climate theory, the conclusions of astrology as science are overridden by the irruption of historical considerations that elaborate on an alternative, more politically convenient, reconstruction of its origins and transmission.

The promotion of the value of the method of the crosses follows the pattern of the transference of the "Science of the Ancients" into Arabic initiated by the translators of eighth- and ninth-century Baghdad. As outlined earlier in this chapter, these translators working for the Abbasid caliphs incorporated the Zoroastrian notion of "political astrology" into Arabic science. This form of *translatio studii* resulted in a lasting bond between astrology and sovereignty in the Islamic world (Gutas 32–52). The association of technical refinement and courtly patronage fostered Eastern astrology throughout the Islamicate. As a result, local traditions like the one recovered by Oueydalla would have been deemed outdated and inferior. The absence of records on the method of the crosses between al-Dabbī's *urjūza* and al-Istijī/Oueydalla's work accounts

for the strength of the methods and works coming from the East, resulting in yet another trajectory of *translatio*. In this context, Ouyedalla's translation may be understood in political terms to promote an authoritative local tradition. Yet, the previous existence of an Arabic tradition around the method of the crosses corroborated by Vernet's discovery of fragments from al-Dabbī only reinforces the incorporation of Eastern practices into Oueydalla's work. By presenting his *translatio* as translation, Oueydalla situates his enterprise within the framework of engagement with the "Science of the Ancients" established by the Baghdadi caliphate.

The astrological expertise of Oueydalla does its part to explain why he promotes the less advanced method from the *partidas de occidente*. In the Arabic prologue, he stresses the powerful interpretations that the book offers "por que son puestas sobre grandes rayzes et fuertes cymientos" ("because they are put over great roots and strong foundations"). While the "strong foundations" of the book suggest a technically solid tradition, the reference to its "great roots" links its transmission to genealogy through one of its most common metaphors in Christian contexts.⁸² Having set its roots in *Occident*, Oueydalla proceeds to explain how to make the most out of his book proposing to use it along with the one developed by the "oriental sages:"

Et el qui estas constellationes pusiere en logar de rayzes et de cymientos en los accidentes del mundo, et de pos desto se ajudare de las sotilezas et de los departimientos que son manifestos en los libros destos otros sabios, puede llegar alo que quiere. (5, fol. 5r)

And whoever put these patterns as roots and foundations for the world's accidents and helps himself afterward with the subtilities and interpretations manifest in the books of those other sages can achieve whatever he wants.

Oueydalla's remarks about the worth and origins of the two astrological traditions lead him to propose an integrated method to reach the highest results. The content of the *Libro de las*

⁸² For instance, in the popular artistic motive of the Tree of Jesse, which Bloch identifies as an allegory that connects family lineage, biblical history, and the arts (*Etimologies* 87–90). Another example of the use of "root" as a metaphor for lineage appears in the *Libro del cavallero Zifar*, as discussed in Chapter 3.

cruzes follows this principle.⁸³ Furthermore, the defense of the added value provided by the method of the crosses redefines the uneven relationship between the astrology originated locally and the one that arrived from the East. Local traditions are brought into the Arabic language to serve as the “root” and “foundation” of a hybrid practice that combines both. Oueydalla’s advocacy from a combined method is proposed as one that differentiates between its components’ origin and distinctive characteristics—even if later chapters silently introduce concepts alien to Late Roman astrology in the West of the Mediterranean.⁸⁴ Furthermore, it does not use their differences to reinforce a hierarchy but proposes integrating them to enhance potential outcomes. In other words, Oueydalla negotiates a place for a piece of local knowledge from Antiquity that is presented as forgotten, technically inferior, and inaccessible.

The recovery of the astrology practiced in the Iberian Peninsula before the Islamic conquest bridges the division between two differentiated traditions. From the perspective of Castilian perception of its own origins, the work of Oueydalla could have been perceived as a recognition of the authority of a local Latin/Visigothic knowledge (*studium*) from which to construct a twofold trajectory of *translatio* to fit the king’s political goals. This second moment of multicultural tension—to put it in Stahuljak terms—is manifested in the conditions for the Castilian tradition in the prologue to Alfonso’s royal manuscript.

The Prologue to the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* instructs its new audience about the reasons and circumstances that led to the translation of the Arabic text. The prologue lists Yehuda ben Mose ha-Kohen—“Hyuhda fy de Mosse alChoen Mosca”—and Johan D’Aspa—

⁸³ See Poch. Samsó (“Development”).

⁸⁴ I use the term “hybrid” in Jeffery J Cohen’s sense of “never synthetic in the sense of homogenizing, hybridity is a fusion *and* a disjunction, a conjoining of differences that cannot simply harmonize” (*Hybridity* 2).

“maestre Johan”—as authors of the translation. Besides them, Alfonso participates actively as the person who “found” the book (*fallólo*):

Onde este nostro sennor sobredicho [Alfonso], qui tantos et diuersos dichos de sabios uiera, leyendo que dos cosas son en el mundo que mientre son escondidas non prestan nada, et es la una seso encerrado que non se amostra, et la otra thesoro escondido en tierra, el semeiando a Salamon en buscar et espaladinar los saberes, doliendo se de la pérdida et la mengua que auian los ladinos en las sciencias de las significaciones sobredichas fallo el Libro de las Cruzes que fizieron los sabios antigos. (1, fol.2r)

Therefore, this our abovementioned lord [Alfonso], who had seen many diverse sages’ sayings, reading that there are two things in the world that are useless while hidden, one is enclosed wisdom and the other treasure hidden underground; he, resembling Salomon in searching and expounding knowledge, regretting the loss of the abovementioned science of the prognostications among the Latins (*ladinos*), found the Book of the Crosses that the ancient sages made.

The actions of Alfonso in this passage project an image of the king consistent with his common appellation as “the wise” or *el sabio* in Spanish historiography. The introduction of the *Libro de las cruces* departs from a reference to Alfonso’s scholarly erudition leading him to recognize the worth of a specific saying dealing with the recovery of knowledge. Presented as the result of Alfonso’s readings, the semantic construction of this saying around the notion of the “hidden” (*escondido*) points to a material contact with knowledge. Narratively, the prologue presents continuity as a difficult task that requires the recovery of a previously inaccessible and lost knowledge: “siempre se esforço de alumbrar et de abiuar los saberes que eran perdidos el tyempo que Dyos lo mando regnar en la tierra” (“he always put effort in illuminating and vivifying the knowledges that were lost at the time when God ordered him to rule on Earth”; 1, fol. 2r). The reference to an underground treasure situates the subsequent mention of Alfonso’s finding of the Arabic book with a physical act of digging up knowledge.⁸⁵ Reading, physical

⁸⁵ In a similar vein, the prologue to the *Lapidario*—whose manuscripts includes numerous miniatures of people digging up minerals—affirms that Alfonso received the book from a Toledan Jew “quel tenie ascondido que se non querie aprouechar del nin que a otro touiesse pro” (“who had it hidden, for he did not want to make use of it, nor did he want that anyone else benefit from it”; 18–19, fol. 1r–v; Bahler and Gyékényesi Gatto 20).

contact with the books, and the digging up of “hidden” treasures situates Alfonso in relation to Andalusí practices around the “Sciences of the Ancients” associated with local origins. The central position of Toledo in this historical and discursive forms of *translatio* accounts for a political use of the translation as much as it points to an interest in putting astrology into practice.

Alfonso X’s representation as a scholar committed to recovering local knowledge mimics the actions of Oueydalla in the Arabic prologue, where his translated words state: “Esto es lo que falle en los libros antiguos” (“This is what I found in the ancient books” 5, fol. 4v). Emulating Oueydalla, Alfonso’s finding of the Arabic book continues the transmission of the astrology of the crosses. The discovery, translation, and transmission actions are concentrated in Oueydalla and Alfonso. In their respective prologues, this protagonism obscures earlier steps in the development of the method of the crosses in al-Andalus and presents the Castilian king as both sponsor and receptor of ancient knowledge. The reference to the loss of astrology among the *ladinos* stresses Alfonso’s willingness to reconnect with a remote past, continuing Oueydalla’s association of the method of the crosses with pre-Islamic Romans from Spain and their Latin language.

The parallel construction of Alfonso and Oueydalla in the two prologues reinforces the notion of a local trajectory of transmission from the Roman and Visigothic past to Alfonso through the Arabic language and Andalusí practices. The lost character of astrology stated in the Castilian prologue displaces the proximity of the Arabic text—produced and probably preserved in Toledo during the *taifa* period—to a remote pre-Islamic past. This displacement creates an alternative continuity between two different collectives of “*ladinos*”: those of Ancient Visigothic Spain and Alfonso X’s contemporaries able to read Latin. Thus, the promotion of the Castilian translation of a piece of knowledge both Andalusí and pre-Islamic results in a double exercise of

translatio studii and *translatio imperii*. As a result, the Castilian king continues the promotion of the “Sciences of the Ancients” by Andalusí rulers while presenting himself as the rescuer of a piece of knowledge coming from the Visigothic kingdom. Thus, the Castilian prologue inserts Alfonso’s promotion of Andalusí knowledge with the regime that Castilian elites had identified as guarantor of his claim of sovereignty over the whole Iberian Peninsula. This twofold origin relies on translation to enable *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* across time between differentiated cultural groups—as the *Libro de las cruces* theorizes in the chapter on the hierarchies among peoples according to climate theory and military conquest.⁸⁶

Non-Iberian referents also play a role in situating the twofold origin of the *Libro de las cruces* as ambivalently Christian and non-Christian. Mentions of Aristotle and Ptolemy expand on the local character of the method of the crosses to connect the Arabic books with intellectual traditions from Antiquity that had come to be seen as remote referents for Christian European culture. The reference to Aristotle associates Alfonso’s understanding of his teachings with Christian theology by stressing:

[P]or uoluntat de Dyos [Alfonso] entendio et connocio que la sciencia et el saber en connocer las significationes destos corpos celestiales sobredichos sobre los corpos terrenales era muy necessaria a los homnes. (1, fol. 2r)

Because of God’s will, he [Alfonso] learned and understood the science and knowledge of the prognostications of those abovementioned celestial bodies over the terrestrial bodies, which was very necessary for humankind.

⁸⁶ Jaime I—king of Aragon and father of Alfonso X’s wife, Violante—expressed his fear that the king of Castile “will be Emperor of the Spains and that We or our kingdoms and lands will be subjugated by reason of the Empire” (“quod sit [rex Castelle] Imperator Hispaniae, vel quod Nos sive regna et terras nostras, in aliqua subjectione ratione imperio”; quoted by González Jiménez 135—see also Ayala Martínez 263–65, 306–11). These words appear in a letter dated on 23 February 1259, only a few days apart from the date when the Castilian *Libro de las cruces* was finished. Notably, the prologue fashions the monarch as “el muy noble Rey don Alfonso Rey d’España” (“the much noble king Lord Alfonso, King of Spain”; 1, fol. 2r) instead of opting for the list the royal titles he owned used in other prologues to his works (Cárdenas “Alfonso’s”). Alfonso dedicated much effort and resources to be recognized as heir to the Holy Roman Empire. His imperial aspirations may be connected with the deployment of *translatio* in his support of written culture. For an overview on medieval ideas about *translatio imperii*, see Chapter 1 above. On the Leonese claims over an imperial rule over the Iberian Peninsula, see Iturmendi Morales, Socarrás (15–38). For their connection with the Visigothic the past, see Deyermund, Fraker (*Scope* 155–69), González-Casanovas.

Alfonso X's direct knowledge and understanding of Aristotle's natural philosophy further supports the image of the wise king whose personal involvement situates him as part of the chain of scholars who have devoted themselves to the knowledge of the "sciences of the Ancients." The manuscript of the *Lapidario* reinforces this association with Aristotle in the miniatures of its first folio (Figure 2.4). At the top, Aristotle teaches a group of students. Their pointed headwear identifies them as non-Christians while the architectural framing encloses them and Aristotle teaching within a Christian setting. Just beneath, Alfonso emulates the intellectual authority of Aristotle with the same body position, seated and with the index finger in his right hand pointed.



Figure 2.4 Aristotle and Alfonso X in the manuscript of the *Lapidario* (fol. 1r, detail).

In her description of the symbols of Almohad political sovereignty, Fierro writes: “It was in fact the Almohad caliphs who encouraged the development of Aristotelian philosophy, commissioning and financing the philosophical, medical and juridical work of Averroes; and this encouragement formed part of the “sapientalist” concept of the Almohad caliphate itself” (“Alfonso X” 177). The Almohad was a Berber dynasty that ruled over Maghreb between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries. Almohad strong association of knowledge and rulership was exercised during the dynasty’s control of al-Andalus between 1172 and 1212. Fierro describes the main features of their cultural politics suggesting a resemblance between them and that of Alfonso X.⁸⁷ The Almohad’s support of Aristotelianism was part of a “sapientalist” view of government that—like the Castilian king in the *Libro de las cruces*—recognized the intellectual authority of the “sciences of the Ancients” as part of the courtly practices that identified the exceptionality of their ruling dynasty.

The representation of Alfonso X in the prologue is reminiscent of these practices and could have taken them into account to establish a continuity with the Almohad paradigm of the ruler as a sponsor of knowledge. The Almohad dynasty exemplifies the use of discourses from various origins to exercise their rulership. The continuities traced by Alfonso X’s translation of Arabic knowledge points to a possibly deliberate attempt to draft from the Almohad example and other Andalusí practices outlined throughout this chapter. This continuity may have been recognizable by the Muslim population in the ample extensions of land conquered to Andalusí

⁸⁷ The characteristics outlined by Fierro are: a) representation of the caliph as vicar of God within a theocratic system that considered Ibn Tūmart (1080–ca. 1130) as a messianic figure (*mahdi*); b) creation of new elites under direct control of the caliph; c) legislative unification and centralization of the administration; d) promotion of an “encyclopedic knowledge” that included the “ancient sciences”, philosophy, natural sciences, magic, and hermetic knowledge; and e) interest in expanding knowledge among common people in vernacular Berber language. After describing Almohad cultural policies (“Alfonso X”). Fierro’s outline of the similarities between Alfonso X’s politics and Almohad rulership—particularly regarding the points c, d, and e—is concurrent with some of the conclusions of Márquez Villanueva and Salvador H Martínez in their respective monographies about Alfonso’s promotion of culture.

rulers within the previous century by Castile—particularly during Fernando III’s rule, between 1217 and 1252.

Looking at Andalusí courtly practices in relation to Alfonso’s commitment to Arabic knowledge brings to light the use of translation to accomplish *translatio* from al-Andalus. The hierarchical conception of differences between collectives in the *Libro de las cruces* helps us understand the extent to which genealogical thinking articulates alterity. As outlined by the importance of the Islamic conquest of Persia in its Chapter 2, the *Libro de las cruces* shows how *translatio(n)* forces knowledge and power into concurrent trajectories. Those hierarchies also make their appearance in the Castilian prologue through a reference to Ptolemy in the first sentences. Offering a Christianized view of ideas attributed to his *Almagest*, the prologue states:

Onde en quanto el angel es mas alto et mas noble que el homne, por su grand entendimiento et por su grand saber que Dyos li dyo, assi el ombre, en qui Dyos quiso posar seso et entendimiento, es mas alto & mas noble entre todos los homnes. (1, fol. 2r)

Thus, as the angel is higher and nobler than the man on account of his great comprehension and knowledge that God gave him, the man to whom God gave insight and comprehension is higher and nobler among all men.

The reference to the *Almagest* highlights cultural referents shared across the religious communities of the Iberian Peninsula and the long tradition of translation and cultural borrowing between them. Ptolemy’s influential work on astrology reached al-Andalus at the end of the tenth century. It was promoted by the circle of astronomers of Maslama al-Majrīṭī (950–1007).

Besides the *Almagest*, Ptolemaic astronomy was influential in the work of Iberian Jewish scholars as Abraham Bar Ḥiyya (ca. 1070–ca. 1145) and Abraham Ibn Ezra (ca. 1089–ca. 1164).

In 1175, Gerardus Cremonensis translated into Latin while working in Toledo.⁸⁸ With the work

⁸⁸ Bar Ḥiyya collaborated with Plato of Tivoli in the translation of Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* into Latin carried out in Barcelona between 1116 and 1138. Translations of Ptolemy into Latin had been already produced in the monastery of Ripoll at the second half of the tenth century. See Goldstein (“Astronomy as a Neutral Zone” 163–65, “Astronomy among Jews”), Márquez Villanueva (*El concepto* 291–95), Samsó (“Sobre el astrólogo” 658–59), Stuckrad (39–41).

of these scholars, astronomy, astrology, and climate theory become fertile soil for intellectual exchanges. Yet, the trajectories of translation and *translatio* were not independent of hierarchies between cultural and embodied alterities formulated in part by these disciplines. In light of them, the scholarly presence of Alfonso in the Castilian prologue continues and supersedes the work of Oueydalla. Similarly, his Christian rule over al-Andalus' former territories appropriates the *imperium* that Oueydalla's idea of *nobleça* puts into the *alaraues* who conquered Persia and, from there, in the whole community of Islam.

If military conquest delivered Andalusian lands into Castilian rule, Alfonso's translations of Arabic knowledge do their part in justifying them within a narrative of *translatio* that historicizes them beyond the geographical and temporal coordinates of his reign. Appropriation of a lost knowledge through translation directs the work of both Oueydalla and Alfonso X towards the accommodation of a remote knowledge as an integral and yet distinctive part of the receiving culture. Part of this distinctiveness comes from the importance both give to the local pre-Islamic method of the crosses. For Oueydalla, its usefulness justifies a transfer and translation into Arabic to use it along with the works of the "oriental sages." Doing so conceives the territories of the Iberian Peninsula as a place of origin of a local "Science of the Ancients."

Oueydalla's proposal of combining "occidental" and "oriental" branches of astrology may be an apt analogy of Alfonso's engagement with Arabic knowledge and, more generally, the historical legacy of al-Andalus within his kingdoms. The translation of the *Libro de las cruces* into Castilian shows Alfonso's engagement with the alterity of al-Andalus as departing from its own courtly and intellectual practices. It shows how multiple trajectories of origin played a role in Alfonso's self-conception as a ruler and in developing a vast cultural project that shaped the early evolution of Castilian literature and intellectual life.

Besides the intellectual genealogies traced by translation and *translatio*, the Castilian version introduces the blood lineage of Alfonso immediately after mentioning him in the prologue: “nostro sennor, el muy noble Rey don Alfonso Rey dEspaña, fyio del muy noble Rey don Ferrando et de la muy noble reyna dona Beatriz” (“the much noble king Lord Alfonso, king of Spain, son of the much noble king Lord Ferrando and the much noble queen Lady Beatriz”; 1, fol. 2r). The mention of Alfonso’s parents is part of a broader discursive strategy to present him in the works produced by the *scriptorium*. Szpiech refers to the continuous textual presence of Alfonso’s as a “symbolic overlapping between translation and filiation” (“Founding Father” 220). Szpiech’s perspective underscores the interdependence of discourses about transmission and origins from different disciplines. For example, medieval historians of Asturias, Castile, and León often relied on imprecise blood lineages to propose a continuity of Visigothic Spain and the Christian elites of their time.

Introducing Alfonso’s dynasty in the prologue of the *Libro de las cruces* leaves a modest trace of the centrality of blood genealogy in a text that seeks to explain the role of non-blood lineages in creating hierarchies among human groups. The following chapters turn to the intertwining of historical and literary narratives to focus on family relationships. Yet the impact of the works studied in each of them—*Libro del caballero Zifar* and *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*—reveal the impact of ideas about genealogy and alterity coming from Alfonso X’s vast cultural project.

Chapter 3 Asian Lineages and Iberian Alterities in the Libro del Caballero Zifar

The analysis of the *Libro de las cruces* in Chapter 2 underscored some of the ideas about Eastern alterities during the Castilian Middle Ages. Its hierarchical classification of noble peoples reveals broader ideas about some regions of Asia as sources of knowledge and virtue. These ideas were manifest in early Castilian literature, from Alfonso X's translation of the Arabic *Kalila wa Dimna* to the *Libro del caballero Zifar*. Written roughly two decades after the death of King Alfonso X in 1284, this romance narrates the adventures of a noble family across multiple Eastern spaces as the knights Zifar and his second son, Roboán, try and succeed to become rulers outside of their native "India." Known by the name of its eponymous character since the Middle Ages, the prologue refers to this romance as "Libro del cavallero de Dios."⁸⁹

As in the previous analysis of the *Libro de las cruces*, the prologue of the romance serves to put the *Zifar* in relation to its broader Castilian context. The prologue of the *Zifar* starts narrating the events surrounding the death of Cardinal Pérez Gudiel, with an emphasis on the relocation of his dead body from Rome to Toledo. After those circumstances, the narrator refers to memory to connect those events with the book's content. At that point, the reader does not

⁸⁹ On most occasions, I refer to the romance as simply *Zifar*. Some scholars prefer referring the work as "Libro del cavallero de Dios." Likewise, there are different preferences for the spelling of caballero/cavallero/cauallero and Zifar/Çifar/Cifar. I have opted for the modern spelling used in the most accessible critical editions. Regarding the issue of genre, Cacho Bleuca ("género") and Lucía Megías ("variance") offer an overview of the variety of the multiple genres that appear in the content of the *Zifar*. I favor the term "romance" over other proposed generic classifications for the reasons outlined by Gómez Redondo ("*libro*"). Specialists such as Cacho Bleuca, Burke, Gómez Redondo, González, Hernández, and Lucía Megías have greatly enriched our understanding of the sources, structure, style, and historical significance of the *Zifar* in relation to Christian traditions and the political context of fourteenth century Castile. I refer to their works in the bibliography for more information on those issues. Meanwhile, a group of scholars has explored different aspects that connect the *Zifar* with the Arabic and Andalusí cultural traditions. Walker's book on the *Zifar* was an initial referent for this approach, later continued by Barletta, Girón-Negrón, Harney, and Wacks, among others.

know yet that what follows is a romance about remote times and spaces, apparently unrelated to the proximity of a local churchman who died shortly before the *Zifar* was written.⁹⁰ As the narrator resorts to memory, the the disparate temporalities start to show: “E porque la memoria del ome ha luengo tienpo, e non se pueden acordar los omes de las cosas mucho antiguas si non las falló por escrito” (“Because man’s memory spans a long time, men cannot remember the ancient things if they are not put into writing” 56; M. 3v; 5).⁹¹ The reference to “ancient things” connects the romance with the recovery of the ancient astrological method of the crosses in the *Libro de las cruces*. Likewise, the *Zifar* shares with Alfonso X’s commission the use of translation in ways that mediate the transference from an authoritative source with a simultaneous display of local and remote cultural referents. The first section of this chapter addresses this issue by considering the implications of presenting as a translation of “caldeo” (“Chaldean”; 56) what was initially written in Castilian, even if frequently resorting to preexisting materials.

Another crucial difference from the previous chapter is the different approaches to genealogy and nobility in both works. The inclusion of climate theory in the *Libro de las cruces* results in a collective assessment of what is there called “nobleça.” However, when it comes to

⁹⁰ There is no consensus about the date of composition of the *Zifar*. Hernández, Pérez López, Wagner, and others favor an early date around 1303. Cacho Blecua, Olsen, Vaquero and others argue that it was written at a later date, ranging between the second decade and middle of the fourteenth century.

⁹¹ Quotations are from González Muela’s edition unless otherwise noted. González Muela edits MS M, relying in MS P for completing lacunae in that manuscript. The election of González Muela’s edition is a consequence of my interest in taking MS M as base for my analysis. I include references to the manuscript to indicate the sections of González Muela’s edition that correspond to MS P. Sporadically, I compare the contents of the only two extant manuscripts. In those occasions I note the use of Olsen’s edition of MS P. Translations are from Nelson’s unless otherwise noted. I note my translations in occasions when Nelson’s translation does not correspond to the content of MS M in the original quote. This divergence is the result of Nelson’s translation of the early twentieth century edition of Wagner, who mixed content of the two extant manuscripts as well as the Cromberger’s 1512 edition for the press. Wagner carefully noted the variants in his critical apparatus. However, those variants and absent in Nelson’s translation as well as in González’s edition—that reprocess Wagner’s text. I choose of M as the base of my analysis in light of its closer association with the cultural legacy of al-Andalus. Both MS M and MS P derive from an earlier manuscript now lost. MS M has been dated between ca. 1426 and ca. 1450. Meanwhile, MS P was produced a bit later, between 1454 and 1460, for the royal court of King Enrique IV of Castile (r. 1454–1474). MS P includes rich miniatures and textual variants that may reflect a willingness of the royal circles to take more distance from some of the implications for ideas about lineage that find their way into MS M. For more details on the manuscripts, see Lucía Megías (“*Libro*” 773–76) and the entry for the *Libro del Caballero Zifar* (BETA texid 1238) in *PhiloBiblon*.

the *Zifar*, dynastic origins articulate the narrative plot around the idea of an inherited curse that forces Zifar to seek fortune outside of India. Accordingly, the romance elaborates on the more common use of “nobleça” concerning the dynastic origins of the privileged class. The romance problematizes the limits between genealogical inheritance and individual actions through the adventures of the family of Zifar (see Table 3.1). Yet, collective identities still play a role in the romance’s deployment of genealogical thinking through references to the biblical dynasties spanning from Noah. Exploring the interplay between biblical and fictional lineages, the two central sections of this chapter argue that the *Zifar* conceives lineages as subject to transformation by the exercise of virtuous rule over non-native lands.

The last section of the chapter addresses the inclusion of the Mozarabic cardinal Gonçalo Pérez Gudiel in the prologue of the *Zifar*. Information from the prologue suggests that the *Zifar*’s author belonged to the Mozarabic community of Toledo. Even though it has been attributed to specific individuals, the author’s identity is not as relevant for my analysis as the implications of a Mozarabic presence that starts with Pérez Gudiel. The inclusion of his dead body, along with the need to preserve its memory, underscores the ambivalent temporalities of the romance. If the lineages of Zifar and Noah problematize the possibility of transforming the past in the romance, the prologue anchors, in the cadaver of Pérez Gudiel (and his *translatio* from Rome to Toledo), the possibility of a Castilian future for the cultural heritage of al-Andalus.

Table 3.1 Descendance of Zifar⁹²

	Zifar and Grima	
Garfin [first son]	Roboán [second son]	
	Roboán & Nobleça	Roboán & Seringa
	Fortunado [first son]	Fijo de Bendición [second son]

⁹² Columns represent progeny, rows represent generations.

Chaldean *estorias* and Castilian Readers

As just mentioned, the prologue of the *Zifar* addresses the events surrounding the death of Pérez Gudiel. Then, it expresses the importance of preserving the memory connecting the story about the Mozarabic cardinal with the content of the romance that follows: “E porque la memoria del ome ha luengo tienpo, e non se pueden acordar los omes de las cosas mucho antiguas si non las falló por escrito” (“Because man’s memory spans a long time, men cannot remember the ancient things if they are not put into writing”; 56, M. 3v; 5). This remote temporality of the “cosas mucho antiguas” is at odds with the death of Pérez Gudiel only a few years before the *Zifar* was written. The contrast between the proximity of this event and the ancient context of the romance highlights the distance between the context of production of the romance and that of the events it narrates.

The prologue claims that the *Zifar* resulted from a translation, adding further distance from the referents of its potential Castilian readers: “[E] por ende el trasladador de la estoria que adelante oiredes, que fue traslavdado de caldeo en latín e de latín en romançe, e puso e ordenó estas dos cosas sobredichas en esta obra” (“Therefore the translator of the story you will hear from this point on, which was translated from Syriac [*caldeo*] into Latin and from Latin into Spanish, placed and established these two aforementioned things in this work”; 56, M. 3v; 5). The *trasladador* presents *caldeo* as source language and the vernacular of Castile (*romançe*) as receptor language, with Latin as an intermediate language. Since all this process represents an inexistent act of translation, I refer to it as forged in the following pages. Understanding this translation as “forged” underscores what I consider a deliberate effort to present the romance as a

continuation of the long tradition of translations conducted in Toledo, where the work was most certainly written.⁹³

Identifying the source language poses a challenge of interpretation. Nelson's decision to translate it as "Syriac" is justified by the common association between those languages during the European Middle Ages. However, it is challenging to maintain the association in light of the linguistic context of the Iberian Peninsula. A literal translation as "Chaldean," the Semitic language of the ancient Chaldeans—who lived in the region of Mesopotamia between the tenth and sixth centuries BCE—has the same problem. However, this remote space and temporality bode well with other references to their region within the romance that I address later in this chapter. Finally, most scholars have adopted the identification between *caldeo* and Arabic. Walker championed this approach as part of his thorough analysis of what he called "Semitic Elements in the *Zifar*." To this end, Walker referred examples of this association in the historiographical and literary traditions of Asturias, Castile, and León (*Tradition* 27–33).⁹⁴ My approach to the *Zifar* addresses the association between *caldeo* and Arabic as ambivalent. Instead of considering *caldeo* as equivalent to Arabic, I argue that the election of *caldeo* aims to present the work simultaneously as Arabic and non-Arabic, related with the close-to-home culture of al-Andalus as well as with the authority of ancient Chaldea.

In this chapter, I use "ambivalent" to refer to textual strategies that result in the lack of clear and univocal referents to languages, places, or identities. I argue that the absence of precise

⁹³ From a different angle, Wacks characterizes the *Zifar* as a "performance of translation" (*Crusade* 61), with an approach that pointedly underscores the social dimension of the ideas that the *trasladador* develops in both prologue and romance.

⁹⁴ González Palencia refers to the use of *caldeo* as Arabic in Alfonso X's scientific translations and other sources besides the *Zifar* (*Historia* 331–32, 345). See also, Wacks (*Crusade* 75–76, 183 n.21). Brownlee notes the possible reference to the three languages stressing the proximity of the *Zifar* with the exemplary literature produced in al-Andalus. Cacho Blecua refers the association of Chaldean with Syriac as well as with Arabic. In his view, the references to Chaldean *estorias* in the *Zifar* go beyond its linguistic sense, although he does not specify potential implications ("Zifar" 24–27). The uncertainty about the language behind the reference to the "Chaldean" is transferred into Nelson's English translation, where "caldeo" is sometimes as translated as "Syriac" and sometimes as "Arabic" without any clarification.

referents that results from that ambivalence allows the author of the *Zifar* to evade a direct contraposition between the content of the *Zifar* and cultural and historical reality of Castile and its relationship with Andalusí cultural legacies. The alleged *caldeo* origin of the *Zifar* enables the problematization of the perceived alterity of al-Andalus while considering it along with ideas about ancient Asia and a place of origin of cultural and literary traditions accepted across the religious communities of the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, although the *Zifar* elaborates on assigned and stereotypical ideas about Asia, they do not serve a colonial discourse towards Asia in the same ways that Bhabha describes. Instead, those views of Asia enable the formulation of intercultural relationships within the Iberian Peninsula, in light of a different form of colonialism that resulted from Castilian expansion over formerly Andalusí territories.

The principal force of ambivalence in the *Zifar* is the person presented as “*trasladador*” in the prologue—also mentioned in the last lines of the medieval manuscripts. The word “*trasladador*” refers to a person who conducts a linguistic translation. In the *Zifar*, the forged act of translation is conflated with other types of interventions expressed as coming from a narrative first person within the romance. The changed perspective from a third person who presents the work of the *trasladador* in the prologue to the narrator's first-person within the romance is consistent with offering the romance as a linguistic translation from Arabic. However, the forged character of the act of translation and the contextualizing nature of the interventions of the romance's narrator points to both narrative voices corresponding to that of the author.⁹⁵ Thus, I use *trasladador* to refer to the presence of the anonymous author of the *Zifar* within the work.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Walker notes the reference to the *trasladador* at the end of the romance as another argument in favor of considering that the author and *trasladador* are the same person (27).

⁹⁶ I refer to the anonymous author-*trasladador* using masculine pronouns in an attempt to recognize the overwhelming control that men had in manuscript production during this period. The same circumstance applies to the compiler of the manuscript of the *Crónica de Flores y Blanaflor* discussed in Chapter 4.

Gómez Redondo addresses the relationship of this *trasladador* with the text he allegedly translates, highlighting that “*trasladar*” does not equate Alfonso X’s *translatio* but resorts to a linguistic translation as a gateway to a “conscious form of composition.”⁹⁷ Throughout the romance, the continued interventions of the glossing voice of the *trasladador* support the attempt to separate the romance from the context of fourteenth-century Toledo, passing it as coming from a remote *caldeo* past. Elaborating on materials from various sources, the author-*trasladador* creates a romance about genealogical origins and its transformation that ambivalently addresses the multicultural character of Castile without openly displaying its reliance on Andalusí traditions.

Using an intermediate language was not unusual in translations from Arabic in the Iberian Peninsula. For instance, in twelfth century Toledo, Abraham ibn Daud and Dominicus Gundissalinus collaborated using a romance vernacular as an intermediate oral language between the Arabic source and the Latin written translation (Brasa Díez 592–94). By presenting the alleged translation of the *Zifar* under this multilingual tradition, the author situates the *Zifar* within local practices of cultural transference. This model of mediated translation implies the transition of its contents through the authoritative languages of the Catholic church. This step creates an additional distance between the final result and its Chaldean origin. But the ambivalent tension between distance and familiarity continues to play out. The *trasladador* refers to how the work was perceived before his forged translation:

E porque este libro nunca apareció escrito en este lenguaje fasta agora, nin lo vieron los omes nin lo oyeron, cuidaron algunos que non fueran verdaderas las cosas que se y contienen, nin ay provecho en ellas, non parando mientes al entendimiento de las palabras, nin queriendo curar en ellas. (59, M. 5r)

⁹⁷ “‘trasladar’, que no es la ‘translatio studii’ alfonsí, sino una derivación lógica en la evolución de la prosa romance en la segunda mitad del s. XIII [...]. Aquí, además, se apoya el tópico de ‘traducir la logra de una lengua a otra’, pero, con todo, ‘trasladar’, es el primer paso de esa forma consciente de composición” (“Prólogo”101).

Because up to now this book has never appeared in Spanish [*este lenguaje*, i.e. Castilian], nor have men seen it or heard of it, some will think that the things contained herein are not true, or that there is no benefit in them, because they will not pay attention to the knowledge of what is said here or will refuse to understand it. (7)

The *trasladador* presents the absence of a previous translation into the vernacular of Castile—“este lenguaje,” previously “romance”—as the reason why some who knew about it neglected its value. Within the chain of transmission outlined by the *trasladador*, the intellectual authority of Latin in the context of the fourteenth-century Castile makes it unlikely that such distrustfulness refers to anything other than the Chaldean source.⁹⁸ Similarly, the context makes doubtful the existence of readers of Syriac, Aramaic, ancient Chaldean, or a different language of the Eastern Mediterranean. An ambivalent conflation between *caldeo* and Arabic would emphasize the experience of reading or, more precisely, on deciding to neither pay attention to nor understand the Chaldean text. The decision of the *trasladador* to put the *Zifar* in the vernacular of Castile challenges that attitude. If Alfonso X’s translations stress making knowledge accessible, this forged “translation” underscores the effort to make it truthful by those who already knew *caldeo*, without giving value to its cultural products.

The narrative voice of the author—under the disguise of *trasladador*—connects the historically documented references to Pérez Gudiel in the prologue with the adventures of Zifar and his family. The forged translation turns the cultural and geographical distance between Chaldea and Castile into a closer intervention in the transcultural character of fourteenth-century Castile and, more specifically, the city of Toledo where the *Zifar* was most probably written. Likewise, it intervenes in ongoing debates and tendencies in Toledo, where Mozarabic Christians

⁹⁸ On the authority of Latin, see Szpiech “Latin,” who also address the implications of using Arabic and/or vernacular in Iberian Middle Ages.

continued using Arabic in their daily lives long after the Castilian conquest only to see its authority and use decline in the second half of the thirteenth century.⁹⁹

Despite the tendency to abandon the use of Arabic in daily life among the Mozarabs of Toledo, the bookshelves of Toledo still preserved numerous Arabic books, as shown in the inventories of the library of Gonçalo Pérez Gudiel.¹⁰⁰ Barletta studies the significance of those materials with an analysis of passages of the *Zifar* in light of Arabic commentaries of Aristotle stored in Toledo (“Agency”). Similarly, Harney has demonstrated its reliance on Arabic geography (“More on the Geography”). Before them, the association of some names of the characters with Arabic was successively addressed by González Palencia (345-46), Burke (“names”), and Walker (*Tradition* 33-39). Walker’s approach to this issue has been particularly influential. According to Burke, the Arabic root of the name “Zifar” has ‘journey’ as its semantic core “thus the knight Zifar is in name as well as in fact «el caballero andante»” (*Tradition* 33); his ancestor Tared “has an eminently suitable name, since the Arabic *tarīd* means «expelled» or «banished»” (*Tradition* 34); and other characters and places may be identified with Arabic roots as well.

The reference to an alleged *caldeo* origin situates the romance as neither/both Arabic and non-Arabic. The ambivalent conflation of the two languages and the forged reference to the *Zifar* as a translation connect the romance with a multicultural history of Toledo and the kingdom Castile. By forging a transcultural translation, the author-*trasladador* subtly criticizes arguments against the continuity of such a multicultural history. At the same time, passing as a *trasladador*, the author can detach the content of the romance from the uncertain political circumstances of

⁹⁹ According to Molenat, the use of Arabic among Christian Mozarabs of Toledo only started to decrease in the second half of the thirteenth century and had a strong impact in the local romance vernacular (105–06). On the particularities of this vernacular and its impact in Alfonso X’s work, see Márquez Villanueva (283–302).

¹⁰⁰ Hernández and Linhan include the inventory in their monumental biography of Pérez Gudiel (475–501).

fourteenth-century Castile after the death of Sancho IV in 1295.¹⁰¹ Understanding *caldeo* as Arabic resituates the framework of the *trasladador*'s intention of keeping the memory of "ancient things." Translating puts memory into practice, keeping transcultural exchanges alive. Thus, the remoteness added by forged translation from *caldeo* allows the author to overcome antagonistic attitudes towards the cultural alterity of al-Andalus among Castilian elites through the enactment of a series of ambivalent associations between origin, language, and truthfulness that enunciate and challenge resistances to what may be associated with al-Andalus in the content of the *Zifar*.¹⁰²

So far, I have focused on *caldeo* concerning the relationships between languages and religious groups within the Iberian Peninsula. However, Chaldea's temporal and geographical remoteness is crucial to understanding it as an ambivalent referent for the alterity of Islam in the romance. The adventures of Zifar's family take place across vast Asian spaces during a vague temporality following the arrival of the apostle Bartholomew to India. Although fictional names refer to most places, the *trasladador* intervenes on various occasions to situate them within real-world geography. The absence of Islamic polities in those regions suggests that the action takes place before the spread of Islam in the sixth century. However, there are some elusive references to Islam, mostly but not exclusively as part of the *exempla* inserted in the text. The ambivalence

¹⁰¹ Nieves understands the reference to the translation from *caldeo* in the prologue as participant of the theme of *translatio studii* from non-European origins. Nieves understands the "Oriental" origin of the *caldeo* source literally, assessing its adaptation to a Christian worldview by the *trasladador* as an attempt to teach "universal truths." My analysis shares with Nieves's a willingness to disentangle how the *Zifar* operates within the multilingual and multicultural reality of fourteenth century Castile. The issue of the political context is addressed by Gómez Redondo, Pérez López, and Vaquero.

¹⁰² For Walker, the impact of Arabic in the *Zifar* goes beyond the names of characters and places. He notes stylistic features that considers characteristic of the Arabic language and Andalusí literature (39–55). Wacks expands on the association of the *Zifar* with Andalusí literature with a groundbreaking approach to the transmission of chivalric literature from Christian sources to al-Andalus and, potentially, the back to the *Zifar* ("Popular," *Crusade* 77–80).

between *caldeo* and Arabic reinforces the temporal and spatial ancient coordinates in consonance with ideas about *translatio* discussed in Chapter 2.¹⁰³

Like the ambivalent presence of the Arabic language in the prologue, Chaldea only appears indirectly as a place within the romance. Within the imprecise character of historical geography in medieval Europe, the ancient region of Chaldea overlapped with the area of Mesopotamia, where the Abbasids built the prosperous city of Bagdad and the Abrahamic religions situated important events following the Great Deluge. Even though the *Zifar* does mention Chaldea as a region, one of the longer interventions of the *trasladador* is centered in the actions of various generations spanning from Noah that take place around the region of Chaldea, particularly in Babylon. This section includes a strange reference to a book that only appears in manuscript M:

E fállase por las estorias antiguas que Ninbos el valiente, visnieto de Noé, fue el primero rey del mundo. E llámanle los christianos Ninno. *E es libro fue fecho en la çibdat de Babilonia* la desierta con gran estudio. E començó a labrar una torre contra voluntad de Dios e contra mandamiento de Noé. (79, M. 16r–16v, my emphasis)

It was found in the ancient histories that Ninbros the brave, called Nimrod by the Christians, great-grandson of Noah, was the first king in the world. *With great effort he built the city* [sic] *of Babylon* in the desert and began to construct the tower against the will of God and against the orders of Noah. (22–23, my emphasis)

The passage records the responsibility of Nimrod (“Ninbros/Ninno”) for constructing the Tower of Babel. Likewise, Nimrod is presented as the first ruler of the world. Girón-Negrón notes that this presentation of Nimrod does not correspond to the Christian biblical tradition, proposing that it may come from Hebrew sources (“maldición” 281–83). The departure from the Christian tradition is particularly significant, given the centrality of legitimate rulership as the

¹⁰³ Beyond references to Persia and Babylon in *Libro de las cruces*, Chaldea appears as a place of wisdom in the prologue to Alfonso X’s translation of the *Lapidario* (Rodríguez M. Montalvo 18, fol. 1r). Wise Chaldean giants are the protagonists of a passage of the *General Estoria* (Part 2, vol. 1, 48–56).

issue that articulates the romance's plot. As discussed below, the adventures of Zifar and Roboán lead them to rule over people with different cultural and historical backgrounds. Shifting away from a strictly Christian tradition opens the discourse about legitimate rulership in the romance to the non-Christian communities of Castile, then overruled by lineages and according to principles strange to them before the expansion of the northern Christian kingdoms.

Nimrod's lineage is also recognizable from a transcultural perspective as recognizable as part of shared ideas about the consequences of the so-called Curse of Noah. In the same section of the romance as the previous quotation, the *trasladador* describes Nimrod as a grandson of Ham and an evil ruler. This dynastic origin situates him as a prominent member of the cursed branch of Noah's lineages. I address this issue in more detail below. For now, the connection between Nimrod's lineage and rulership along with the book mentioned in the previous quote are enough to underscore his role in constructing the Tower of Babel. Wagner's edition—translated by Nelson and reprinted by González—wrongly reads “libro” in MS M as “çibdat” (Wagner 36).¹⁰⁴ González Muela's edition corrects the reading, which seems to make little sense in its context.

Whether being there from the initial conception of the work or as a result of a scribal slippage, the reference to a Babylonian book in MS M seems to refer to the source used by the *trasladador* to insert biblical lineages in a work deeply concerned with the consequences of evil rule for forthcoming generations of a ruling dynasty. The *trasladador* had expressed his reliance on a source beyond the alleged *caldeo* romance about Zifar right after presenting his distant ancestor Tared as a wicked ruler of India. Hence the expression “dizen las estorias antiguas”

¹⁰⁴ Instead of “libro,” MS P and the 1512 print read “torre” (“tower,” P: Olsen 12, P. 11v; Cromberger: f. 7r). There is not textual testimony of the word “çibdad” chosen by Wagner. The limited number of witnesses makes difficult determining a prevalent or original reading.

preceding the information about Noah's descendants. Moreover, the fact that the source used in this passage is associated with ancient Chaldea elaborates on the ambivalence of the *caldeo* origin of the *Zifar* by suggesting that part of its content was written in the same temporality and space of Nimrod's evil rule. Thus, the *caldeo* book is a material testimony that keeps the memory of that event and gives credibility to its framing.¹⁰⁵

The distance between Nimrod's Babylon and the writing of the *Zifar* in fourteenth-century Toledo reveals another facet of the ambivalent *caldeo* origin of the romance. According to Abrahamic sacred histories, God's punishment for the attempt to build the Tower of Babel was the separation of the original language of the creation into multiple ones. This punishment aimed to confuse them, making it harder to communicate. The reference to the "libro" in manuscript M situates the source of the *Zifar* in the same context that translation would be needed to mediate linguistic differences. From this association with sacred history—familiar to Christian, Hebrew, and Muslim exegesis—the *Zifar* comes to be conceived as a *caldeo* book translated into the vernacular of Castile. The ambivalence of *caldeo* situates the work within a shared cultural tradition, partially unmaking the effects of the construction of the Tower of Babel if only for those who, regardless of their background, could read the emerging secular language of Castile.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the forged translation from *caldeo* addresses the alterity associated with Arabic in an ambivalent manner. It simultaneously associates the origin of the *Zifar* with the predominant language of al-Andalus and with the remote temporal and spatial referent of ancient Chaldea, at the crossroad of shared cultural referents and communicative barriers between the religious communities coexisting in the kingdom.

¹⁰⁵ The authority of a translated first-person account is also addressed in Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁶ I use "secular" to highlight its lack of use in religious contexts, in contrast with Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin.

During the chivalric adventures of the main characters of the romance, *caldeo* reappears as a language. The *trasladador* mentions *caldeo* language when referring to the existence of two more books (“estorias”) about the sons of Roboán.¹⁰⁷ The two sons are born following at the end of his two major quests. Fortunado, the first son, is born after Roboán’s adventure in the *Ínsulas Dotadas*: “este imperio es de los más viçioisos e muy abondados del mundo, que dizenle las Islas de Çin, e de la otra parte con las Islas de Trenidat e las otras dos escontra oriente” (this empire is one of the most delightful and bountiful in the world, for it is called the Fortunate Islands [Ínsulas Dotadas]. It borders on one side the islands of Sind [Çin] and on the other touches the sea of the empire of Tigrida, and the other two borders are to the east”; 404, M. 183v; 289). As Harney notes, the association of the *Ínsulas Dotadas* with China may follow Arabic sources (“Geography” 211, “More on the Geography” 77–78). Nevertheless, the episode is full of Christian referents and symbolisms.¹⁰⁸

Roboán arrives at the *Ínsulas Dotadas* after a plot organized by jealous fellow knights at the court of the emperor of Tigrida. After reaching the *Ínsulas Dotadas*, Roboán becomes the sexual partner of the empress Nobleça (‘Nobility’) and seems to be in line to become emperor of the land. When Nobleça realizes that she is pregnant, Roboán suggests naming the child “Fortunado.” This name highlights Roboán’s privileged position when engendering his first son. Then, a devil dressed as a maiden tempts him, leading to his failure to comply with Nobleça’s

¹⁰⁷ My approach to the *caldeo* books about Roboán sons is indebted to conversations with Ryan Szpiech about his work in progress on Alfonso X and father-son relationships in medieval Iberia, including the *Zifar*. As part of his exploration of the significance of bastard sons for the royal lineage of Alfonso and Castilian literary culture under their reigns, Szpiech discusses the references to Roboán’ sons as part of “a lingering rhetoric of anxiety and uncertainty, a worry about downfall, the loss of a stability, about impurity and sin. And I situate the *Zifar*’s anxiety as at its core, a genealogical one, a worry about the Arabic origins of foundational Castilian linguistic expression expressed as a worry about the origins of one’s family and the good behavior of one’s sons. The angst of *Zifar* is an angst of early Castilian prose itself, a worry that is more metaphorical than biological, hinging the origins of cultural tradition and prestige” (“Name”).

¹⁰⁸ On the Arabic sources, see Harney. This episode has received significant critical attention due, in part, to its Christian symbolism and marvelous character. See Ayerbe-Chaux, Burke (“Meaning”), Galván, González (*caballero* 98–110), Lucía Megías (“descripción”), Walker (90–97).

requests. Roboán is immediately expelled from the Ínsulas Dotadas. The existence of “Fortunado” would serve as a living memory of Roboán’s failure. The *trasladador* confirms the name of the child while introducing his future deeds:

E él [Roboán] respondióle: “Díganle Fortunado.” E así le dixieron después que fue nascido. Del qual ay un libro de la su estoria en caldeo, de quantas buenas cavallerías e quantos buenos fechos fizo después que fue de hedat e fue en demanda de su padre. (403, M. 183r)

He [Roboán] answered here “Let him be named Fortunate.”

And thus they named him after he was born, and there is a book in Arabic [*caldeo*] of the numerous deeds of chivalry and other good deeds he accomplished after he came of age and went in quest of his father. (288)

After his father was unable to fulfill the expectations of Nobleça, Fortunado is relegated to a destiny of failure. His *caldeo* book narrates an unfinished quest to find his father as defining his existence. When the rest of his family is reunited towards the end of the romance, Fortunado is not mentioned. His absence signals that he is not considered part of the family lineage. Even though this quote is the only reference to Fortunado in the romance, the existence of the *caldeo* book presents him as equally virtuous as other members of the dynasty from which he is excluded. Even in disgrace, the descendants of *Zifar* embody chivalric ideals, a situation that contrasts with *Zifar*’s position at the beginning of the romance, as discussed in the following section.

Following the episode of the Ínsulas Dotadas, Roboán returns to Tigrida where he ends up named heir of the childless emperor. After Roboán inherits Tigrida, his subjects ask him to marry. The new emperor requests a marriage with Seringa—a queen he had previously served—and they engender Fijo de Bendición (‘Son of Blessing’). His birth culminates the recovery of the dynasty’s royal status by *Zifar* and its ascent to the imperial ranks by Roboán.

The *trasladador* mentions the existence of another *caldeo* book about Fijo de Bendición: “[D]e que dizen que fue fecho un libro en caldeo en que cuenta toda la su vida e muchos buenos fechos que fizo” (“[O]f whom they say a book es written in Arabic (*caldeo*) in which is told all his life and the many good deeds he accomplished”; 434 M. 195r; 312). The location of this reference in the last folio of the medieval manuscripts serves as an invitation to continue reading about the deeds of Zifar’s lineage. However, there is no indication that either the book about Fijo de Bendición or Fortunado’s book was translated into Castilian. Therefore, if accepting the existence of all these forged books, any potential reader would need the *caldeo* language to read more about Zifar’s lineage. Nevertheless, this limitation is not a concern for the *trasladador*, who does not refer Castilian translations of any of those *estorias*. This should not come as a surprise. With the resolution of the dynastic heritages posed by the evilness of Tared and Nimrod, Fortunado and Fijo de Bendición’s function to confirm the continuity into the future of the newly transformed lineage.

Highlighted by the forged character of translation in the romance and its linguistic and geographical ambivalence, the *caldeo* origin of the *estorias* mentioned by the *trasladador* encapsulates the challenges raised by cultural alterity within Castile. From the multilingual and transcultural intellectual circles of Toledo, the *trasladador* exposes the challenge of understanding alterity without translating it into a recognizable language. The forged translation of the *Zifar* functions as a tool that, coming from the long history of transcultural exchanges in the Iberian Peninsula, relays in a forged textual transmission to situate in the remoteness of ancient Asia an internal struggle with alterity. The ambivalent “Chaldean” origin of the romance engages with the diverse communities of—Jewish, Islamic, but also Christian—Castile as an integral but not equal part of the kingdom of Castile. Translation makes that diversity

comprehensible but bridging the difference between integral and equal requires transformation. The romance addresses this issue through the problems raised by dynastic inheritance discussed in the following section.

Dynastic Heritages

As mentioned above, ancestry is crucial for understanding the decision of Zifar to leave his native land in India. As the knight plans to leave his native India to shine as a knight and become a king, the *trasladador* introduces the reference to the lineages spanning from Noah. Both dynasties include unfitting rulers—Tared and Nimrod—whose actions lead their relatives to leave their native land and relocate the dynasty. With its references to Noah’s family, the *Zifar* introduces Abrahamic history into the romance’s fictionalized rendering of Asian geography and history. Yet, the *trasladador* establishes a direct link between both lineages.¹⁰⁹ The connection between the two temporalities is represented in Table 3.2.

Noah is at the top, with his three sons engendering their respective progeny in their column. The romance only refers up to the fourth generation after Noah without addressing the descendants of Japheth—who, according to the exegesis of Abrahamic sacred texts, populated Europe. Instead, it focuses on the descendants of Shem and Ham—who were thought to inhabit Asia and Africa, respectively. In doing so, it creates an apparent dichotomy into the reprehensible lineage of Ham and the virtuous one spanning from Shem.

¹⁰⁹ The romance’s association of Zifar’s Indian dynasty with the sacred history of the Abrahamic religions has received minimal critical attention. Hernández suggests possible sources for the section I discuss in the following pages, without addressing the significance of this section for romance (“alegoría” 11–13). From a different perspective, Gómez Redondo, studies the problems faced by the family of Zifar in relation to the internal problems of the royal family of Castile since Sancho IV’s rebellion against his father Alfonso.

Table 3.2 Lineage of Noah according to the *Libro del caballero Zifar*

	Noé (Noah)	
Jafet (Japheth)	Sen (Shem)	Can (Ham)
	Asur (Ashur) [second son]	Cus (Cush)
	... ¹¹⁰	Ninbrot ¹¹¹ (Nimrod)
	Albarheme el Mayor	
	...	
	Tared	
	...	
	Zifar's grandfather	
	(No info about Zifar's father)	
	Zifar, married to Grima	

As part of this first passage of the *Zifar* discussing the descendance of Noah, the *trasladador* addresses conflicts among his family. According to his narration, the unfit rule of Nimrod as the first king of the world incited his relative Ashur to migrate from Babylon to Niniveh. Later on, Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the city would force another migration towards the Indus River, whose name attributes to Noah. Finally, a group of "gentiles" crossed the river to become the first "Indians" ("Indios"). The passage includes descriptions of the qualities of the people of India that stress their intellectual achievements. In this regard, the excursus elaborates on ideas about the differences between human groups akin to those discussed in Chapter 2. As in the *Libro de las cruces*, the *trasladador* refers to ancient Indians as "los primeros sabios que çertificaron el sol e los planetas después del diluvio" ("the first sages that studied the sun and planets after the deluge"; 80, M. 17r; my trans.). The reference to the deluge

¹¹⁰ The number of generations between Assur and Tared and between Tared and Zifar is not specified. Contreras Martín offers a slightly different genealogical reconstruction (156). As Contreras Martín points out, the genealogical origin of Zifar as descendant of Sen (Shem) makes him a Semite (157), thus making the Christian knight descendant of the same branch that Christians associated with Jews and Muslims. On the anti-Jewish aspects of the *Zifar*, see Girón-Negrón ("Maldición").

¹¹¹ Also spelled as Ninbos, Ninbrot, and Ninbot. A passage mentions that the Christians called him "Ninno." (79, M. 16r–16v).

in this quote is part of a succession of events that binds together sacred history, ideas about the authority of Asian knowledge, and the historical background of Zifar's lineage. The intersection of these discourses turns the excursus into a significant point to bring together the genealogical problems that articulate the romance.¹¹²

The movement from religious to non-religious history in the passage is mediated by the authority of Abuit, who is presented as “un sabio de las Indias antiguas” (“a learned man from the ancient Indias” (80, M. 17r; my trans.). Harney discusses possible sources of this passage in the *Zifar*, comparing its content with the work of Andalusī historian Abū ‘Ubayd ‘Abd Allāh al-Bakrī (ca. 1040–1094). Harney’s findings provide yet another example of the reliance of the *Zifar* on Andalusī intellectual history.¹¹³ If we accept Harney’s initial identification of Abuit with al-Bakrī, presenting this author as originally from India continues the *trasladador*’s strategy of displacing the alterity of Andalusī referents into remote Asian spaces and temporalities. However, this point is complicated by a later discovery from Harney that associates the content of the excursus with the work of Baghdādī scholar Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Mas‘ūdī and his *Murūj ad-Dahab wa-Ma‘ādin al-Jawhar* (The Meadows of Gold). Contrarily to the name of Abū ‘Ubayd ‘Abd Allāh al-Bakrī, there is nothing in the name of al-Mas‘ūdī that justifies referring to him as Abuit in the *Zifar*. The conflation of the Andalusī al-Bakrī and the Persian al-Mas‘ūdī parallels the distance between the Castilian production of the romance and its forged Chaldean

¹¹² Castaño Navarro underscores the association between geography and genealogy in this passage, without expanding on the implications of the relationship between them.

¹¹³ In this and the following passages, I refer to Harney’s points in two related articles, “Geography” and “More on the Geography.” Following Menéndez Pidal, Hernández identifies Abuit with al-Bakrī as well (“Alegoría” 12, bibliographical details in 19n18). Harney refers to this section as the first “geographical excursus” of the romance. Harney’s research on the geography of the *Zifar* provides an outstanding framework for understanding the *Zifar* as the result of transcultural intellectual exchanges. Coussemacker expands on Harney’s findings about the geography of the romance with a focus on cultural identity, particularly in relation to likely Mozarabic identity of the anonymous author.

origin. Furthermore, the alleged Indian identity of Abuit mimics that of Zifar, whose virtuous character is historically backed by his remote ancestors.

The implicit distant ancestors of Zifar are none other than the “gentiles” who crossed the Indus River, according to the authority of the wise Abuit. The passage continues mentioning that they elected as their first king a wise man named Albarheme el Mayor. His wise rule serves as a counterpart to the recklessness of Nimrod. This comparison encapsulates exegetical interpretations of the differences between their lineages as descendants, respectively, of Noah’s sons Shem and Ham. This distinction between the descendants of Ham and Shem is critical to understanding how lineage, race, and travel intersect in the actions of the wandering knights Zifar and Roboán. The description of the “gentiles” of India attributed to Abuit serves as a transition between the biblical root of ideas about embodied alterity grounded in the legend of the “Curse of Ham” and those derived from anthropological and scientific theories:

Çiertamente, de antigüedad fue India fuente e manera de çientia, e fueron omes de grant mesura e de buen seso, maguer que son loros, que tiran quanto a los negros quanto en la color, porque con ellos Dios nos guarde de las maneras de ellos e de su torpedat; e dióles mesura e bondad en manera e en seso más que a muchos blancos. E algunos de los astrólogos dizen que las Indias ovieron estas bondades porque la provinçia de India a ý por natural partiçión Saturno e Mercurio mesclado con Saturno. E sus reys fueron sienpre de buenas costunbres e estudiaron toda vía en dinidad. E por eso son omes de buena fe e de buena creençia e creen todos en Dios muy bien, fuera ende pocos de ellos, que han la creençia de Sabaa, que adoran las planetas e las estrellas. (81, M. 17v)

Of course, from time immemorial, India has been the source and way of knowledge. The Indians were men of great moderation and great intelligence. Although they are dark-skinned and resemble negroes in color, for they share common borders with them, God protected them from the negroes’ way and their stupidity. He gave them good deportment and goodness in manners, and intelligence more than to many whites. Some of the astrologers say that the Indians had these good traits because the province of India falls naturally under Saturn and Mercury [...].¹¹⁴ Their kings were always well born and

¹¹⁴ I omit a section added by Cromberger to his print edition without a manuscript antecedent: “They acquired their dark complexion from Saturn; they are wise, discreet, and clever, having obtained these traits from mercury, mixed with Saturn” (f. 7v). Interestingly, this section participates of deterministic views about collective identity from astrology, the same discipline of the *Libro de las cruces* discussed in Chapter 2. More research would be necessary to trace the use of astrology and its application in sixteenth century Castile.

believers in God and for this reason are men of good faith and sagacious, and all believe in God deeply. Therefore, there are a few of them who have any belief in Sabaa and worship the planets and stars. (24)

The description of the ancient people of India in these terms reinforces their association with astronomy in the translation of the *Libro de las cruces* discussed in Chapter 2. The *Zifar* puts astrological expertise in relation to ideas about embodied alterity that cast racialized black skin as an index of less intellectual development. The darker skin of Indians is described as breaking the universality of that assumption. Similarly, the reference to the people of Sabaa creates a distinction between studying the stars for scientific or religious purposes.¹¹⁵ Besides providing valuable information about the racialization of alterity in medieval Iberia, this passage addresses its connection to lineage as part of the broader role of dynastic continuity that frames the excursus. The reference to the wise and pious Indian kings traces the next steps of the lineage of Shem in India after the “gentiles” that Albarheme led. Right afterward, the *trasladador* contrasts their virtue with King Tared, a direct ancestor of Zifar. Tared is singled out from the succession of rulers as someone with bad habits or “mal acostumbrado.” Those bad habits led his lineage to lose its royal status. As I discuss below, they substantially impact Zifar’s dynastic heritage. Nevertheless, the *trasladador* immediately describes Zifar as “bien acostumbrado,” in exact opposition to his ancestor Tared (82, M. 18r; 24).¹¹⁶

The sharp contrast between Zifar’s and Tared’s habits accounts for the role that individual merit has in the disparate legacy they transmit to their descendants. These divergent

¹¹⁵ Harney discusses this passage with important notes about the relationship between astrology and race (“More on the Geography”). His article includes a detailed analysis on a section of five kings of the world, whose Westward decadence is parallel to the hierarchy of nobility between peoples in the second chapter of the *Libro de las cruces* addressed in the previous chapter.

¹¹⁶ Nepaulsingh associates the name of Tared with Thare, father of Abraham, highlighting another intriguing biblical reference (91–92). Hernández notes the presence of Thare in Alfonso X’s *General estoria* (“Alegoría” 12–13). There, Thare creates idols later destroyed by his son Abraham. These actions led him to escape from Ur and resettle in Aram (Part 1, vol. 1, 165–74). The parallelisms between the story of Thare and Zifar are intriguing, particularly when considering that the Abuit referred by the *trasladador* may be the same Abu Ubeit from whom, according to Hernández, the *General estoria* claims to reconstruct the life of Thare.

legacies enable the problematization of genealogy as a bearer of fixed identities in the romance. As discussed below, the knight Zifar departs from a situation where his social possibilities are limited by the heritage he receives from Tared. However, his deeds lead to the abandonment of that inheritance as he reciprocally transforms and is transformed by his wandering travels. Before addressing those transformations in more detail, it is pertinent to address the implications of embodied alterity in the geographical and genealogical excursus discussed in this section.

The reference to the black-skinned Indians in favorable terms is concurrent with Alfonso X's the *Libro de las cruces*. Racialized alterity sets a collective horizon of expectations for individuals belonging to that group.¹¹⁷ Skin color results in a visually identifiable index of embodied alterity. However, the representation of dynastic heritage in the *Zifar* suggests that ancestry has a lasting impact on an individual's inherent qualities beyond visible body features. This genealogical condition points to strategies of racialization that are not limited to the superficiality of the body but rely on the interiorization of alterity as a moral quality transmitted from generation to generation within a patrilineal conception of lineage.¹¹⁸ When it comes to the lineage of Noah, the *trasladador* refers to the Curse of Ham as part of an explanation of Nimrod's failed enterprise of building the Tower of Babel. As a punishment to humankind, God divides the original language of creation into multiple ones. These languages are distributed

¹¹⁷ Another passage of the *Zifar* refers to the three different regions of India identifying one with black people: "E dicen las estorias antiguas que tres Indias son: la una comarca con la otra de los negros; e de esta India fue el caballero Zifar, onde fue el rey Tared, que fue ende rey" ("Ancient history says that there are three Indias: one which borders on the land of the negroes [...]. The Knight Zifar was from this India where Tared was king"; 79, M. 16r; 22). The differentiation between three "Indias" was common in medieval Europe (O'Doherty 33–38). Embodied Asian alterities reappear in a brief geographical excursus at the end of the romance: "a la parte de mediodía son de Agas de de Almus e de la partida de los Enopes, a que dizen Canracales porque comen los omes blancos do los pueden aver" ("the part of the south, the lands of Agas and Almus, which are the share of the Ethiopians who are called cannibals because they eat white men whenever they can get them"; 425, M. 190r; 306). The references to those eaten as *blancos* (white) implicitly signals a racialized alterity attributed to the "Canracales." Nevertheless, more research would be needed to confirm their identification with the Ethiopians proposed in Nelson's translation.

¹¹⁸ I address the possibility of ideas about lineage from feminine lines and practices in the next chapter.

among the descendants of three sons of Noah. The *trasladador* explains this major event of the sacred history of Christian, Jews, and Muslims alike as follows:

E partiólos en setenta lenguajes: e los treinta e seis en el linage de Sen, e los dize seis en el linage de Can, fijo de Noé, e los dize ocho en el linage de Jafet. E este linage de Can, fijo de Noé, ovo la mayor partida de estos lenguajes por la maldición que le dio su padre en el temporal, que le erró en dos maneras: lo primero, que yogo con su muger en el arca, onde ovo un fijo a que dixieron Cus, cuyo fijo fue este rey Ninbrot. (79, M. 16v)

He divided them into seventy languages: thirty-six in the lineage of Shem, sixteen in the line of Canaan [sic for Ham¹¹⁹], son of Noah, and eighteen in the lineage of Japheth. And this lineage of Canaan [sic, for Ham], had the greatest share of these languages through the curse that his father put on him at that time; for he had sinned in two ways—the first when he lay down with his mother in the ark where she had a son named Cush, whose son was this King Nimrod. (23)

The uneven number of languages assigned to each branch of Noah's lineage underscores the assertion that not all of them were equally guilty. The discrepancy between the major number of languages for those from Shem in the full count and the subsequent clarification saying that those from Ham received most of them is particularly notable. This clarification blames Nimrod, not primarily for his own ambition but for the sins of his grandson Ham. The precedence given to Nimrod's inherited fault is textually reinforced by referring to Ham's misbehaviors *before* the sin that God was punishing humanity for, the construction of the Tower of Babel. Although the events of Babel are a consequence of Nimrod's unfitnes to rule, the sins of his ancestor Ham are the ones that merit a more severe divine punishment for their lineage.

The relationship between the Curse of Ham and medieval ideas about races has been extensively traced by Goldenberg, who situates the *Zifar* within the longer trajectory of the association of Ham's lineage with blackness. As Goldenberg notes, the *Zifar* does not make an explicit connection between the consequences of the Curse of Ham and black-skinned people. This situation leads Goldenberg to conclude that "It thus seems doubtful that we can assume a

¹¹⁹ Nelson turns "Can" into "Canaan." However, "Can" is an alternate spelling of "Cam", the Spanish name of Ham.

Course of Ham in the *Zifar*” (*Black* 116, see also 135–36 and *passim*). In my view, the emphasis of a transmittable curse through generations of a lineage functions as a racializing principle in the *Zifar*, even if the romance does not present Ham’s behavior as the origin of ideas about race around black skin. Thinking about medieval racial thinking beyond externally visible body features sheds light on the importance of lineage and genealogical thinking in defining the alterity of al-Andalus in Castilian sources.

Besides Goldenberg, scholars such as Akbari and Braude have discussed the close relationship between the Curse of Ham and medieval geography and ethnography, either in Christian or Islamic contexts.¹²⁰ According to thinkers of both faiths, those coming from Shem inhabited Asia, the lineage of Japhet migrated into Europe. Meanwhile, the descendants of Ham occupied the lands of Africa. Thus, the aftermath of the Tower of Babel led to the origin of both linguistic (cultural) and racialized (embodied) alterity. At the crossroad of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic intellectual traditions, the *Zifar* participates in the imagination of embodied alterity around the theme of the “Curse of Ham.” The *trasladador* elaborates on this issue with his description of Ham’s sins:

E maldixo estonçe Can en los bienes tenporales; e otrosí dizen los judios que fue maldicho Can porque yogo con la cabdiella estando en el arca. E la maldición fue ésta: quantas yoguiese con la cabdiella fincasen lisiados [...] E por ende este rey Ninbrot, que fue su nieto, fue malo contra Dios e quiso semejar a la raís de su avuelo Can onde veniera. (79–80, M. 16v)

And then he was cursed in all worldly things. Furthermore, the Jews say that Canaan [sic, for Ham] was cursed because he lay with the wife of the leader in the ark. And the course was this: as many times as he lay with the wife of the leader [*cabdiella*], that many times would they tear each other apart [*fincasen lisiados*] [...]. Therefore this King Nimrod

¹²⁰ Focusing on a later period, Wacks piece of public scholarship “The Curse of Ham in Medieval Iberia and the Enslavement of Black Africans” traces the impact of Jewish ideas about the Curse of Ham up to the *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, a foundational work of early Iberian colonialism in Africa. It is currently accessible at <https://davidwacks.uoregon.edu/2020/12/30/ham/>.

who was his grandson sinned against God by following the example of his grandfather Canaan, from whom he descended. (23)

The passage highlights the transmission of the negative behavior of Ham into Nimrod as an inheritable embodied heritage. This continuity is reinforced by the contiguous narration of Nimrod's sin of setting up the construction of the Tower of Babel and Ham's suggested sexual intercourse with the *cabdiella*. The sin of Ham results in a "curse" ("maldición") for his lineage identifiably in their character, as exemplified by Nimrod. Furthermore, using the adjective "*lisiado*" turns this heritage into physical terms. Girón-Negrón suggests the rabbinic tradition of the Talmud of Babylon as the source of this passage. The source clarifies the meaning of the expression "fincasen lisiados" as a reference to the physical attachment between male and female dogs during intercourse ("maldición" 283–85).¹²¹ Besides the reference to the Talmud of Babylon, the expression "fincasen lisiados" may have been understood as an adverse physical condition that an individual would have to suffer for the rest of his life, a sense that appears five times in Alfonso X's *Libro conplido de los juizios de las estrellas* (Complete Book on the Judgment of the Stars, 1254).¹²² The succession of sins of Ham and Nimrod expresses a conception of genealogical inheritance that results in a transmissible embodied alterity. Furthermore, it leads to a decisive moment in the emergence of cultural alterity, the separation of the universal tongue, and the subsequent distribution of humankind out of the shared space of Babylon and Chaldea.

After the events of Babel and the separation of tongues, the *trasladador* describes the displacement of Shem's second son Ashur out of Babylon and the collective migration of his

¹²¹ This clarifies the reference to the "cabdiella" in the passage, a word that can refer to the wife of the "cabdiello" or 'leader,' but is also to the feminine form of 'can' or "dog." Nelson's translation of *cabdilla* as "wife of the leader" is accurate but falls short in suggesting the ambiguity between bestiality and incest as the sin of Ham. For the sake of simplicity, I have cut a part of the passage that refers to a Christian saying about dogs ("canes").

¹²² The *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* reveals the use of "lisiado" in two late fourteenth century documents with a closer association with human lineage and engendering.

descendants from Nineveh to the other side of the Indus River to connect the ancient lineages of Abrahamic sacred histories with the knight Zifar, whose family history had triggered the inclusion of the geographical and genealogical excursus:

E este cavallero Zifar, segunt se falla en las estorias antiguas fue del linage del rey Tared, que se perdió por sus malas costumbres, pero que otros reys de su linage de éste ovo y ante muy buenos e bien acostunbrados; mas la raíz de los reyes de los linages se derraiga e se abaxa por dos cosas: lo uno por las malas costumbres, e lo otro por grant pobredat. E así, el rey Tared, comoquier que el rey su padre le dexara rico e muy poderoso, por sus malas costumbres llegó a podredat e óvose de perder, así como lo ya contó el avuelo del cavallero Zifar segunt oyestes; de guisa que los de su linage nunca podieron cobrar aquel logar que el rey Tared perdió. (79, M. 16r)

This Knight Zifar, according to ancient history, was descended from King Tared, who was ruined because of his evil traits. However, other kings of his lineage before him were good and enlightened. But the foundations of kings and royalty are uprooted and humbled on account of two things: one is evil character and the other is extreme poverty. Thus King Tared, although the king, his father, left him very rich and powerful, became poor and was overthrown through his evil ways just as the grandfather of the Knight Zifar has already related, as you heard; so that his descendants never were able to regain that high position that King Tared lost. (22)

Here, Zifar's ancestor Tared appears as the origin of a negative outcome for the whole dynasty. The consequences of his "evil traits" or "malas costumbres" outline a theory of rulership whose metaphors remit to medieval genealogical thinking. Kingship is described as a moment of origin, a "root" (*raíz*) that may be "uprooted" (*derraiga*) by the bad habits or poverty of individuals of a given dynasty. This framework is linked with the story of Zifar's family origins by the connector "*e así*" ("thus") that introduces the actions of Tared and its consequences as logical but also as an illustration of the concepts explained. Besides the traditional articulation of rulership along genealogical lines, this theoretical passage elaborates on the irreparable consequences of Tared's actions which none of his descendants could undo or reverse. This genealogical context constitutes the point of departure of the romance plot, whose

adventures will lead Zifar and Roboán to respectively recover the royal position lost by Tared and a rightful rule over the Chaldean lands first ruled by Ham's grandson Nimrod.

The inclusion of the *estorias* about the lineage of Ham immediately after defining the reasons for dynastic decadence expands on the idea of evilness as indelibly carried generation after generation. This naturalization of the consequences of individual actions is reinforced by the arboreal metaphors shared by the brief theory of dynastic decadence just quoted and the later characterization of Nimrod as someone who “quiso semejar a la raíz de su avuelo Can” (“wanted to resemble the root of his grandfather Ham”; 80, M. 16v; my trans.). Even if common in medieval ideas about lineage, the repetition of the references to ancestry as a “root” puts in relation the authority of sacred history with the decadence of Tared's lineage. Notably, Zifar's grandfather is the figure who introduced the problem of ancestry, functioning as a counterpart to the evilness of Nimrod's grandfather:

[Y]o, seyendo moço pequeño en casa de mi avuelo, oí dezir que oyera a su padre que venía de linage de reyes, e yo, como atrevido, pregunté que cómo se perdiera aquel linage, que fuera despuesto, e que feziera rey a un cavallero simple [...]. “E si nos de tant gran logar venimos—dixe—, ¿cómo fincamos pobres?” Respondió mi avuelo; dixo que por maldat de aquel rey onde desçendimos, “ca por la su maldat nos abaxaron así como tú vees; e çertas non he esperança—dixo mi abuelo—que vuestro linaje e nuestro cobre fasta que otro venga de nos que sea contrario de aquel rey e faga bondat e aya buenas costumbres. (77, M. 15r)

[W]hen I was a small boy in my grandfather's house, I heard that his father had said that he came from royal ancestry. I audaciously asked how that royal lineage had been lost [so that a king was deposed and turned into a simple knight] [...]. “And if we came from such high position,” I said, “why are we poor?” My grandparent answered: “It was through the evil of the king from whom we are descended that we have come to such humble station as you now see. And I in truth have no hope that I will regain your rightful inheritance and ours until another member of our family comes who is the opposite of that deposed king—one who does good deeds and is virtuous. (20–21; in brackets, my trans.)

The familiar space of the grandfather's house introduces Zifar into the origins of his lineage. There, Zifar asks him about the decadence of his dynasty, receiving an answer not only

for his inquiry but to the general problem of the “uprooting” of lineage and the naturalization of individual actions as an embodied heritage to be transmitted to the descendants. The grandparent’s hope for someone who would change the family’s destiny is the stimulus that puts the romance in motion. The dynastic *estorias* of Tared/Zifar and Ham/Nimrod articulate direct transmission from grandfather to grandchildren as the point of departure for the creation of longer genealogical implications. The evil character of Ham as a grandfather finds its counterpart in the role played by Zifar’s grandparent as the messenger of the possibility of a member of the lineage who would return the dynasty to his previous heights. The parallelisms between the two families consolidate an inheritable embodied heritage that Zifar and Roboán try and get to overcome throughout the romance.

Aiming to pursue a chivalric quest—referred as “demanda” in this episode (77, M. 15v)—outside of his land of origin, Zifar emulates the path chosen by Ashur in the *Zifar*’s narration of the Curse of Ham. Whereas Ashur’s migration leads to the first group of gentiles moving into India, the adventures of the romance end up with Zifar’s son, Roboán, following the opposite route to rule over Tigrida (also spelled as Triguida and Triguiada), around the ancient biblical places where the critical events of the Curse of Ham and the Nimrod’s attempt to build the Tower of Babel took place.¹²³

The reconstruction of the biblical lineages spanning from Noah and the unfitness of Zifar’s ancestor King Tared problematize familial relationships, putting in conversation the differences within humanity and the consequences of individual actions.¹²⁴ The result of this

¹²³ The name of this empire is explained in relation to the Tigris River: “Este inperio de Triguida tomó el nombre de este río Triguis, que es uno de los quatro ríos que salen del paraíso terrenal” (“This empire of Tigrida took its name from the Tigris River, which is one of the four rivers that originates in the earthly paradise”; 373, M. 172r; 267). I refer to it as Tigrida to preserve this etymological association.

¹²⁴ Szpiech emphasizes the connection of the evilness of Nimrod and Tared with the curse that Zifar suffers: “Zifar’s family curse was to have returned to the evil of Nimrod, which was the very evil that led to the tower of Babel in the first place” (“Second Sons”).

intermingling of sacred history with the internal struggle of an Indian dynasty is an allegorical narration of the rise to power of the exemplary knights Zifar, Garfín, and Roboán. This allegorical character emerges from the possibility of reading the work as a response to the consequences of Castilian struggle with the legacy of al-Andalus.¹²⁵ The need of Castilian elites to rule over territories previously controlled by Muslims raised the challenge of dealing with a local population used to different social rules and practices. This issue is problematized in the romance through the path that Zifar and Roboán follow until reaching positions of rulership over subjects outside of their native land.

Ruling over Strange Lands

For the knight Zifar, the relationship between rulership, individual actions, and dynastic heritage addressed in the previous section takes the form of an unfortunate recurrent event. Every horse he rides dies ten days later. It is difficult to find a more damaging situation for a member of the chivalric class. Scholars have pursued different avenues to explain the significance of the death of the horses in the *Zifar*. Walker puts the death of Zifar's horses in direct relation to the poverty of Zifar, proposing a possible correlation with one of the stories of the *'Alf Laylah wa-Laylah* (One Thousand and One Nights). He also suggests a relationship with an earlier Castilian

¹²⁵ The allegorical character of the *Zifar* is studied at length by Burke and Hernández (“allegory,” “*libro*”). Even if arriving to different conclusions, their focus on medieval exegesis and rhetoric explains the work within a Christian framework with fine analysis and erudition. Gómez Redondo considers the romance the first example of “allegorical fiction” in Castilian. According to him, its allegorical character results from the exegetical guidance that the work offers to decipher its content in relation to the political circumstances of the kingdom, more specifically to defend the position of María de Molina after his son Enrique IV took control of the throne (“*El libro*”). My references to the use of allegory are closer to the position of Gómez Redondo. However, they do not propose an allegorical reading of the *Zifar* as a whole. Rather, I consider that some sections of the romance may have been read allegorically by its early readers, not only in relation to Christian ethics or recent political events, but also regarding the place of Andalusí traditions within the Christian kingdom of Castile. I concur with Wacks in that “we can read Zifar as an allegory for the Castilian appropriation of Andalusí cultural capital during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as part of the intellectual conquest that came in the wake of the military conquest of al-Andalus” (*Crusade* 72).

version of the legend of St. Eustache known as “Plaçidas” (*Tradition* 66–69).¹²⁶ The increased economic pressure that the death of the horses puts on the king, responsible for the equipment of his knights, exposes Zifar to constant criticism from his peers, making his situation at the court unsustainable (60–62, M. 5v–7r; 8–10). Thus, it appears as a manifestation of the importance of poverty in the decadence of lineages explained by the *trasladador* in the brief theory of rulership analyzed in the previous section of this chapter.

The death of the horses—an appendix assembled to his knightly body¹²⁷—draws attention toward the corporality of the wicked heritage that Zifar received from his ancestor Tared. I refer to this embodied—coming from his body—heritage as a “curse.”¹²⁸ This curse is brought to light through the physical contact between human and animal flesh, without which Zifar cannot perform according to his social rank. Coming from his genealogical origins, the death of the characters acts as a transmittable curse akin to what the *Zifar* expresses about the impact of Ham’s actions on his descendants.

If both lineages share an inheritable trait, they diverge in the content of such a trait. While the descendants of Ham are described as inherently evil, the “curse” that Zifar suffers is not reflected in his ethics but the ability to act on them to demonstrate his virtue. The divergent expressions of embodied heritages between the two lineages exemplify a transformable character of alterity distinctive in ideas about race developed in the Iberian Middle Ages. The chivalric adventure that Zifar plans on pursuing to overcome the consequences of his inherited course spans from that transformable conception of alterity. Only by demonstrating the limits of his

¹²⁶ The association of the death of the horses with the legend of St. Eustachy was first proposed by Wagner (*Sources* 21). Arbesú uses textual analysis to persuasively question the extent of *Zifar*’s reliance on those sources (“muerte”).

¹²⁷ I follow here Jeffrey J. Cohen’s analysis of the relationship between knight and horse in the Middle Ages departing from Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “assemblage” (“Inhuman”). Duby’s foundational study of medieval chivalry reconstructs the development of chivalry with a strong focus on ideas about lineage and nobility (59–80).

¹²⁸ The characterization of the death of the horses as a “curse” has received either support or resistance from various scholars. Wacks is among those who had also considered this event as a “curse” (*Crusade* 61).

alterity can he escape the downward implications that Tared's evil actions have over the members of his family and transform the lineage.¹²⁹

In the absence of notable visible physical attributes, the romance relies on the adjective “*estraña/o*” to underscore Zifar and his family's alterity while traveling away from their native Indian land. I translate “*estraña*” and “*estraño*” as “strange” in an attempt to stress a lack of familiarity with their customs. However, the use of the word in the romance suggests a perception of foreignness rooted in origin from a different place.¹³⁰ “*Estraña*” and “*estraño*” are used eight times to refer to lands (“*tierra/s*”), with six of them describing the origin of Zifar, Grima, or Roboán.¹³¹ Likewise, there are at least twenty-three uses of “*estraña/o*” to describe individuals or groups of people as “knight/s,” “lady,” “man/men,” or “people” (“*cavallero/s*,” “*dueña*,” “*ome/s*,” and “*gente*”). Fourteen refer to Zifar, Grima, or Roboán, with six more coming from the *exempla* and only three describing other main plot characters.

While numbers do not tell the whole story, they show that Zifar and his family are repeatedly perceived as others. They suggest the extent to which that Zifar's family is marked as different along their route, something confirmed by the analysis in the following pages of some passages in which their strangeness is stressed. As the romance progresses, the “strange” alterity

¹²⁹ The importance given to issues associated with the theme of the “Curse of Ham” is parallel to Tared's wicked heritage. This association shows how medieval racialization processes were not exclusively reliant on physical features, most notably skin color. The association of the Ham's offspring with Africa and black skin has been properly studied as an element of ideas about race in the Middle Ages (see Akbari 38–43, Braude). I do not have the space to develop the implications of this approach to race here, but it is noteworthy that the references to the “curse of Ham” in the *Zifar* do not lead to explicit indication of a visible manifestation of alterity, either through skin color or otherwise. This does not mean that those ideas were not implicit. Black skin is mentioned several times in the *Zifar*, as in the description of the three “Indias” quoted above. Nevertheless, it would be limiting to think about medieval race focusing solely on skin. It is my contention that in medieval Iberia embodied alterity based in genealogy *may* racialize individuals or groups, even if there is no visible indication for the external viewer.

¹³⁰ Nelson does not offer a consistent translation of “*estraña/o*.” Besides “strange,” other words include “foreign,” “unknown,” and “visiting.”

¹³¹ 83, M. 19r; 127, M. 44r; 177, M. 70v; 232, M. 101v; 350, P. 155v; and 370, M. 170r. The other two refer to a land of origin of characters of an embedded *exemplum* (69, M. 10v; 215, M. 91r).

of the traveling Indian family reconfigures the reality of the lands they end up ruling after demonstrations of Christian virtue and chivalric prowess.¹³²

To take a closer look at how the place of origin of the Zifar family problematizes alterity, I turn to two episodes where the word *estraña/o* defines Zifar and Grima's interaction with the people they encounter. The first episode takes place in the town of Galapia, the first one they arrive at after leaving their native land. The second one corresponds to the events leading to them becoming rulers of the kingdom of Mentón. Then, I move to the significance of Roboán's "strangeness" to his inheritance of the imperial title of Tigrida. The three characters follow separate paths that lead them to circumstances where their origin in *tierras estrañas* provokes surprise, attraction, or suspicion. Meanwhile, Garfín lacks individual development. His easier path to rulership as firstborn son makes unnecessary a demonstration of his worth in the romance plot. As a result, the actions of Roboán are mostly limited to demonstrations of knightly prowess along with his brother Roboán before he seeks his own adventure.

The family's association with strangeness starts ten days after leaving their native land. After the death of Zifar's horse, they request shelter to spend the night inside Galapia, a besieged town ruled by a widowed lady. The knight convinces the gatekeeper to let them enter, stressing their origin outside the region: "Cavallero, nos somos de tierra estraña [...] e non abremos otro lugar poblado do fuésemos albergar" ("Sir, we are from a foreign land [...] and we could not find another town where we could find lodging"; 83, M. 19r; 25). While they await a decision, one of the besiegers antagonizes Zifar, threatening to abduct Grima. The brief episode elaborates on the curse of Zifar as a limiting factor. As a man on his own feet, the newly arrived knight is taken as

¹³² One of the reasons why numbers do not tell the whole story is that Zifar's receive more mentions than other characters of the romance. The subsequent analysis of some of the passages where "estraña/o" articulate the story aim to better qualify the implications that being "strange" have for Zifar and his close family.

a servant of Grima. The subsequent duel between them reinstates Zifar into his class just in time for the gatekeeper to let the family enter Galapia as coming from a “foreign land,” a *tierra estraña*.¹³³

The “strangeness” of the family place of origin expands to define Zifar himself. After more proofs of chivalric prowess, a local citizen praises the outsider telling him: “Cavallero estraño, yo non sé qui vos sodes, mas por quanto yo entiendo en vos, creo que sodes de buen logar e de buen entendimiento” (“Stranger, I do not know who you are, but from what I know about you, I believe that you are a great and wise nobleman”; 88, M. 22r; 30). The anonymous citizen attributes the heroic participation in defense of Galapia to a nobility that Zifar received from his ancestors. The association of individual deeds with that dynastic legacy overturns the alterity of his identification as a “strange knight.” The actions of Zifar please the local lady who wants the family to remain in Galapia, a willingness shared by Zifar’s wife. Besides this concurrent wish, both noble women share the name of Grima, a detail that has not received much attention to my knowledge. Zifar agrees to extend their stay for a month.

During the extended stay in Galapia, the “strange knight” continues proving his prowess. Now, he receives from lady Grima the arms of her dead husband. The borrowed arms hide Zifar’s foreign origin, confusing the leader of the besieging forces who cannot understand how the dead lord, or his infant child, may lead the forces of Galapia (96, M. 26v; 38). After Zifar defeats him in battle, lady Grima invites the family to settle in Galapia. The successive demonstrations of chivalric virtues have turned the horseless “stranger” into someone able to perform as a local ruler successfully. The shared name of his wife and hostess facilitates his

¹³³ MS P reiterates this foreign character by putting the word “estraña/o” twice in Zifar’s words before entering Galapia (Olsen 13, P. 13r–13v; Nelson 25). Furthermore, the title of the chapter in the MS P reads “E dize el cuento de commo el Cauallero Çifar e su mujer se fueron con sus fijos a beujr a tierra estraña” (“The story tells of how the Knight Zifar and his wife went away with their sons to live in a foreign land”; Olsen 13, P. 12v; 24).

symbolic impersonation of the dead ruler. However, the existence of a young heir leaves Zifar's overtaking of Galapia in that symbolic plane.

The possibility of a replacement of the local nobility by Zifar's family hinted at in Galapia comes to fruition in the later episodes at the kingdom of Mentón. After a series of misfortunes, Zifar is separated from his wife and sons. Wandering alone, the knight arrives to the house of a hermit where he meets a poor servant referred to as *ribaldo*, "knave" in Nelson's translation. The arrival of Zifar leads to a discussion between him and his master about the possibilities individuals have to elevate themselves above the social status received at birth. The *ribaldo* vehemently defends the adventure of Zifar and seeks to accompany him as an opportunity for growth: "¿E non sabes —dixo el ribaldo— que la ventura ayuda aquellos que toman osadía, e por aventura puedo que yo aprender buenas costumbres de este cavallero e ser bien andante con él?" ("And don't you know that fortune aids those who dare? By chance I can learn good manners from this knight and improve my fortune through him"; 132, M. 46v; 67). With these words, the *ribaldo* emphasizes the romance's conception of individual worth as able to overcome the limitations inherited from lineage. As the story advances, this conception is performed by the transformation of the poor server from *ribaldo* to a knight known as "Caballero Amigo" ('Knight Friend'), to receiving a title of count at the end of the romance.¹³⁴

The successive transformations of the *ribaldo* are the result of his close association with Zifar and Roboán. This relationship starts when he tells Zifar about the siege of Mentón.

Besieged by the rival king of Ester, the king of Mentón promised to marry his only daughter to

¹³⁴ This is not to say that the *Zifar* advocates for a renovation of the ranks of Castilian nobility. Rodríguez Velasco has effectively challenged this idea as both anecdotal and anachronical ("*Libro*"). The main issue here is not social ascension but the debate about the limits between the inherited heritage received from the ancestors and the ability of an individual to transform it within a deeply aristocratic, patriarchal and genealogically sustained society. For the passage on access of the former *ribaldo* to the nobility, see González Muela (428, M. 191v), Nelson (307).

the man who liberates his kingdom. At that point, Grima and Zifar have been separated for a long time, following her capture by a group of sailors. The reader knows about her separate adventures and is aware of her being alive. However, Zifar sees the promise of a marriage with the princess of Mentón as a possibility to acquire his pursued royal status. The *ribaldo* and the knight travel together to Grades. Once there, the *ribaldo* lends Zifar his clothes allowing him to bypass the siege with the appearance of a fool (“sandio”). If borrowed arms allowed Zifar to perform as lord of Galapia, the poor clothes of the *ribaldo* incite jokes among Grades’s besiegers: “¡Ahé aquí el rey de Mentón, sin caldera e sin pendón” (“Behold here the king of Mentón without a flag or a pot to call his own”; 151, M. 57r; 84–85). Behind the parody, this entrance in the city anticipates the result of the forthcoming chivalric demonstrations: Zifar will become king of Mentón.

Once inside the city, Zifar takes off the borrowed clothes and affirms his noble status as a “cavallero fijodalgo e de lenguas tierras” (“a knight of the nobility from a distant land”; 152, 57v; 86). On this path to become king of Mentón, remote origins and “strangeness” go hand in hand. From the tower of the castle, the king and his daughter observe Zifar as he fights the hostile forces of the king of Ester along with the local knights. Impressed with his abilities, the king asks: “¿Es aquel el nuestro cavallero estraño?” (“Is that our visiting [*estraño*] knight?”; 155, M. 59v; 89). The initial perception of Zifar as a “strange knight” evolves as a result of his chivalric deeds.

When Zifar kills the two sons and a niece of the rival king, the people of Mentón rejoice and wonder who deserves their praise. Initially, the gatekeeper stresses his strangeness and foreign origins saying that he is “un cavallero estraño e non les semejava que era de aquella tierra” (“a strange knight and they did not believe that he was a native”; 159 M. 61v; 92). But the

people of Mentón do not wait to change that perception and give him the nickname “el cavallero de Dios” (“the knight of God”; 161, M. 62v; 94). The swift change from the association of Zifar with the alterity of a *cavallero estraño* to the religious virtue of the *cavallero de dios* transforms the perception of Zifar among his future subjects. The movement from an emphasis on Zifar’s foreign appearance (*semejava*) to the exemplarity of his actions in this episode stands out when considering the relationship between this episode and the name that the *trasladador* gives to the romance in the prologue:

[E]l qual cavallero ovo nonbre Zifar de bautismo; e después ovo nombre El Cavallero de Dios, porque se tovo él sienpre con Dios e Dios con él en todos los fechos, así como adelante oiredes, podredes ver e entenderedes por las sus obras. E por ende es dicho este Libro del Cavallero de Dios. (58, M. 4v)

This knight was baptized with the name of Zifar and afterwards was called the Knight of God because he was ever close to Good and God was always with him in all his deeds, as you will hear from this point on. You will be able to see this and understand this by his deeds. Therefore, this book is entitled *The Knight of God*. (6)

The association of chivalric prowess with religious virtue evidences the extent to which a clear Christian worldview overshadows all ambivalent presence of alterity in the romance. Furthermore, it brings to light the tension between the continuity and transformation of traits inherited from lineage. Here, Zifar’s deeds result in a new name. In the intercultural context of medieval Iberia, receiving a new name signaled the passage from one religious community to another.¹³⁵ In the case of Zifar, the new name implies a different kind of transformation, from a “strange” outsider to one collectively recognized by his future subjects.

After killing the young members of the lineage of the king of Ester, Zifar stands out as the only virtuous and skilled noble in a position to eventually inherit Mentón. With their rivals defeated, the king asks the *cavallero de Dios* about his dynastic origin, particularly if he comes

¹³⁵ The *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* addresses this issue indirectly mentioning the unnecessary change of name of the protagonists after their conversion, as discussed in Chapter 4.

from a royal lineage. Zifar conceals the story heard from his grandfather replying: “Señor, vergüença grande sería a ninguno en dezir que venía de sangre de reyes, andando así pobre como yo ando; ca si lo fuese, abiltaría e desonrraría a sí” (“Sir, it would be a great shame for anyone as poor as I am to say that he came of royal blood. If he did, he would defame and dishonor himself”; 167, M. 66r; 100). The emphasis that Zifar puts on his poverty spans from the theory of rulership outlined by the *trasladador* and discussed above. Should he have presented himself as coming from a lineage of kings, the wicked heritage received from Tared would have been exposed. Instead, Zifar limits his status to *hijodalgo*, a lower rank of the nobility that provides a baseline for his marriage with someone of such a higher status as the heir of a kingdom.

Zifar’s election between presenting his dynastic origins or presenting his deeds as the result of his merit corresponds to the representation of the hero according to one of the two ways to acquire nobility in medieval Castile. Arbesú discusses this issue with detailed attention to cultural discourses about nobility in the period, also recapitulating recent scholarly discussions on this subject in the *Zifar* (“muerte”). The emphasis on individual merit aligns Zifar with those who had raised to the high ranks of the Castilian nobility for their participation in the expansionist wars against Andalusí polities. As Zifar, this new nobility gained control over lands where they were perceived “strange” to the local population. But the *Zifar* does not aim to reproduce the historical evolution of Castile’s southern expansion. On the one hand, the alterity of Zifar’s soon-to-be subjects is concealed by the ambivalent *caldeo* origin of the romance. Furthermore, Zifar does not acquire his position of rule after violently taking over the local authorities but by defending the local population from hostile forces.

Despite its concealment of alterity, the *Zifar* proposes a model to deal with the “strange” origin of Zifar as a new ruler. This model presents a service for those to be subjects that respond

to the nobility's responsibilities in European feudal societies of the period. Likewise, it emphasizes transformation at two different but coherent levels. First, this occurs through Zifar's final unmaking of the embodied heritage he received from Tared. Once the princess agrees to marry him, the family's royal status. Thus, the curse disappears, with no more horses dying because of Zifar or his descendants from this point on. Secondly, through the reciprocal transformation of Zifar and his subjects after the king dies and Zifar starts his reign. This second aspect is expounded when Grima finds her way to Mentón to find her husband married to the local queen, as discussed in the following pages.

After being forcibly separated from Zifar, Grima ended up in Orbín, where the local king and queen supported her plan to establish a convent for local women and serve as its abbess (120–29, M. 40r-45r; 58–65). The conventual life of Grima preserves her chastity. Meanwhile, the romance explains her husband's chastity first because of the young age of her new spouse and then through his fabrication of a vow of chastity to purge his sin. Despite the unconventionality of Zifar's double marriage, the lack of consummation of the second one keeps him without sin, as Smith explains (197–204). With the death of king of Mentón, his daughter and Zifar inherit the kingdom during their sexual abstinence.

When the agreed period of chastity is about to finish, the *trasladador* returns to the story of Grima, who abandons Orbín to return to her land, meet her relatives, and die among them (127, M. 44r; 64). On her route back to India, she learns about the virtuous king of Mentón and decides to visit Mentón. Grima is gazed at by the new spouse of her husband while praying in a church. The emphasis on gaze elaborates on the significance of being “strange” as a form of alterity in the *Zifar*:

E la reina paró mientes e vio aquella dueña estraña que fazía su oraçión muy apuestamente e con grant devoçión, e pensó en su coraçón quién podría ser, ca la veía vestida de vestiduras estrañas, a ella e a las otras dos mugeres que con ella venían. E después que fue dicha la misa, fizola llamar y preguntóle quién era e de cuáles tierras e a qué veniera. E ella le dixo: “Señora, yo só de tierras estrañas.” “¿E dónde?” —dixo la reina—. “De las Indias” —dixo ella—, do predicó sant Bartolomé después de la muerte de Iesu Christo.” (176–77, M. 70v)

The queen noticed the strange lady who was saying her prayers earnestly and with such great devotion. She wondered who she could be, for she noticed her strange clothing and that of the other two women who accompanied her. After mass was over the queen had her summoned, and inquired who she was and from what lands she had come. She replied:

“My lady, I am from a foreign land.”

“From where?” asked the queen.

“From India,” she answered, “where Saint Bartholomew preached the gospel after the death of Jesus Christ.” (107)

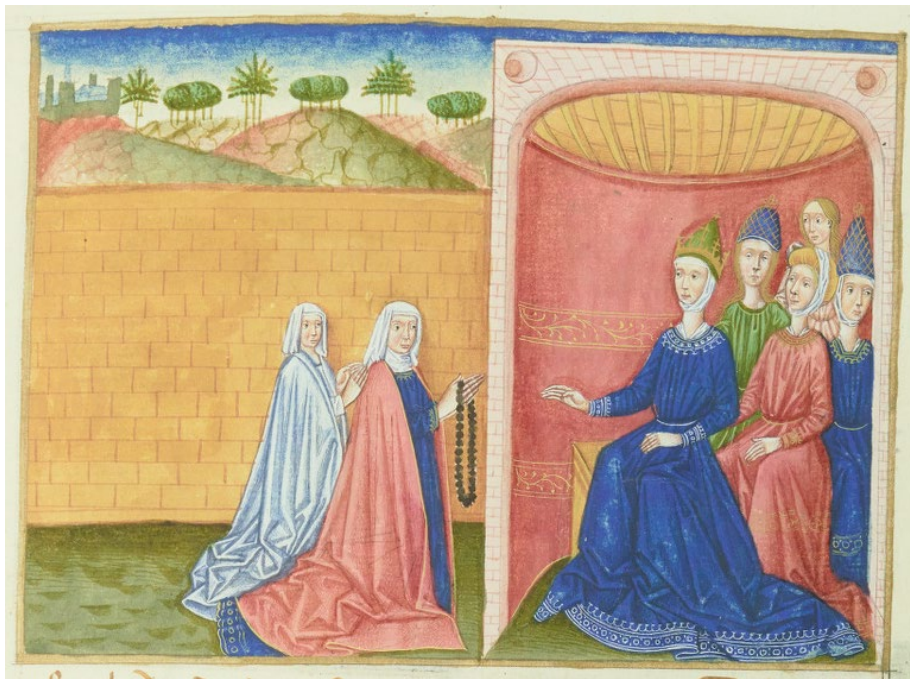


Figure 3.1 Grima and the Queen of Mentón (MS P, fol. 67r, detail)

Grima, her garments, and their land of origin are all described with the adjective “estraña/s.” In a subtle inference of prejudice against the foreign lady, the “strange” appearance of her clothes picks the queen’s interest when contrasted with her pious behavior. The conversation between the two noblewomen sets those prejudices aside by associating her

“strange” and remote origin with the Indian lands evangelized by the apostle Bartholomew. The existence of Christian communities in India was of great interest for European Catholics who view Christian realms in Asia as a potential ally against Islam in an otherwise barely known region of the world.¹³⁶ The textual reference to the differences in the appearance of the two noblewomen as expressed by their clothes contrasts with the representation of both as wearing European-style clothes in manuscript P, as seen in Figure 3.1.¹³⁷

During her conversation with the queen, Grima proposes building a hostel in Mentón. If her initiative to build a convent in Orbín protected her sexuality while separated from Zifar, the hostel in Mentón aims to support the masculine ideal of the knight-errant embodied by her husband and sons Zifar and her sons by offering a place to stay when pursuing their chivalric adventures. The queen speaks with Zifar about the Indian woman she met. The king abruptly laughs to her wife’s surprise: “Río de aquella dueña –dixo el rey—, que de tan luengas tierras es venida” (“I am smiling about the lady who has come from such distant lands”; 177–78 M. 71r; 108). Zifar’s laugh results from his suspicion that the *dueña estraña* is no other than Grima, his only wife according to canon law. The queen organizes a meeting. The reencounter between Grima and Zifar evidences the transformation of he who was once perceived as a *cavallero estraño*:

La reina enbió por aquella buena dueña e díxole de cómo avía fablado con el rey. E ellas estando en esta fabla, entró el rey por la puerta. E así como la vio, luego la conosció que era su mujer. E ella dubdó en él poque la palabra avía cambiada e non fablava el lenguaje

¹³⁶ This wider context may explain in part the projection of the ideals of European Christianity into Asia in the *Zifar*, Bartholomew’s in prologue India is also mentioned in the prologue: “así como contesció a un cavallero de las Indias, do andido predicando sant Bartolomé Apostol después de la muerte de nuestro Salvador Ihesu Christo, el cual ovo nonbre Zifar de bautismo; e después ovo nombre El Cavallero de Dios” (“This happened to a knight from India, where Saint Bartholomew the Apostle had carried the gospel after the Death of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This knight was baptized with the name of Zifar and afterwards was called the Knight of God”; 58, M. 4v; 6).

¹³⁷ Cacho Bleuca studies the miniature program of MS P suggesting a strong correlation between the miniatures and chapters’ headings—absent in MS M (“Texto”). Among other insightful remarks, he signals that absence of identifying features of the characters in the illuminations, including clothing (43–45). There are instances where the miniatures evidence a reading beyond the headings, as I discuss below in relation to Figure 3.2 and 3.3. Likewise, there are examples of miniatures that decidedly attempt to represent difference through clothing and body features, such as the miniatures in 167v and 168v.

que solía, e demás que era más gordo que solía, e que le avía crescido mucha la barba. E si le conosció o non, como buena dueña, no se quiso descubrir porque él non perdiese la onra en que estaba. (178, M. 71r–71v)

The queen sent for the Good lady and told her how she had spoken with the king. And while they were conversing, the king entered through the doorway. And as soon as he saw her, he recognized that she was his wife [...¹³⁸]. And she was uncertain about his identity, because his speech had changed and he was not speaking the language to which he was accustomed. Furthermore, he was fatter than he used to be and his beard had grown longer. And whether she recognized him or not, because she was a prudent lady she did not want to expose him for he would then be dishonored. (108)

Zifar immediately recognizes his wife without any reference to a change in her persona.

Meanwhile, his description underscores physical and cultural changes that limit Grima's ability to determine whether she is in front of her husband or a stranger. More than nine years after being separated from his wife and sons, Zifar is now physically and culturally other. These changes are partially explained as the result of his new royal position, but they also imply a more profound transformation in Zifar as no longer a "stranger" in Mentón. His new language not only distances him from Grima, but it also connects its use with the far-reaching fame of Mentón under Zifar's rule, one that allowed Grima to find the path to this encounter.

By describing the transformation of Zifar from Grima's perspective, the *trasladador* inscribes adopting the alterity of the newly acquired realm as part of Zifar's praise as a wise ruler. Transferring this model to the Castilian expansion over the formerly Muslim lands of al-Andalus, the adoption of the foreign language by Zifar appears as part of the repertoire of exemplary behaviors that the romance allegedly translated from *caldeo*—as an ambivalent referent to Arabic—aims to transmit to its audience. If the translation of the work promotes adaptation of the external tradition, the new language of Zifar models a reciprocal exchange

¹³⁸ Nelson's translation includes a sentence from MS P absent in MS M: "e demudósele toda la color, pensando que ella dirie commo ella era su muger" ("The color drained from his face when he thought she would reveal that she was his wife"; Olsen 53; 108). Whereas MS M focuses primarily on the problem of identification, the additional sentence in MS P introduces Zifar's concern about the potential loss of his royal status. More subtly, MS M only suggest this problem through Grima's determination to not expose him at the end of the quote.

through which the adoption of cultural practices of the new subjects proves instrumental to rule over “strange” lands correctly. As a result, fame and prosperity are transformed along with its once strange ruler’s cultural and physical transformation.¹³⁹

As addressed in the section “Dynastic Heritages,” Zifar and Grima’s decision to leave their native Indian land is initially presented as dependent on the consequences of the unfitness of Tared to rule and related to the consequences of the Curse of Ham. Their travels allow Zifar to unmake his wicked heritage and recover the position of rule that Tared lost. If the genealogical problem serves as a point of departure from the chivalric adventures, the *trasladador* emphasized the “strange” as a way to underscore how their perceived alterity is an obstacle to achieve their goals, but one that can be managed through a combination of demonstrations of virtue and ability to transform and be transformed by their new lands.

Following the queen’s death, Zifar discloses his previous marriage with Grima, and she is accepted as queen. Likewise, the people of Mentón recognizes Garfín as a legitimate heir. Being able to leave a kingdom to his first son, Zifar solves the problem of negative heritage unleashed by Tared. But the romance does not end here. Beyond the transformation of dynastic heritage, the *trasladador* turns to Roboán to address the consequences of the family’s most remote ancestors and the consequences of the Curse of Ham.

Seeing his older sibling as the rightful heir, Roboán asks his father permission to leave Mentón “para ganar onra” (“to win honor”; 185 M. 75v; 153). His reasoning points to a generic search for adventures and fame that contrasts with the troubled situation of Zifar. Nevertheless, genealogy and alterity also articulate Roboán’s adventure. With his dynastic heritage solved, the

¹³⁹ On the physical transformation expressed through fatness, see Campos García Rojas.

journey of Roboán addresses the still unresolved consequences of the Curse of Ham. To do it, the knight crosses a broader geography, even if partially concealed under fictional names. The emperor of Tigrida stands out in his adventure not only for his mighty power but also as someone who welcomes the alterity of “strange” noblemen: “plazía mucho con ome de tierra estraña, si era de buen logar” (“would be greatly pleased with a man from a foreign [*estraña*] land if he was highborn”; 370, M. 170r; 264).¹⁴⁰ After hearing news about such a ruler, Roboán travels to Tigris River, where the emperor considers him worthy of being two times knighted after watching him ride.

Roboán’s riding calls attention to the curse once suffered by his father. The emperor offers the skillful rider an accolade that would make him hold a “doble cavallería” (“double knighthood”; 371, M. 170v; 264). Roboán explains that his father already knighted him, but the emperor insists saying that “cuido que de una guisa lo fazen en su tierra e de otra guisa aquí” (“I believe they do it one way on his country and another way here”; 371, M. 170v; 265). The emperor takes distance from the customs of a kingdom of Mentón “strange” to him. However, his subsequent accolade is presented as “stranger” to the Castilian reader than the one that Zifar had previously led.

The first accolade of Roboán was briefly mentioned at the end of the first part of the romance. After Garfín and Roboán arrive to the hostel funded by Grima, Zifar organizes an accolade for them “segunt el uso de aquella tierra” (“according to the custom of that land”; 185 M. 75v; my trans.). The reference to the local customs of Mentón reinforces the adaptation of Zifar to the land where he started as a *cavallero estraño*. Now that the whole family has adopted

¹⁴⁰ The emperor is described as a powerful honest ruler with forty vassal kings, resembling common attributes of mythical figure of the Prester John across medieval European Christianity. For the importance of Prester John in Castilian medieval travel narrative, see Chimeno del Campo.

Mentón as their land, the description of both accolades after Roboán’s arrival to Tigrida aligns the customs of Mentón adopted by his family with those of Castile. The ceremony in Mentón started consisted of an overnight vigil, a mass, and a blow with the king’s sword (371, M. 170v; 265). As González Muela’s notes, this description follows closely Christian customs of the Iberian Peninsula that Ramon Llull presents in his *Llibre de l’orde de cavalleria* (ca. 1275). Meanwhile, the ceremony conducted by the emperor of Tigrida resembles and the idealized image of Asia as a land of riches and splendor common in references to Asia in medieval Castilian literature. Roboán dresses clothes made with gold while being surrounded by damsels. One of them gives him a lance and a banner. The differences between both accolades are represented visually in two miniatures of manuscript P (Figures 3.2 and 3.3).¹⁴¹



Figure 3.2 Zifar knights his two sons (MS P, fol. 72v, detail)



Figure 3.3 The emperor of Tigrida knights Roboán (MS P, fol. 165v, detail)

¹⁴¹ Donahue studies the relationship between text and illuminations in MS P. As Cacho Bleuca (“Texto”), he suggests that the miniaturists mostly rely on the section headings. Furthermore, his study provides evidence of miniatures whose design required closer attention to the narrative. The illuminations of Roboán’s second accolade in Figure 3.3 is a good example of this. The heading of the episode only states “De commo el enperador de Trigrida armo cauallero al infante Rroboan” (“How the emperor of Tigrida knighted Prince Roboán”) (Olsen 126, P. 164v; 264). Thus, the differences between two accolades in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 would have required taking details from the body text into consideration. Fournès studies the codes of chivalry in the miniature of the first accolade to support that the manuscript served as a propagandistic piece of the benefits for those who acted according to the goals and values of the nobility (“Miniatures” 260–62). Rodríguez-Velasco refers to the issue of the double accolade according to ideas about the nobility in fourteenth century Castile (“Zifar,” esp. 177).

Besides signaling the alterity of the customs of Tigrida, Roboán's second accolade gestures a transition from the issues of his dynasty into a space linked to the more remote matters around the three sons of Noah. As he arrives at the Tigris River, Roboán retraces the displacement of the first Indians, returning to their Chaldean region that the *trasladador* also identifies with the origin of the romance. After receiving his second accolade from the mighty ruler of Tigrida, Roboán becomes a prominent member of his court thanks to his wise advice. Envious members of the court successfully plot against Roboán, who is expelled into Ínsulas Dotadas. The *trasladador* explains the location of this realm with a reference to China.¹⁴² This travel to Eastern regions of the world known for those in the medieval Mediterranean functions as a test of virtue. As already mentioned, his failure to comply with Nobleça's requests deprives him of the possibility to rule along with her. Instead, the episode paves his way to the throne of Tigrida, that is, to rule over the lands once unfittingly ruled by the lineage of Ham.

Roboán returns to Tigrida, where the emperor reveals that he had failed the same quest in the Ínsulas Dotadas (408, M. 186r; 292–93). The shared failure reinforces the relationship between them. Lacking a son of his own, the emperor chooses Roboán as his heir. One year later, his death makes Roboán emperor of Tigrida.¹⁴³ Some local kings refuse to be ruled by a “strange” and revolt against him “ca, como ome estraño, non se pagava de los naturales del imperio, mayormente de los poderosos” (“because he was not a native of their land and did not

¹⁴² “Çin” in the original: “este imperio es de los más viçioisos e muy abondados del mundo, que dizenle las Islas de Çin, e de la otra parte con las Islas de Trenidat e las otras dos escontra oriente” (“this empire is one of the most delightful and bountiful in the world, for it is called the Fortunate Islands. It borders on one side the islands of Sind [Çin] and on the other touches the sea of the empire of Tigrida, and the other two borders are to the east”; 404, M. 183v; 289). Following Walker, Harney suggests that the name could derive from the Arabic word for “China” (“Geography” 212, “More on the Geography” 77–78)

¹⁴³ Pérez López notices that the description of Roboan's crowning ceremony refers to an “altar de Santi Spiritus” (“altar of Saint Spiritus”; 411, P. 181v; 295). He connects this reference with an altar of the cathedral of Toledo. He explains that the kings of Castile used to be buried there up to Sancho IV's reign, later it was associated with the Mozarabic Toledo through the family of Gonçalo Pérez Gudiel (“*Libro*” 219–24). This detail is indicative of the ways in which the remote spaces of the romance function as places where Castilian realities may be projected to address them allegorically.

like the natives of the empire, especially the powerful ones”; 409 M. 186v; 293). The revolt gives Roboán an opportunity to demonstrate his ability to handle the realm wisely. With the assistance of the Cavallero Amigo—formerly known as *ribaldo*—Roboán starts diplomatic and military actions against the revolt kings.

The more providential character of Roboán’s adventure is manifested during his conflict with the local kings. After being defeated in battle, Roboán hears a voice from the sky that suggests resorting to a pennant he received in the *Ínsulas Dotadas*; (421, M. 188r; 302, see Figure 3.4). Coming—as himself—from outside Tigrida, this artifact functions as a material illustration of what is to be gained from travel into remote lands. With the aid of the pennant, the *ome extraño* makes his enemies flee, takes the lands of the treasonous vassals, and redistributes them. For his service to the emperor, the Cavallero Amigo receives a county. The victory consolidates Roboán's rule over Tigrida, now without the negative effects of his previous perception as a “stranger.”

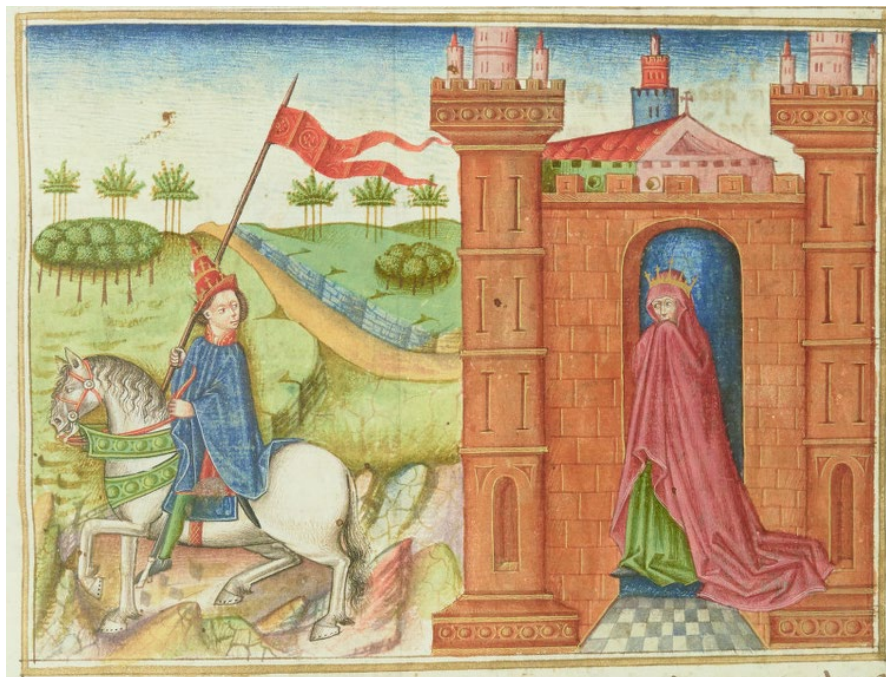


Figure 3.4. Roboán, Nobleça, and the pennant (*Zifar*, MS P fol. 178r, detail).

Once Roboán consolidates his rule over Tigrida, the *trasladador* returns to the reasons of Zifar for leaving his native India. A new geographical excursus explains the division of the world among the three sons of Noah. The passage brings the reader back to the issue of the Curse of Ham and its implications for the creation of linguistic and embodied alterity. The description of the world follows the transference of biblical history to world geography characteristic of the popular T-O maps.¹⁴⁴ The three regions of the world assigned to each of Noah's sons are broken down into several areas, including real-world places as well as the fictional realms of the *Zifar*. This excursus ends with an invitation to travel:

E esto de estas tres partes del mundo fue aquí puesto porque lo sepan aquellos que andar quisieren por el mundo, mayormente aquellos que quieren más valer e probar las tierras donde se podrán mejor fallar e mejor bevir, así como contesçió a este enperador, que andido por las tierras faziendo bien fasta que Dios le encrinó, así como oistes. (426, M. 190v)

This explanation of the three parts of the world was placed here so that those who plan to travel through the world may learn of it, especially those who plan to explore and evaluate the lands, so that they will be able to find them and live better, just as this emperor did, who wandered through the lands doing good and whom God raised to high position, as you heard. (306)

The direct appellation to the reader closes the geographical excursus framing the world within Roboán's rise to the throne of Tigrida. As in the rest of the romance, Christian exemplarity appears as the ultimate goal, one that is successfully reached through the travels across remote lands of the "strange" family of Zifar.¹⁴⁵

Once Zifar's lineage has reached the highest possible point, the romance addresses its continuity. Roboán marries princess Seringa—whose realm he had saved before arriving at

¹⁴⁴ Pinet outlines the cultural underpinnings behind T/O maps (*Task* 14–20), exhaustive archival information of their use in medieval Castile (*Task* 27–34), and numerous insightful analysis of how maps—T/O and otherwise—were textually displayed in medieval Castile, particularly in *Libro de Alexandre*.

¹⁴⁵ This invitation to travel closes the chivalric adventures of the family of Zifar. I have addressed elsewhere another example of invitation to travel among Castilian noble circles in Pero Tafur's *Andanças e viajes*. There, the invitation precedes his own travels, which aimed to reach the lands of the Prester John—whose might is emulated by the initial emperor of Tigrida.

Tigrida. Their first son is named Fijo de Bendición (Son of Blessing). Later on, the empire of Tigrida will be renamed after him to honor his rule and, by extension, the dynasty that coming from India ended up ruling with exemplarity over the region where the misbehaviors of Nimrod led to events around the construction of the Tower of Babel:

E desí, tornáronse para su inperio, do mostró Dios por ellos muchos miraglos, de guisa que a toda aquella tierra que éstos ovieron a mandar e dízenle oy en dia la Tierra de Bendición. E tomó este nonbre del fijo del enperador, que ovo nonbre Fijo de Bendición, así como ya oyestes, de que dizen que fecho un libro en caldeo en que cuenta toda la su vida e muchos buenos fechos que fizo. (434, M. 195r)

And afterward they returned to their empire, where God performed so many miracles through them throughout all the lands they ruled, so that it is called the Blessed Land [lit. 'Land of Blessing'] today. It took its name from the son of the emperor and empress, for he had the name Blessed Son [lit. 'Son of Blessing'], just as you have already heard, and of whom they say a book is written in Arabic [*caldeo*] in which is told all his life and the many good deeds he accomplished. (312)

The reference to the *caldeo* book about Fijo de Bendición returns to the question about the ambivalent origins of the *Zifar*. The enterprise carried out by the *trasladador* echoes the transformative results of Zifar and Roboán's adventures away from their native land. Their chivalric prowess and Christian virtue result in them acquiring ruling positions over strange lands that successively transform their dynastic heritage and unmake the fleeing of their remote Indian ancestors away from the unwisely ruled Babel. The new name of Tigrida inextricably bonds their lineage with the lands of ancient Chaldea.¹⁴⁶

Beyond the specificities of the romance, this process sheds light on how genealogy, translation, place, and alterity were interrelated in medieval Castilian thought. The remote spaces and temporalities of the *Zifar* ambivalently discuss these issues as both internal and external to

¹⁴⁶ As Szpiech notes, Fijo de Bendición is, in fact, a bastard son since Roboán married the Empress Nobleça in the *Ínsulas Dotadas*. According to Szpiech's reading, this makes his rule based on false pretenses. Even though this situation does not prevent him to be a good ruler of the Empire, it "reinserts his newly made lineage with a new sin of illegitimacy and deception, waiting in the Arabic texts of the imagination" ("Second Sons")

the cultural dynamics of an unstably multicultural society where Christian elites struggled to find a solution for the contrast between the perceived alterity and authority of Islam and al-Andalus. In this context, the much-discussed relocation of Pérez Gudiel's cadaver in the prologue functions as an integral part of the romance. The last pages of this chapter address this issue, suggesting that the dead body of the Mozarabic cardinal encapsulates the uncertainty about the situation of the multicultural space of Toledo at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Instead of being detached from the adventures of Zifar's family in remote Asian spaces and temporalities, the prologue lays out the uncertain position of Andalusí legacies within Castile, hinting at transformation and *translatio(n)* as possible ways forward explored at length in the romance through the transformable character of lineages discussed throughout this chapter.

Memories of Alterity

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Toledo preserved part of its long history of intercultural exchanges. As discussed in Chapter 2, translation was a prominent aspect of that history. By the time the *Zifar* was written, Toledo was a multicultural space, populated by Jews, Muslims, Christians with ancestors from other regions of the Iberian Peninsula and beyond the Pyrenees and Mozarabs, the descendants of Christian families who had lived there before the Castilian conquest in 1085. Gonçalo Pérez Gudiel (1238/1239–1299) was one of the most notable members of the Mozarabic community during the second half of the thirteenth century. He had a brilliant career in the clergy, including the Archbishopric of Toledo and a cardinal see at the Roman Curia. Furthermore, he was a prominent member of the court of Castile during the times of Alfonso X and his son Sancho IV. His cadaver is the protagonist of the first part of

Zifar's prologue, bridging the remote times and spaces where the romance takes place with the specificity of Castile during the early fourteenth century.

The prologue of the *Zifar* starts with a reference to the indulgencies that Pope Boniface VIII offered to those who made a pilgrimage to Rome during the first Catholic jubilee of the year 1300.¹⁴⁷ This spatial and temporal precision sharply contrasts with the vagueness surrounding the adventures of Zifar and his family in the romance that follows. Similarly, the ambivalent position of *trasladador* as narratorial voice, author, and translator contrasts with the representation of Ferrand Martínez as the guiding force behind the actions narrated in the prologue that result in the relocation of the corpse of Pérez Gudiel from Rome to Toledo.¹⁴⁸ Martínez is presented with the historically accurate title of “arçediano de Madrid en la iglesia de Toledo” (“archdeacon of Madrid in the church of Toledo”; 52, P. 1v; 2). Furthermore, the accuracy of the events in the prologue has led some scholars to suggest that Martínez was the author of the romance.¹⁴⁹

The apparent disconnection between the content of prologue and romance has resulted in a stimulating scholarly debate. Olsen was among the first scholars to explain the relationship between both stories through a nuanced analysis of the different sections of the prologue. She concludes that the author referred to Boniface VIII, Pérez Gudiel, and Zifar in the prologue with the moral purpose of showing how “the unrestrained, immoderate actions of the Pope served as a model of errors that were avoided by the Cardinal and that would be shunned by the Knight

¹⁴⁷ Various scholars write about the representation Boniface VIII in the prologue in relation to his historical actions. Brownlee interprets the contrast as ironical (“Interruption” 152) and Olsen as “subtly and humorously” disclosing his defects (“Prologue” 16–17). On the spiritual meaning of the Jubilee in Christianity and Judaism, see Brownlee (“Interruption” 150–51).

¹⁴⁸ Following González Muela’s edition, I spell the name as “Ferrand Martínez.” His name is frequently found with other spelling variants, particularly modernized as “Ferrán Martínez.”

¹⁴⁹ The most prominent supporters of Ferrand Gonzales as author are Burke (*Tradition* 14–19) and Hernández (“Ferrán”). Cacho Blecua supports the hypothesis of a Mozarabic author close to the chancellery of the kingdom (“Contextos” 22–23). Whereas I am not particularly concerned with the identity of the author of the romance, I do agree with these scholars in considering that it was most probably written by someone belonging or very close to the Mozarabic community of Toledo.

Çifar” (“prologue” 21). Gómez Redondo analyzes its structure as parallel to the evolution of the romance, emphasizing its exemplary character. Likewise, he addresses the significance of “*trasladar*” as the ordering of the content of the work to satisfy its preconceived objectives (“prólogo”).

Wacks’s textual analysis demonstrates the construction of both Martínez’s and Zifar’s deeds as heroic in the context of Christian imagination about the crusades (*Crusade* 62–64). Wacks also pointedly argues for a thematic connection between prologue and narrative as “both concerned with accumulating power and status in Toledo and Castile-León by means of translation” (*Crusade* 64).¹⁵⁰ Girón-Negrón contextualizes the relocation of Pérez Gudiel’s body as part of the hagiographic tradition of the *translationes* of saints. This type of sacred *translatio* involved the theft of relics from their burial places to give religious authority to the new location where they were revered as saintly bodies (“Commo a cuerpo” 250). Furthermore, Girón-Negrón addresses the significance of this *translatio* as a reaffirmation of the primacy of Toledo over the Iberian Church. The conclusions advanced by Girón-Negrón and Wacks inform my approach to the inclusion of Pérez Gudiel in the initial part of the *Zifar*’s prologue as an actualization of Alfonso X’s use of *translatio* and translation as tools to address the tension created by the concurrent alterity and authority of Andalusi heritages inside Castile.

In my view, the prologue’s relocation-*translatio* seeks to memorialize the transcultural heritage of al-Andalus as embodied in Pérez Gudiel’s cadaver. My understanding of memorialization here departs from the words of the *trasladador* himself who justifies the inclusion of Pérez Gudiel’s *translatio* “porque la memoria del ome ha luengo tiempo, e non se

¹⁵⁰ Wacks explores other similarities between Zifar and Ferrand Martínez proposing that “this analogy of Martínez’s quest to that of the knight errant Zifar points to the broader Mediterranean context of the work, the struggle for political and spiritual hegemony in the region” (“Translation” 118). This approach results in a novel approach to the *Zifar* within a broader Mediterranean context further explored in *Crusade*.

pueden acordar los omes de las cosas mucho antiguas si non las falló por escripto” (“Because man’s memory spans a long time, men cannot remember the ancient things if they are not put into writing”; 56, M. 3v; 5). The association between memory and writing suggests that the goal of the *trasladador* is preserving an important event so that future readers could learn from it similarly to how they can learn from the ancient *estorias* contained in the romance.¹⁵¹ However, the content of the account of Pérez Gudiel’s *translatio* reveals a bias towards the event that makes its writing not only a memorialization of a finished past but an intervention to prolong it into the future of Castile. This prospective character of memory bodes well with the romance’s exemplary character, complicating the relationship between the remote past of the romance and the recent one of the prologue in a manner similar to the way that the spatial remoteness of Asia relates to the internal circumstances of the Iberian Peninsula. The following pages deal with the events surrounding Pérez Gudiel’s death to understand what memory and memorialization mean for a general assessment of the *Zifar* as a work that addresses the intercultural origins and reality of the fourteenth-century Castile.

Pérez Gudiel came from one of the more prominent Mozarabic families of Toledo.¹⁵² Some of those families pride themselves on being descendants of Christian Visigoths who continued inhabiting the city after the Islamic conquest. As the center of the Visigothic kingdom, Toledo was of vital symbolic importance for the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, both before and after the conquest of the city in 1085 by Alfonso VI of León and Castile. During

¹⁵¹ Olsen offers a succinct summary of the role of memory in the Middle Ages in relation to the prologue of the *Zifar* (“Prologue” 20–21). González refers to remembering as a linking piece between prologue and romance: “el recuerdo es la causa de la aventura real de Ferrán Martínez y la finalidad de la aventura literaria del *trasladador*” (*Caballero* 57). Lozano-Renieblas connects the issue of memory with the idea of *translatio studii*, quoting a passage from the *Estoria de Espanna*, as well as other literary works from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (*Novelas* 101–05). Following Gómez Redondo, Villegas addresses the relationship between memory and the labor of *trasladar* in the *Zifar* emphasizing the rhetorical function of memory in the structure of the romance in light of the foundational scholarship on medieval memory by Carruthers, Le Goff, and Zumthor.

¹⁵² Subsequent references to Pérez Gudiel as the “Mozarabic cardinal” follow the title of the outstanding biography by Francisco J. Hernández and Peter Linehan.

the centuries of Muslim rule, Mozarabs were an active part of Toledo's social life. They were allowed to preserve their Christian identity and adopted some aspects of Andalusí culture, including the use of Arabic in their day-by-day and religious affairs.

At the time of the Christian conquest of Toledo in 1085, the leader (“alcalde”) of the Mozarabic community was a direct ancestor of Pérez Gudiel: Yaḥyā Abū Zayt b. Ḥārith. The ancestors of Pérez Gudiel—known as Banū Ḥārith—continued to hold public positions under Christian rulers. During that period, the Mozarabic population intermarried with the northern conquerors who became themselves progressively “mozarabized” (Hernández and Linehan 14). The personality and trajectory of Gonçalo Pérez Gudiel exemplify the persistence among the Mozarabic community of processes of cultural assimilation that originated under Andalusí rule.

As a prominent member of the Mozarabic community, Pérez Gudiel was familiar with Andalusí cultural production. That knowledge and personal background made him valuable for the ruling dynasty. After the conquest of Murcia in 1266, Pérez Gudiel was among those who participated in its incorporation into the realm of Castile. Hernández and Linehan suggest that “in Murcia he may also have been the *only* scholar of his time and place to concern himself with the medical branches of Arabic science” (139–40). His library included multiple translations of Arabic and Hebrew works from different branches of knowledge.¹⁵³ Later on, Pérez Gudiel became a notary at the court Alfonso X and chancellor of the kingdom during the reign of his son Sancho (Hernández “Ferrán” 308, Hernández and Linehan 126–13).

¹⁵³ Hernández and Linehan's biography of Pérez Gudiel offers ample evidence of his engagement with Andalusí intellectual traditions. On learning of Arabic among Mozarabs, see 28–29. On his interest on Arabic medicine, 140. His personal library included works by Ibn Rushd, Maimonides, Abū Ma'shar, al-Farghānī, al-Bīṭrūjī and Haly Abenragel—author of the work translated by Alfonso X's collaborators as *Libro complido de los iudizios de las estrellas* (Hernández and Linehan 476–496). Abū 'al-Husain ibn Rashīq wrote about the interest of Christian scholars in finding intellectual treasures in Murcia after its conquest, commanded by the future Alfonso X during the reign of his father: “a group of monks dedicated, according to their lights, to a devout life and the study of the sciences, but above all intent on translating the science of the Muslim into their own language in order to fault it” (quoted and translated by Hernández and Linehan, 139; from Granja's Spanish edition *Relato [de la disputa] de ibn Rasīq con los monjes a propósito de la inimitabilidad del Corán* (67).

As for Pérez Gudiel's ecclesiastical career, he followed his position of bishop of Cuenca—a see previously held by his maternal ancestors—with the title of archbishop of Toledo, one of the most important of the kingdom. During Pérez Gudiel's tenure, the archdiocese of Toledo received the honor of Primate of Spain in 1285, giving it oversight of the whole Iberian Church. The primacy reinforced the importance of Toledo's clergy—and its Mozarabic ecclesiastical circles—to that of Santiago de Compostela, where the relics of the Apostle James had turned its cathedral into a popular pan-European pilgrimage site.

In 1298, Boniface VIII elected Pérez Gudiel as cardinal of the Roman curia. This appointment was as much a result of his successful career as due to the intrigues of the court. After the death of Sancho IV in 1295, the kingdom was in shambles. His son Enrique was a minor whose legitimacy to rule was in question since the Pope had not recognized his parents' marriage due to consanguinity problems. The factions of the kingdom revived the internal wars that started in 1282—at the end of Alfonso X's reign—lasting until the treaty of Monteagudo in 1291. The situation began to settle when Boniface VIII recognized the marriage of Enrique III's parents and, consequently, recognized him as the rightful king. By then, his mother, María de Molina (ca. 1265–1321), had lost influence over Enrique, and the factions closer to him plotted to separate her from courtly affairs. Close to the circle of the widowed queen, Pérez Gudiel left Castile for Italy at the end of 1296.¹⁵⁴

Despite the unfortunate circumstances of Pérez Gudiel's arrival in to Italy, his appointment as cardinal only two years later would have been received with satisfaction by the Mozarabic clergy of Toledo. One of his longstanding close collaborators was Ferrand Martínez

¹⁵⁴ Hernández transcribes a document about Pérez Gudiel's departure that presents Pedro Rodríguez de Quexada—the bishop of Burgos in the prologue—as the person who escorted him out of Burgos without the corresponding honors (“Algunos datos” 1306–08).

(or Ferrán Martínez), who had accompanied him during a stay in Orvieto before becoming cardinal (Pérez López “Algunos datos” 1308–09). According to the *Zifar*’s prologue, this Ferrand Martínez took the cadaver of the Mozarabic cardinal back to Toledo after his death in Rome on November 9, 1298. The studies of Hernández, Hernández & Linehan, and Pérez López I have relied on to reconstruct the significance of Pérez Gudiel demonstrate how the prologue reflects the political climate of the court while fitting the historical events. Besides these considerations about peoples and events, the prologue reveals an attitude towards Iberia’s transcultural traditions that links the retrospective act of memorializing and the prospective exemplarity of Pérez Gudiel with Zifar’s family.¹⁵⁵

According to the prologue of the *Zifar*, Martínez and Pérez Gudiel met during the former’s stay in Rome as a participant in the jubilee of the year 1300. By situating the encounter between Martínez and Pérez Gudiel as part of the Catholic jubilee of the year 1300, the *trasladador* underscores the significance of displacement away from the native land—central to the plot of the *Zifar*—within the religious framework of pilgrimage and absolution of sins. The narration of Martínez’s travel to Roma as a pilgrimage (*romería*) sets the tone of his interaction with the Castilian cardinal:

[D]on Gonçalo, obispo de Aluaña e cardenal en la iglesia de Roma, que fue natural de Toledo, estando en Roma con el este arçediano sobredicho, a quien criara e faziera merçed, queriéndose partir de él e irse a Toledo donde era natural, fizole prometer en las sus manos que si finase, que este arçediano que fuese allá a demandar el cuerpo e que feziere ý todo su poder para traerle a la iglesia de Toledo do avía escogido su sepultura. (52, P, 1v).

¹⁵⁵ Scholars interested in the *Zifar* have addressed other facets of the Pérez Gudiel’s life. Orduna considers him the central figure of a group of scholars whose significance would have been parallel to Alfonso X’s *scriptorium*. Orduna refers to this group as “escuela catedralicia de Toledo” (“élite”). Rodríguez Argente expands on the significance of the Mozarabic identity of Pérez Gudiel for the political interest of the Christian circles of Toledo.

Don Gonzalo, bishop of Aluaña and cardinal in the church of Rome, a native of Toledo, was in Rome with the aforesaid archdeacon, whom he had educated and for whom he had done favors. When the archdeacon was preparing to take leave of him and set out for Toledo, of which he was a native. Don Gonzalo made him promise with his hands in his, that if he should die while a cardinal in the Church of Rome, the archdeacon would go to Rome to request his body and would do all in his power to take his body to the church in Toledo where he had already selected his tomb. (2)

The *trasladador* notes Toledo as the place of origin of both churchmen while underscoring their previous relationship of patronage that strengthens the connection between them. The shared background lays the foundation for Martínez's commitment to fulfilling Pérez Gudiel's plans for his burial site. According to historical documentation, Pérez Gudiel had prepared a tomb for himself in the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Hernández and Linehan suggest that the deceased cardinal may have wanted to divide his body between Rome and Toledo, where he had previously prepared another tomb.¹⁵⁶

Given Pérez Gudiel's prominent position in the Catholic Church, the location of his corpse was not without significance for the Castilian authorities, neither it was for the Mozarabic community of Toledo who could look to him as proof of their continued influence in a kingdom where the particularities of their Christian rites had been put into question. Nelson notes that Martínez's promise expressed with the hands in the previous quote suggests a kneeling vassal (2n4). This close bond results from the protection that Martínez received from the one who "raised him." The election of the verb "*criara*" highlights a quasi-familial relationship between Pérez Gudiel and Martínez that proves instrumental to the success of the relocation of the Cardinal's dead body.

¹⁵⁶ The possibility of a divided corpse situates the body of the cardinal in relation to the circulation of fragmented bodies as relics in medieval Christianity. However, the publication in that same year of the bull *Detestandae feritatis* prohibiting the division of corpses would have made necessary to choose a single burial place (Hernández and Linehan 391–400).

As opposed to the affective relationship of patronage between Martines and Pérez Gudiel, the prologue states how the bishop of Burgos and the queen María de Molina avoided requesting the Pope a relocation of the cardinal's body.¹⁵⁷ On the contrary, Martines complies with the promise to his former patron, taking the enterprise for himself and obtaining the required permission from the Pope. By doing it, Martines achieves the envisioned but abandoned intention of the bishop of Burgos of "onrar a toda España" ("honor all Spain"; 54, M. 2v; 3). Notably, the bishop of Burgos who failed to pursue the same objective is presented as "natural de Asturias de Oviedo" ("a native of Asturias, from Oviedo"; 53, M. 2r; 3). The contrast between each other's birthplace has profound implications for the internal tensions of the kingdoms of Castile and León.

Being from Asturias, the bishop of Toledo is associated with the old Leonese nobility of the kingdom that royal and ecclesiastical historiography described as direct descendants of the Visigothic nobility. On the other hand, the Mozarabic identity of Pérez Gudiel traces an alternative claim to dynastic continuity with pre-Islamic Spain. Asturian and Leonese historiography promoted Asturian lineages as a driving force against Islam. This idea was adopted by Alfonso X's *Estoria de España*—a foundational piece of Castilian and Spanish historiography that I address in more detail in the following chapter. On the other hand, the Mozarabs of Toledo pride themselves as direct descendants of the Visigothic population that remained in their lands after the Islamic conquest without converting to the religion of their new overlords. The contraposition between the bishop of Toledo and the relationship between Martines and Pérez Gudiel participates in the conflict between two ways to conceptualize the place of al-Andalus in the Castilian past. In this regard, the prologue makes unambiguous praise

¹⁵⁷ Pedro Rodríguez de Quexada, also known as Petrus Hispanus, was highly regarded in the Roman curia, where he served Boniface VIII since 1294 and was elected cardinal in 1302 (Lozano Renieblas "prólogo").

of Toledo as a place where intercultural exchanges go hand in hand to “honor all Spain.” Where the member of an Asturian lineage failed, a clergyman from Toledo succeeds. Martines returns to Rome for a second time. If the first one was framed as a pilgrimage and jubilee, the second one corresponds to a *translatio* that takes the valuable remains of Pérez Gudiel from the ecclesiastical center of the Catholic church to the city that aimed to occupy that position in the Iberian context.

As in the case of Alfonso X’s *Libro de las cruces* discussed in Chapter 2, *translatio* and translation work together in the prologue the *Zifar* to reinforce that position of authority. The forged existence of the romance’s *caldeo* source runs parallel to Alfonso’s translation of the Arabic treatise for its superior knowledge of the celestial bodies. Likewise, both works underscore a superior knowledge of the ancient people of India, implying an Eastward transmission according to the medieval paradigm of *translatio studii*. But the intersection between translation and *translatio* in *Zifar* is not limited to its alleged *caldeo* source. It is also implied in the place from where Pérez Gudiel’s takes the corpse of the Mozarabic cardinal: “el arçidiano sacólo de la sepultura do yazie enterrado en la çibdad de aroma en la iglesia de Santa María, çerca de la capiella de presepe domini, do yaze enterrado sant Gerónimo” (“Then the archdeacon took it from the tomb where it was lying interred in the city of Rome in the church of Saint Mary Major near the chapel of the church of Christ where Saint Jerome lies interred”; 54, M. 2v; 3). The historically accurate burial place is associated with the neighboring burial place of Jerome, translator of the standard Latin version of the Christian Bible.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Besides *translatio* of his body, the intellectual work of Jerome included a Commentary on the Book of Daniel in which he identified the passage on the four kingdoms discussed in Chapter 1. According to Jerome, those four kingdoms corresponded to Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. Without referring his mention in the prologue, Gómez Redondo underscores Jerome’s work as a historian as part of his *auctoritas* (“prologue” 95). Olsen writes that “the physical proximity of this saint to the Cardinal, irrespective of historical veracity, associates the qualities of a saint with Gonçalo Gudiel (“Prologue” 17). Hernández and Linehan confirm the existence of Pérez Gudiel’s tomb in Santa Maria Maggiore, transcribing its inscription, and describing the space (392–93).

Long after he died in 420, the remains of Jerome's body received a *translatio*. In this case, the saintly body of Jerome was relocated from Bethlehem to the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (De Blaauw 156). His *translatio* was part of the Papacy's continued effort to reinforce Rome's central position for the European Christendom. Now, Ferrand Martínez takes the corpse of Pérez Gudiel from the very place where the relics of Vulgate Bible's translator were venerated to Toledo, where the anonymous *trasladador* claims to have translated into Castilian another remnant of the ancient East, the ambivalently Chaldean source of the *Zifar*.

Coming back to its native land from the center of European Christendom, the dead body of Pérez Gudiel receives the treatment of a saintly relic, as Girón-Nigrón has convincingly argued. His arrival to Toledo reinforces the recent elevation of the city's Archbishopric to the title of Primate of Spain. Furthermore, it grants its cathedral with a relic to compete with the famed relics of Saint James in Santiago de Compostela. Even if the dead body of Pérez Gudiel pales in comparison to the relevance of Saint James, it is not without significance in terms of vindicating the local Mozarabic community vis-à-vis other Christian identities in the kingdoms of Castile and León. The *translatio* of his corpse follows three stages that suggest that relocation of the corpse of Pérez Gudiel in the prologue of the *Zifar* was conceived as a form of propaganda of the virtues of Toledo. These three stages correspond to the route up the arrival to Castile, the entry in the realms of Fernando IV (r. 1295-1312), and the reception of the dead body by the people of its native city in Toledo.¹⁵⁹

The brevity of the prologue limits the information given for each of the three stages I outlined. Nevertheless, each of them includes meaningful glimpses that reveal how lineage and alterity intersect as the prologue narrativizes the *translatio* of the Mozarabic dead body. During

¹⁵⁹ Olsen writes about this *translatio* as "an ironic situation which downgrades the prestige of Rome while increasing that of Toledo" ("Prologue" 18). This reading correlates to her emphasis on an ironic representation of the Pope Boniface VIII.

the first stage of this travel, Ferrand Martines confronts the people of Florence who try to bury the corpse in their city. Martines pretends to a relative of the deceased arguing that “era un cavallero su pariente que muriera en esta romería, que lo levava a su tierra” (“it was the body of a knight who was a relative of his who had died on the pilgrimage and he was escorting to his own land”; 54, M. 2v; 3-4). Even if only pretended, this family relationship reinforces the already stated relationship of patronage between the two men. After presenting himself as a relative of the deceased, Martines is no longer questioned about his travel with a corpse. He has the right to take care of his dynastic business.

The episode in Florence is the only challenge that Martines faces during the travel. After solving it by forging a family relationship, the *trasladador* moves into their entry in Castile.¹⁶⁰ This happens in Logroño where Martines uncovers the dead body. Then, the remains of the cardinal are received by a group of local clerics and “good men” (“omes buenos” González Muela 54, M. 2v). The *trasladador* mentions that the same reception followed up to the arrival of Toledo before going into more detail about who was present when they crossed the city of Burgos:

E ante que llegasen con el cuerpo a la çibdat de Burgos, el rey don Ferrando, fijo del muy noble rey don Sancho e de la reina doña María, con el infante don Enrique, su tío, e don Diego, señor de Vizcaya, e don Lope, su hijo, e otros muchos ricos omes e infançones e caballeros que le salieron a resçibir fuera de la çibdat e le fizieron mucha onra; e por do ivan, saliendo a resçebir todos los de las villas como a cuerpo santo, con candelas en las manos e con ramos. (54–5, M. 2v–3r)

Before they arrived with the body at the city of Burgos, the king, Don Fernando, son of the famous king Dons Sancho, and the Queen, Doña María, which prince Don Enrique, his uncle, Don Diego, lord of Vizcaya, and Don Lope, his son, may other rich men,

¹⁶⁰ Blood familial relationships play a role at Pérez Gudiel’s arrival to Toledo. His body is received by Gonçalo Díaz Palomaque, his nephew and successor in the archbishopric of Toledo—both had previously held the see of Cuenca (Hernández and Linehan 539). According to the prologue, Díaz Palomaque failed to take the body of his uncle back to Toledo. Lacking this blood relationship, the decision of Martines to forge one as they cross through Florence was necessary to fulfill the *translatio*. Besides Pérez Gudiel’s nephew, the cadaver is received in Toledo by Juan Manuel—nephew of King Alfonso X—whose canonic work *El conde Lucanor* constitutes another important example of the impact of the transcultural tradition of exemplary tradition in medieval Iberia.

noblemen, and knights come to receive it as they would with the body of a saint, with candles and branches of devotion in their hands. (4)

The royal family and local nobles lead the honors that the cadaver receives in Burgos. As Girón-Negrón points out, the reference to the cardinal as a “*cuerpo de santo*” strongly suggests the prologue’s conceptualization of Pérez Gudiel’s relocation according to the tradition of the *translatio* of saints. Furthermore, two characteristics stand out among those receiving the body in Burgos, their nobility and Christian devotion. Pérez López disentangles the internal conflicts of the Castilian royal family that had opposed the “infante don Enrique”—brother of Alfonso X—and the “reina doña María”—wife and blood relative Alfonso’s rebel son Sancho (“*Libro*” 2001–04). After a papal bull had recognized the young Fernando as legitimate, Enrique and María set aside their problems to receive and honor the body of Pérez Gudiel, a close ally of the queen María pushed to leave the kingdom for his see in Rome once Enrique took control of the kingdom after the death of Sancho IV. These dynastic conflicts anticipate and connect to the local context the dynastic struggles stressed in the romance content, even if there is no clear indication that the *trasladador* aimed to suggest that the embodied heritage resulting from unfitting rule had local implications.¹⁶¹

Besides its historical value, the description of the arrival to Burgos underscores the contrast between the northern city and the final destination of the *cuerpo de santo* in Toledo. If the bishop of Burgos had conceived the *translatio* as an event that would “honor all Spain,” the range of individuals that received the body there portray a narrow conception of its people limited to the higher ranks of the realm and without any reference to non Christian people. By

¹⁶¹ Hernández, Hilty, and Pérez López argue that the detail and accuracy of the historical events in the prologue strongly suggest that the author of the *Zifar* was Martínez or someone close to the Mozarabic clergy of Toledo.

contrast, the arrival of the body results in broader collective honoring and being honored by the culmination of Martínez's enterprise:

E la onra que resçibiço este cuerpo del cardenal quando llegaron con él a la noble çibdat de Toledo fue muy grant maravilla, en manera que non acordava ninguno, por ançiano que fuese, que oyese dezir que nin a rey nin a enperador nin a otro ninguno fuese fecha atan grande onra como a este cuerpo de este cardenal; ca todos los clérigos del arçobispado fueron con capas de seda, e las órdenes de la çibdat también de religiosos. Non fincó christiano nin moro nin judío que todos non le salieron a resçebir con sus çirios muy grandes e con ramos en las manos. (55, M. 3r)

The honor that this body of the cardinal received when they arrived at the illustrious city of Toledo was astonishing. No one, no matter how aged he might be, could remember or had ever heard of any king, emperor, or anyone else for whom so great honor had been done as for this cardinal's body; for all the clergy of the archbishopric were dressed in their capes of silk, as were the civic groups of the city, as well as all religious orders. There was not a Christian, Moor, or Jew who did not come out to receive the body with their very largest candles and branches in their hands. (4)

The extraordinary character that the *trasladador* aims to project into the arrival of Pérez Gudiel's body to his city of origin is expressed through references to luxurious silk garments, big candles, and great multitudes. *Every* Muslim and Jew received the body, it is said. Regardless of differences in religious beliefs, this collective joy widens the scope of those encompassed by the "honor all Spain" goal of the *translatio*. Furthermore, the celebration of the Mozarabic cardinal across religious boundaries introduces the reader to the adventures of Zifar's family. As stated by the *trasladador*, both stories are to be remembered.

Toledo's collective celebration of the dead body sheds light on the social implications of the romance's stances about what alterity implies and how it can be transformed. The *cuerpo de santo* is disposed of his individuality to serve as a living memory of the multicultural character of a Mozarabic identity that the *trasladador* proposes as a model for an expansive Spanish social body. This is not to say that the *Zifar* proposes a "tolerance" to non-Christian values. Rather contrarily, there is an evident push towards transforming religious alterity into a Christian

worldview. The prologue expresses this push towards Christianity by framing the reception of Pérez Gudiel's cadaver as a Christian ceremony in which *all* non-Christian local communities celebrate. When it comes to the romance, the ambivalent presence of Arabic referents and Christian ideals of the *cavallero de Dios* do their part. Collectively, prologue and romance acknowledge the existence of alterity while limiting all participation that does not correspond to a Christian worldview. This ambivalent representation of alterity accounts for what I referred to as memorialization. Both the Mozarabic body and the *caldeo* romance may be genealogically traced back to al-Andalus while preserving its exemplary Christian character. They are remembered as a relic from a past whose alterity is overshadowed by monocultural and monolingual Christian rites.

Like any historical record, the *Zifar* and its prologue create a past as it describes it. The *traslatio* of the corpse of Pérez Gudiel presents him as an embodied relic of the intercultural exchanges conducted in Toledo during and after its Andalusí period. Those dynamics are memorialized as the origin of a still vibrant community where religious alterity exists, even if its presence is visible through a strictly Christian lens. At this crossroad of Christian authority and multicultural identity, the *Zifar* chooses a knight from remote ancient India to become the main character of this "Book of the Knight of God."

Intermingling memorialization and exemplarity, the *trasladador* proposes a path to transform the alterity of the Andalusí heritage under a Christian future within Castile. Along with its strong emphasis on family origins as the space to be transformed, the *Zifar* follows a strictly patrilineal conception. This patrilineal character is evident in the in-existent impact of women's actions in determining their offspring's ethical or embodied characteristics. The chapter that follows continues exploring the notion of a transformable genealogical heritage with a stronger

focus on gender. To do so, I address a fourteenth-century branch of the *Estoria de Espanna* that embeds a version of the French romance about the love story of the Muslim prince Floire and Christian captive Blancheflor. Unlike the *Zifar*, the Spanish version expands on the possibility of a female-driven dynastic transformation through the practice of breastfeeding.

Chapter 4 Wet Nursing and Conversion in the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*

In this chapter, I analyze the intercultural romantic relationship between the two protagonists of the Castilian version of the widely transmitted French romance *Floire et Blancheflor* focusing on their shared breastfeeding by Berta, mother of *Blancheflor* (Blancaflor, in the Castilian). While French versions locate the plot in Southern Italy, the Castilian version—known as *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*—situates the love story between a Muslim prince and a Christian captive in the fictional kingdom of Almería, around the city located in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. Furthermore, the version I discuss incorporated the story into a branch of the *Estoria de Espanna*, the most influential historiographical work of medieval Castile.¹⁶² Despite forming a relatively late manuscript branch, the *CFB* derives from a direct copy of the *Versión primitiva* of the *EE*. Thus, it modifies the first Alfonsine version of the *EE*, which relied on ideas about a dynastic continuity between Visigothic and Asturian nobility of earlier chronicles, particularly from Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *De rebus Hispaniae* (1243).¹⁶³

Throughout this chapter, I address the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* as evidence of a willingness to reevaluate the role that individuals of Muslim origin may play in the unified

¹⁶² I refer to the *Estoria de Espanna* as *EE* and the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* as *CFB*. I quote from Arbesú's edition, who follows Grieve's nomenclature for the title of his edition calling it *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*. Bautista titles his edition *Crónica carolingia* to encompass the content of the chapters following the *CFB*, which address the life of their daughter—from the tradition of *Berthe aux Grands Pieds*—Berta and grandson Charlemagne—from the *Mainet*. These materials are not included in Arbesú's edition. They are not part of the analysis in this chapter since they do not address my focus on the implications of breastfeeding for reconstruction of Iberian past. Both Arbesú and Bautista include materials of the romance along the intercalated chapters from the version of the *EE* that the manuscript transcribes and adapts. Gómez Pérez's first edition of the romance did not include the historical sections of the manuscript. References to the manuscript correspond to MS 7583 of the Biblioteca Nacional de España. All translations of the *CFB* are mine unless otherwise noted.

¹⁶³ For the textual filiation of the *CFB*, see Crespo (122–24), Fernández-Ordóñez (“transmisión” 256). I discuss some details about the cultural and historical significance of the *EE* in Chapter 1.

Christian kingdoms of Castile and León. This reevaluation calls into question ideas about a monocultural origin of Spain's noble lineages that found their way into earlier versions of the *Estoria de Espanna*, as discussed in Chapter 1. Taking Berta's breastfeeding of the two protagonists as a central point of my analysis, I propose that the *Crónica de Flores y Flancaflor* fosters a reinterpretation of relationships between Christians and Muslims through its projection of the history back onto the early years of Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula. The romance plot inserted into the *EE* occurs while al-Andalus was still part of an integrated Umayyad Caliphate ruled from Damascus (711-756). This period ended with the ascension of the Abbasid dynasty to the caliphate, whose consequences included the relocation of the caliphal court to Baghdad, the promotion of translations from the "Sciences of the Ancients" discussed in Chapter 2, and the arrival of 'Abd al-Raḥmān I, the only surviving member of the Umayyad dynasty, laying the foundation for al-Andalus's later split from Abbasid rule.

In the *CFB*, Berta's actions present the religious alterity of Iberian Muslims as transformable through feminine practices of intimacy that may lead to their conversion and assimilation into a Christian worldview. To justify this claim, I analyze how the intimate affection deployed by the main characters of the romance defines the alterity of Islam as assimilable through a close reading of crucial moments of the romance related to the effects of breastfeeding in creating intercultural practices and transforming dynastic identities.

With multiple medieval versions in various European languages, the romance about the love story of Flores and Blancaflor was intertwined with a relatively late branch of the *Estoria de Espanna*. Alfonso X commissioned the *EE* as a chronicle that would narrate the history of Spain from the early settlers of the Iberian Peninsula to his time. However, the work remained unfinished during his lifetime. It was his son and heir, Sancho IV (r. 1284–1295), who completed

the chronicle, setting its ending point at the death of Alfonso's father Fernando III (r. 1230–1252), nicknamed “*el Santo*” (the Saint), and later canonized by the Catholic Church, for his numerous military victories over the Islamic rulers of Southern Spain.

Within that complex textual transmission of the *EE* outlined in Chapter 1, the version including a version of *Floire et Blancheflor* was probably created around 1390. The *CFB* is preserved in five manuscripts, but only the MS 7583 of the Biblioteca Nacional de España—a fifteenth-century copy—includes the full account of the story.¹⁶⁴ This relatively small and incomplete branch of the *EE* remained unnoticed until 1964, when Gómez Pérez discovered it in the abovementioned manuscript. Even then, the romance remained mostly unnoticed until Grieve published her exhaustive study of the whole European tradition of *Floire et Blancheflor* in 1997. Grieve suggested the title *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* (Chronicle of Flores and Blancaflor) for this version, accurately underscoring the romance's revamped historiographical character met the content of earlier versions of the *EE*.

In its different iterations across the European Middle Ages, the romance describes the adventures of the two eponymous characters as they face obstacles to their mutual love. The Castilian *CFB* starts with the capture of a widowed French countess named Berta by Fines, Muslim king of Almería. In the Almería court, Berta becomes close to the king's wife. Soon, both women realize that they are pregnant, and both deliver on the same day. Berta gives birth to a girl, Blancaflor, and the queen to a boy, Flores. Berta takes care of breastfeeding and raising the children, who became infatuated with each other. Fines sends his son away to impede an unfavorable marriage with the daughter of a Christian captive. When he finds his way to return

¹⁶⁴ For Bautista, the *CFB* was composed during the reign of Enrique III, probably between 1388 and 1390 (Estudio 29–34). Both Gómez Redondo and Grieve situate the manuscript BNE MS 7583 around 1390 but suggest an earlier composition of the *CFB* at the end of the thirteenth century. Details about the manuscripts in Arbesú (Introduction 25–27), Bautista (Estudio 18–21), and Fernández-Ordóñez (“transmisión” 256). After studying its four incomplete manuscripts, Catalán gave this manuscript branch of the *EE* the name of *Crónica fragmentaria* (Fragmentary Chronicle).

to the court, Blancaflor has been sold to some merchants who offered her to the Muslim King of Babilonia—the title that the romance gives to the Sultan of Egypt. Flores follows her path and tries to reunite with his beloved. After a series of adventures and a court trial, the Sultan allows Flores and Blancaflor to return to Almería, but they shipwreck in an island of the *mar oçeano* (the Atlantic Ocean). In this symbolic space, they interact with a community of monks. An apparition of St. Augustine leads to Flores's conversion to Christianity, a decision that he keeps in secret until being crowned king of Almería. At the end of the romance, Flores becomes an actor in Iberian politics as a Christian king, conquering extensive Muslim lands within and beyond the Iberian Peninsula in ways that disregard entirely the real facts of Iberian history, despite using the *EE* as the base text.

Some of the actions outlined are common to other European versions of the romance. However, the Castilian version is unique in introducing a description of the practice of cross-confessional breastfeeding and the impact of Flores's actions as a king over the Muslim realms of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa. Along with these innovations, the religious identities of the characters also add a layer of signification to the romance in the context of coexistence and familiarity of multiple religious communities within the Iberian Peninsula. In this regard, the *CFB* remains conspicuously silent until the conversion episode. However, that episode allows for a reconstruction of their earlier identities. Whether openly or in private, Berta remains Christian after being held captive. This situation aligns with strong Islamic opposition to forced conversion. Meanwhile, Flores and Blancaflor are educated as Muslims, with Blancaflor hearing her mother talk about their Christian origin but—we can infer—without attempting to make her an open or secret Christian.

Despite not influencing their Muslim identity, Berta's breastfeeding creates a shared nurturing and educational space for Flores and her daughter. It is her breastfeeding that the *CFB* describes as leading to Flores's conversion to Christianity "ca la naturaleza de la leche de la cristiana lo mouio a ello" ("because the nature of the Christian milk moved him towards it"; 16–17, fol. 41v). What does the reference to the "nature" of Christian milk mean in this context? To fully understand the implications of Berta's breastfeeding, this chapter includes a historicization of the conceptualization of royal lineages in the historiographical tradition of the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula challenged by the figure of Berta in *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*. I also provide information about medical, theological, and sociological ideas about breastfeeding in medieval Iberia and the Mediterranean basin.

By analyzing cross-confessional breastfeeding in and beyond the *CFB*, this chapter traces the gendered imprint that milk leaves in the revision of the Spanish past that results from weaving together the tradition of *Floire et Blancheflor* and Alfonso X's *Estoria de Espanna*. I follow that imprint through two separate but interconnected paths. First, I analyze the relationship between Berta, Flores, and Blancaflor in light of sociological and anthropological ideas about milk and the family in the medieval Mediterranean. I propose that Berta is presented in the *CFB* as the founder of a milk-based lineage. This milk-based lineage enables the conception of Flores's Islamic origin as an integral component of the Spanish Christian past after he decides to convert. The consequences of Berta's suckling underline both the unstable character of individual "nature" and the transformative potential of nurture and education.

The second line of inquiry further explores the entanglement between gender, religion, and genealogy by placing their representation in the *CFB* into dialogue with a series of social and historiographical practices under Christian and Muslim rule. From a historical perspective,

patterns of royal marriage and inheritance in the Kingdom of Asturias and al-Andalus from the Islamic conquest of 711 to the end of the Caliphate of Córdoba in 1031 reveal that rulers of both realms were born from women of a different religion than their own. In Asturias, there are cases of royal inheritance through marriage with a king's daughter, as Pick shows. Despite the importance of queens and other women in courtly circles to understand interfaith and dynastic relationships during the first centuries of Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula, the chronicles only give them scant attention. Written several centuries after that period, the *CFB* should not be expected to clarify women's role in forming dynastic identities. However, the characters of Berta and Blancaflor offer an unusual narrative about this issue that sheds light on how fourteenth-century Castilians conceived the impact that feminine practices as breastfeeding could have in the creation and effects of intercultural relationships and, more specifically, in potential consequences of intermarriage.

Breastfeeding and Milk Kinship

The plot of the romance in the *CFB* starts with Berta's path to the Almerian court of the Muslim King Fines after a failed pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Her displacement from France to Almería traces a trajectory from a Christian space into one in which intercultural contact leads to transformative relationships. The beginning of Berta's journey is meant to satisfy the vow she made of going to the shrine of Santiago if she became pregnant. Her father, an unnamed duke, accompanies the then widowed countess. Both pursue a pilgrimage to Compostela but, when they are close to fulfilling Berta's pious promise, the army of Fines surrounds them. The duke dies in battle, and his daughter Berta is handed over to the king in

exchange for “grand auer” (“valuable assets”; 2, fol. 6v). Once in the Andalusí court, King Fines underscores Berta’s noble origin as proof of her worth:

E mando llamar a la reyna, e dióle a la Condessa Berta, e dixole que la mandasse mucho onrar, ca era fija dalgo e condessa mucho honrada en su tierra e en su logar, e la reina fue muy pagada e gradesçiole mucho al rey por que tal don le daua, e mandola mucho seruir e onrar, e auien grand savor vna de otra. (52, fol. 7r)

He summoned the queen and gave her the countess Berta. And he asked the Queen to command that Berta ought to be honored because she was noble and a much-honored countess at her land and place. The queen was very pleased and thanked the king for the gift. She commanded that she be served and honored, and they were very fond of each other.

As the daughter of a duke, Berta’s worth is assessed according to a genealogical logic of lineage. However, the title of Countess that she receives underscores the patriarchal character of that logic. Marriage to the dead count overrides the nobility received from her father as “fija dalgo” (literally ‘daughter of someone,’ with the implication ‘of someone noble’). Furthermore, the reference to her as “fija dalgo” already implies the gender disparities of medieval lineage, given the disparate number of cases of its feminine and masculine forms in extant documentation.¹⁶⁵

Berta’s virtues rapidly make an impact on the Almerian queen. The *CFB* explicitly states how this closeness is built *against* the linguistic barrier created by their different backgrounds: “La Condessa Berta fablaua francés e la reyna algarauia, e vna a otra se mostravan su lenguaje. E la reina fizola mucho su priuada, ca en todo su palacio non auie más fermosa que aquella Berta, nin más cortes nin mesurada” (“Countess Berta spoke French, and the queen Arabic, and they taught each other their own languages. And the queen relied on her as a counselor, since there was none in the whole palace more beautiful, courteous, and restrained than Berta”; 52, fol. 7r).

¹⁶⁵ A search in the *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* reveals significant differences in the use of feminine and masculine forms of the noun, with 32 and 332 cases respectively before 1400.

The linguistic differences between the two noblewomen introduce a problem that the characters need to solve to convey meaningful mutual interaction. Multilingualism appears here as a solution to overcome the problem. The explicit reference to language acquisition is a recognition of the social reality of the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in contexts of intercultural contact.

Overcoming linguistic differences enables the emergence of a close relationship between the local queen and the foreign Berta. This bond is presented as part of a quotidian familiarity: “E avino assy que vn dia esta condessa labraua vn façeruelo de seda que diesse a la reyna su señora por que ouiese mas su gracia, e en labrandole touole ojo la reyna e viola triste a marauilla, e preguntole que auie” (“And it happened that one day this countess was sewing a pillow of silk to give the queen her lady to gain her favor. And while she was sewing, the queen looked at her and saw that she was extremely sad. And the Queen asked what happened to her”; 52, fol. 7r). Here, the luxurious gift functions as material support for the intercultural affective bond. The construction of the passage around the act of weaving highlights a gendered intervention in the patriarchal structures of lineage. Moving beyond the centrality of kingship and patrilineal genealogy in the historiographical tradition of the *EE*, the *CFB* introduces this feminine courtly practice as a point of departure for the romantic plot led by their children.

A shared narrative about their two pregnancies emerges from Berta’s weaving of the Andalusian silk fabric. Berta’s sadness turns into shared joy as the Queen tells her: “Otrossy so yo preñada dese mesmo tienpo que vos dezides” (“I am also pregnant from the same time that you said”; 53, fol. 7r). From this point on, the still-unborn Flores and Blancaflor become inextricably linked until the creation of an intermixed dynasty that—spawning from the disparate origins of their parents—will lead to Charlemagne’s birth. The singularity of the moment of affective connection between Berta and the queen is materially manifested in manuscript BNE 7583

(Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Interrupting his transcription of the *CFB*, the scribe created a visual representation of it by creating a sketch of Berta embroidering the pillow inside the long trace of the “I” (the “y” of *yo*) with which the Queen confirms that she is also pregnant. The same-day birth signals the tight bond that their children will eventually have. Meanwhile, the election of their names underscores this bond through a symbolic resemblance: Flores (‘flowers’) and Blancaflor (‘white flower’). The choice of these names is explained by being born during the month of April “quando nasçen las flores” (“when flowers are born”; 53, fol. 7r). This emphasis on birth conveniently fits their role in giving birth to a new lineage that, shifting away from monocultural and patrilineal logics, intermingles Christian and Muslim origins.¹⁶⁶

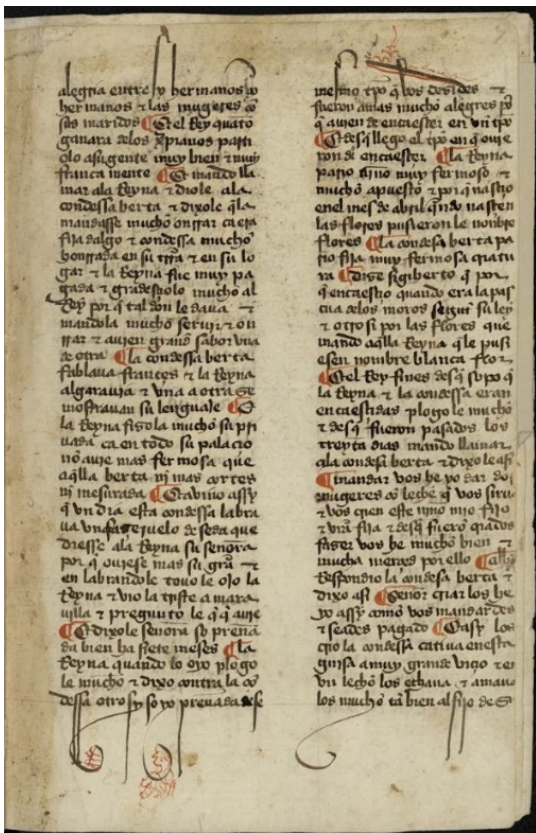


Figure 4.1 Berta and the Queen: text and sketch (fol. 7r)

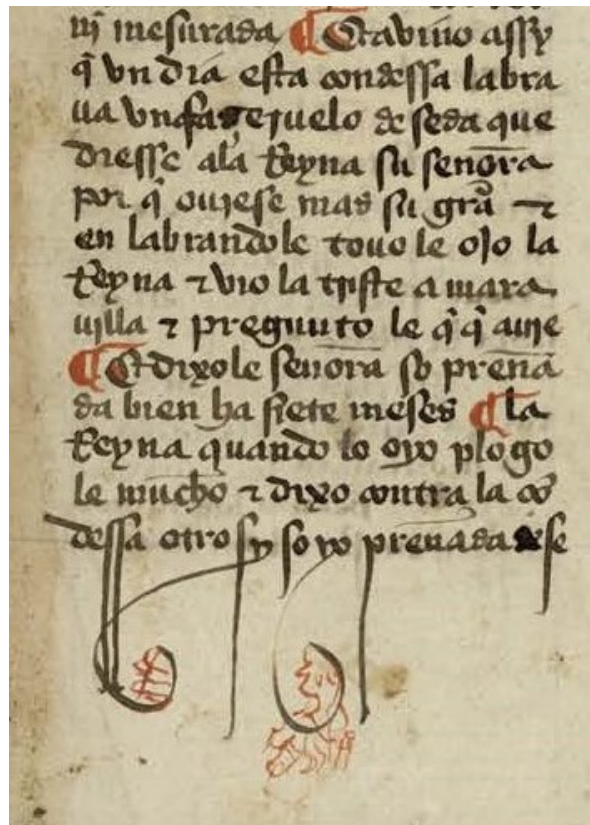


Figure 4.2 Berta and the Queen: text and sketch (fol. 7r, detail)

¹⁶⁶ Likewise, the *CFB* brings together romance and historiography; Castilian and translated sources; and Andalusí, Castilian, and French history. Each of these separate categories received support either in medieval or postmedieval discourses, a work as *CFB* puts into question their universal validity within medieval society.

The names Flores and Blancaflor are common to the other medieval versions written across Europe—even if adapted to each language—, but the *CFB* introduces a reference to religion in the context of their birth. The narratorial voice of the compiler invokes the authority of a historian named Sigiberto: “Dize Sigiberto que porque encaesçio quando era la pascua de los moros, segunt su ley, e otrosi por las flores, que mando aquella reyna que la pusiesen nombre Blancaflor” (“Sigiberto says that because she gave birth when it was the Easter of the Moors, according to her/their law, and also because of the flowers, the queen commanded that they name her Blancaflor”; 53, fol. 7r). Given the unclear antecedent of the third person pronoun “su” (“their” / “her”), the reading of this quote is ambiguous. “Su” may refer to the religious law to “the Moors,” to the plural subject of “they name” (*pusiesesen nombre*), to Blancaflor’s mother, or to the queen who commands the action. The convoluted enumeration confusingly introduces religion as a reason for the election of a name not associated with Christianity or Islam.

Likewise, it is unclear what “Easter of the Moors” may signify in the previous passage. Does it refer to an Islamic celebration akin to the Christian commemoration of the death of Christ? Is it emphasizing that the birth occurred during the *Christian* Easter but in a Muslim context? Instead of a precise answer, the births of Flores and Blancaflor during the “Easter of the Moors” may be approached in terms of the ambivalent approach to the alterity of al-Andalus discussed in Chapter 3 regarding the *Libro del caballero Zifar*. As an ambivalent signifier, the festivities celebrated during Flores’s and Blancaflor’s birth may be pointing to either, both, or a combination of religious referents coherent with the affinity between Berta and the queen regardless of their religious affiliation. Ultimately, the mention here to a religious signifier without dogmatic referent evidences a predisposition to blend normative assumptions about the

limits of identity and community through life experiences of the newly born Flores and Blancaflor.

Continuing with the topic of religious ambiguity, the *CFB* avoids mentioning explicitly the religion in which the two children are educated. Blancaflor's later conversion to Christianity requires that she had been raised as a Muslim, but this is not evident until the episode of her conversion.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, she is never questioned for being Christian, even though King Fines conceives her Christian ancestry as a challenge to the legacy of his Umayyad lineage should she marry his son Flores. While lineage and conversion are addressed in more detail in the next section, they are inextricably linked with Berta's role as a wet nurse. As discussed in the following pages, their eventual conversion to Christianity is rooted in the ability of Berta to interact with them in a way that challenges barriers between communities conceived from multiple disciplines in both Christian and Muslim circles.

After Flores's and Blancaflor's birth, the intercultural bonds created between the two mothers are expanded into the relationship between Berta and the newborns. Thirty days later, King Fines shares with Berta his plan for raising the children: "Mandarvos he yo dar dos mugeres con leche que vos siruan e vos crien este niño, mio fijo, e vuestra fija; e desque fueron criados, fazervos he mucho bien e mucha merced por ello" ("I will send you two wet nurses to serve you and nurse my son and your daughter for you. And once they are raised, I will treat you well and with great honor for it."); 53, fol. 7r). Opposed to Fines's plan, Berta suggests raising and nursing the babies herself:

«Señor, criarlos he yo assy como vos mandardes e seades pagado». E assy los crio la condessa catiua en esta guisa a muy grand viçio, e en vn lecho los echaua, e amaualos

¹⁶⁷ Whereas Christianity requires baptism for being a full member of the community, for Islam everyone is born Muslim and only education turns people away from the true faith.

mucho, tan bien al hijo de su señor como a su hija. E asy se criaron amos fasta que llegaron a hedat de diez años. (53, fol. 7r–7v).

“Sire, let me nurse them as you command, and you will be satisfied.” And the captive countess nursed them this way with great joy. And she laid them in one bed. And she loved them very much; the son of her lord as much as her daughter. And they grew up in this manner until they reached the age of ten.

The representation of Berta as actively seeking to nurse the children is a particularity of the *CFB* absent in other versions of the romance. Grieve’s analysis of this passage in the French “aristocratic” version (also known as “conte” or group I) reveals a problem among modern editions related to the religious identity of the woman who takes care of the babies. Different editors read a reference to the woman as “the queen” (*la roine*), “the Arab” (*l’Aravie*), or “the captive” (*la ravie*) (*Floire* 43–46). The editorial dilemma indicates the extent to which contact between children and religious “others” was a sensitive matter during the Middle Ages, if not in modern times as well.

The editorial discrepancies do not impede a clear delimitation of breastfeeding in the French “aristocratic” version. There, the text clarifies that Berta did not breastfeed the babies. Instead, this labor was given to a “pagan” (*paiene*)—that is, a Muslim—because their religion forbade other women to suckle the child (*car lor lois l’autre refusoit*).¹⁶⁸ The *CFB* differs from earlier versions of the romance about the two lovers in presenting Berta as the breastfeeder of the children. The association of Flores’s conversion with the ingestion of Berta’s milk after his birth makes the novelty of the Castilian version particularly significant. Berta plays a similar role in a later Castilian summary of the story in Lope García de Salazar’s *Libro de las bienandanzas e fortunas* (1471–476):

¹⁶⁸ The full passage reads “Livré l’ont a la damoisele, / por çou qu’ele estoit sage e bele, / a norrir et a maistroier, / fors seulement de l’alaitier. / Une paiienne l’alaitoit, car lor lois l’autre refusoit” (*Le Conte* 11 vv. 179–84). “They placed him [Floire] in the Christian [Berthe]’s care— / She was kind, as they were well aware. — / She did not nurse him at the breast / But cared for him in all the rest, / A paynim nursed him; this was done / By rule of their religion” (Hubert’s translation, *Romance* 28, vv. 177–82).

E como allegó a su casa pariole luego la Reyna su muger un fijo, e commo non avía otro, preciándolo mucho diolo a criar aquella Condesa de Proencia que tenja buena teta, diziendo que la leche de la christiana era mejor que la de los moros. Lo qual la Condesa ovo a buena dicha e criolo a su teta. E porque no quiso que su fija Blancaflor mamase teta de mora criábala con leche de cabras e dábale la su teta de callada cuando podía (153–54, quoted and translated by Arbesú Introduction 16–17).

And when this king arrived at his house, the queen, his wife, had given birth to a son, and the king was very fond of him because he did not have another child. Therefore he gave his son to the countess so that she could raise him, since she had good milk, claiming that the Christians' milk was better than that of the Moors. The countess agreed to this and fed the boy, and because she did not want her daughter Blancaflor to be breastfed by Moors, she gave her the milk of some goats, and also hers when she could, but secretly.

This fifteenth-century reference to the milk that nurtured Flores and Blancaflor may be informed by the role given to Berta's milk in the *CFB* as part of the evolution of the two protagonists of the romance towards forming a Christian ruling dynasty. García de Salazar's characterization of King Fines's attitude towards Berta's breastfeeding goes from the silent acceptance of the *CFB* to claiming that Christian milk is better than Muslim milk. For Arbesú, the differences between García de Salazar's version and the *CFB* could result from recalling the story from memory ("Introduction 18). At the same time, the discrepancies could be related to the intensification of discourses of alterity based on the religion practiced by ancestors during the fifteenth century.¹⁶⁹

The representation of the Christian milk of Berta as inherently superior to the milk of Muslim women brings to light ideas already existing in medieval Iberia long before the composition of the *CFB*. The following pages address some instances of the conceptualization of breastfeeding as problematic for preserving in-group cultural identity. In other words, they explore responses to breastfeeding the children of cultural groups perceived as others in and

¹⁶⁹ The bibliography on this subject is abundant, particularly in relation to the idea of "purity of blood." These changes fall out of the temporal scope of this dissertation and require further research to offer a more conclusive analysis. Wacks addresses this issue in a similarly tentative way ("*Crónica*" 278).

beyond the Iberian context. I start by addressing the notion of milk kinship: a family-like form of social bonding through milk in Islamic societies. Then, I continue addressing medieval attitudes towards breastfeeding children across religious communities in both Islamic and Christian contexts according to legal documents, literary texts, medical treatises, and archival sources.

Grieve discusses the role of breastfeeding in the *CFB* in relation to iconographic and literary representations of the Virgin Mary feeding Jesus Christ with her milk. Furthermore, she refers to medieval ideas about milk production and its capabilities as “conductor of otherwise hereditary characteristics as well as ethical and moral qualities” (*Floire* 97). The later part of this section expands on these ideas connecting them with the social implications of breastfeeding across religious communities. In a thought-provoking article, Wacks hints that milk kinship may be behind the relationship between Berta, Flores, and Blancaflor (“*Crónica*” 278, 283–84 n.16). For Wacks, the association with this Muslim practice would serve as an argument supporting a possible Arabic origin of the romance.¹⁷⁰

As part of this dissertation’s inquiry about genealogical origins and their transformation in medieval Castile, this chapter elaborates on the insights of Grieve and Wacks to address how breastfeeding shapes the relationships and identities of the main characters of the *CFB*. This approach complements the focus on textual transmission—either historical or forged—in the previous chapters, emphasizing family structure within the Iberian Peninsula. By situating breastfeeding, love, and intermarriage in the eighth century, the *CFB* resorts to remote origins to address the increasingly questioned place of individuals from a non-Christian ancestry in the Iberian Peninsula. In this context, the formulation of a strong bond between Berta and Flores

¹⁷⁰ This possibility was advanced by Hugo Brunner and accepted by Gaston Paris among others (Grieve *Floire* 18–20).

akin to the Muslim structure of milk kinship offers an alternative to monocultural discourses regarding exchanges between religious communities coexisting in the fourteenth century Castile.¹⁷¹

The notion of “milk kinship” (Arabic: *ridā’a*) refers to the social regulation of the relationships between individuals related to each other by having suckled milk from the same woman. Since the early codification of Islamic practices, milk kinship became an alternative to the relationships established by blood to create strong ties and obligations beyond the realm of the family and the tribe.¹⁷² The practice of wet nursing was accepted and even promoted in Islamic contexts since the Prophet’s time. For example, *Sūra* 4 of the Qur’ān states that “forbidden to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your parental aunts, brothers’ daughters, sisters’ daughters, those who are your mothers by having suckled you, those who are your sisters by suckling” (Q. 4:23, quoted by Giladi 21). This passage on the restrictions to sexual intercourse expands the punishment of incest to include the relationships established by wet nursing. Here, blood and milk relationships are codified as equivalent when considering the limits of belonging to the same kin.

The *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Biography of God’s Messenger) by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (704-767/776) offers a glimpse of how the practice of milk kinship was used to create strong bonds with non-blood-related lineages. When referencing Muḥammad’s infancy, Ibn Ishāq says that a Bedouin woman named Ḥalīma went from her desert settlement to Mecca looking for a child to breastfeed in exchange for wages. The little Muḥammad had been offered to different wet nurses who refused to take him, alleging that he was an orphan. Ḥalīma took the orphan Muḥammad

¹⁷¹ Kinoshita addresses the issue of intermarriage in the French versions of the *CFB* (*Medieval Boundaries* 77–104). My approach is informed by her analysis and conclusions, even if focused on the particularities of the Iberian Peninsula.

¹⁷² The use of the word “tribe” is problematic since it encompasses collectives that during early Islam were referred by various Arabic terms. For more details, see Varisco.

with her to the desert. When she started to suckle him, her dry breasts miraculously filled with enough milk to feed Muḥammad as well as Ḥalīma’s son. The milk kinship relationship created by nursing shaped the Prophet’s identity. According to Ibn Ishāq’s account: “The Apostle of God used to say to his companions: ‘I am the most Arab of you all. I am of Quraysh and I was suckled among the Banū Sa‘d b. Bakr’” (72).¹⁷³ The words that Ibn Ishāq attributes to the Prophet show that milk kinship expanded beyond blood to incorporate milk-based bonds created by nurture as part of Muḥammad’s perception of his ancestry.

By claiming to belong to both the Quraysh lineage of his parents and the milk-based lineage of the Banū Sa‘d, the Muḥammad of this narrative brings together two differentiated communities of early Islam: the Quraysh people who controlled Arabian commerce from Mecca and the desert tribes regarded as custodians of the purity of Arabic language and poetry.¹⁷⁴ Thus, Ibn Ishāq suggests that milk kinship brings together the multiplicity of the Arab peoples identifying the Prophet as a legitimate descendant of two different lineages by either blood or milk.

Ibn Ishāq’s biography of Muḥammad points to how milk kinship could transform individual perceptions of belonging and ancestry. The expansive character of kinship networks created by milk throughout the Islamic world leads to complex affiliation structures beyond the patrilineal blood-based dynasties. This situation required the formulation of clear rules about when and how milk kinship was effectively formed. As Parkes notes, “dubiously claimed ‘milk fatherhood’ as a means of morally illegitimate affiliation” became a potential source of social insecurity and required rulings intended to delimit the scope of milk kinship juridically (316–19).

¹⁷³ Full account of episode in pp. 70–72. See also Giladi 33–37.

¹⁷⁴ On this view of the desert tribes, see Touati 45–77.

Medical conceptions about how milk was processed supported the potential of milk kinship to include non-blood-based ancestry as part of an individual affiliation. Particularly relevant was the notion of the “sire’s milk” (Arabic: *laban al-fahl*), a euphemism for male semen. An example of the implications of this idea appears in the work of the Andalusī Mālikite jurist Ibn Rushd (1126–1198): “Certainly a man does not bring forth children by means of pregnancy and delivery like a woman, but he begets children by means of his semen which causes the (woman’s) pregnancy and flow of milk. Thus he becomes a parent just as the woman does by pregnancy and delivery” (*Muqaddimat Ibn Rushd*, quoted by Giladi 80). Ibn Rushd’s view of the generative power of man’s semen is not limited to the generation of the embryo but continues beyond conception to generate the production of milk. Giladi describes the implications of “sire’s milk” for gender relationships as making the man “owner” of the milk while reducing the role of the woman to that of a “hostess” (26).

The idea of semen being transformed into milk had consequences in Islamic jurisprudence. For example, the founder of the Mālikite legal school, Mālik ibn Anas (711–795), ruled that a certain man and a woman whom two different women breastfed by two different women could not be permitted marry because those women had partnered with the same man: “the semen [...] which impregnated both and which was the source of the milk of both was one and [...] the two sucklings had thus become as though they were the children of the two women’s husband” (quoted and translated by Giladi 26). Taken from the *ḥadīth* compilation *al-Muwattaʿa*, this ruling makes clear that ibn Anas conceived the relationship created by milk kinship as legally equivalent to family relationships established by blood and birth. References to the “sire’s milk” in legal and *ḥadīth* literature support Benkheira’s claim that “according to

religious families and the different schools of law, milk kinship is constructed in exact *symmetry* to consanguineous kinship” (21).

Parkes has proved the wide diffusion of this conception of milk kinship throughout medieval Islamic societies. This scholar shows how, in dynastic practices developed among Seljuk Turks, Mamluks, and Mughals, “‘milk fatherhood’ seems to have been the basic contractual or ‘co-parental’ tie established through *rida’ a* milk kinship, which plausibly accounts for the peculiar elaboration and symbolic legitimation of these vital male linkages through female nursing evident in Islamic jurisprudence” (320). There is no evidence that knowledge of dynastic practices involving “symbolic legitimation” through female nursing reached the Iberian Peninsula. However, given the existence of Islamic polities—Seljuk and Mamluk—within the Mediterranean basin by the time the *CFB* was elaborated, this possibility should not be ruled out.

Given the broad implications of breastfeeding in Islamic communities and the constant contact between Iberian Christians and those communities, it seems unlikely that the Islamic conception of milk as generative of family-like kinship ties were unknown to those in Castile more familiar with the culture of al-Andalus. The significance of breastfeeding is apparent when looking at how Christian and Muslim elites aimed to regulate breastfeeding across religious communities. To address the implications of wet nursing in the *CFB* it is necessary to expand the inquiry to consider occasions during which the wet nurse was not part of the Muslim community.

The renowned Andalusī poet, jurist, and theologian ibn Ḥazm of Cordova (994–1064) offers an illuminating note about wet nursing from a normative Islamic perspective. In his book of jurisprudence and Islamic law *al-Muḥallā* (The Adorned Treatise), this champion of the Zāhirī legal school considers that monotheist non-Muslim women were suitable wet nurses for Muslim

children. If they refrained from eating unlawful food and drink, Christian women—just as Berta in the *CFB*—would be suitable wet nurses for Muslim infants. Only the milk of women outside of the Abrahamic faiths was considered impure (Giladi 110–11). Ibn Ḥazm’s reference to the diet of the wet nurse is related to contemporary medical discourses. Medical views of milk and breastfeeding in the Islamic world followed the medical opinions of authors as Galen (129–ca. 210), Hippocrates (ca. 460–ca. 370 BCE), and Soranus (ca. 98–ca. 138). According to the latter, milk production resulted from heating menstrual blood in the breast. This view was also generally accepted in Christian contexts.¹⁷⁵

Some medical discourses associate the physiological process of milk nurture with moral values. Particularly influential was the approach of Persian polymath Ibn Sīnā’s (Lat: Avicenna, ca. 980–1037) to the relationship between blood, milk, and infant development in *al-Qānūn fī aṭ-Ṭibb* (The Canon of Medicine, ca. 1025)—a work widely disseminated in Europe, including the Iberian Peninsula. This compendium of medical knowledge includes guidelines about infant feeding. When addressing wet nursing, Ibn Sīnā offers a detailed description of the ideal wet nurse considering her health and physiognomy as affecting the quality of her milk. He concludes that “a nurse of immoral character cannot be trusted to give conscientious care to the baby and her behaviour would adversely affect the child’s character” (287).

Beyond references to this subject in medical and legal documents, documentation about wet nursing among enslaved non-Muslim Umayyad concubines suggests that cross-confessional breastfeeding was common in some circles of Andalusī society. However, there is no clear indication about whether it resulted in interconfessional milk kinship ties. It is also uncertain to

¹⁷⁵ Bartholomaeus Anglicus (ca. 1203–1272) supported it in his popular encyclopedic work *De Proprietaribus Rerum* (Giladi 41–67, Sinclair 36–37). Bartholomaeus Anglicus also signaled that the quality of the milk had important consequences for the evolution of the child: “Good milk produces good progeny, and bad milk bad progeny. The corruption of the nurse’s blood necessarily harms the little body of the child or infant” (quoted in Fildes 33–34).

what extent Islamic ideas and practices were known in the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. However, anthropological studies have shown similar forms of kinship based on milk in other European Christian societies during the Middle Ages.¹⁷⁶

Moving into Christian contexts, archival documentation from Majorca and the kingdom of Aragón demonstrates that cross-confessional breastfeeding was an active practice. Enslaved and freed wet nurses of Muslim origin served as wet nurses in Christian households of those territories from at least the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁷⁷ Castilian legal resolutions of the *Cortes* (royal assemblies) of Castile also addressed cross-confessional breastfeeding. Alfonso X issued resolutions on this subject after the *Cortes* of Valladolid in 1258 and Jerez in 1268. The Jerez resolution elaborates the position of the previous one of Valladolid against cross-confessional rearing (*crie*), completing it with a more unambiguous reference to breastfeeding:

Ninguna cristiana non more con judio nin con judia, nin con moro nin con mora, nin los siruan nin crien sus hijos, e la que lo fisiere sea sierua del rrey [...]. Ninguna judia nin mora non crie asu leche fijo de cristiano nin gela dé; la que lo fisiere sea mi sierua e el preçio que valdria sy se vendiese que dé yo la meytad al acusador. (*Cortes* vol. 1, 77)

No Christian woman should live with a Jewish man or Jewish woman or a Moorish man or woman. She should not serve them or rear their children, and the one who does shall become a slave to the King [...]. No Jewish or Muslim woman should nourish with her milk the child of a Christian or give it to the child; the one who does so shall be my servant, and I shall provide the accuser half of the price she would have if sold.¹⁷⁸

According to Dillard, these court resolutions were part of a “climate of segregation” during the second half of the thirteenth century in which a “double standard” pushed minority women out of their religious communities and under the control of Christian men (207).¹⁷⁹ Alfonso X’s legal regulations on the *Siete partidas* supported this administrative impulse to

¹⁷⁶ Parkes finds impediments to marriage in Eastern Christian canon law based on milk kinship “whose reckoning remarkably parallels that of contemporary Muslims” (320). Likewise, he points to the existence of milk kinship agnatic relationships among Christians in the Northern Balkans (321–22).

¹⁷⁷ Winer conducts a thorough archival research on wet nursing in medieval Aragon whose conclusions I follow here.

¹⁷⁸ My translation. For the resolution of the of Valladolid, see *Cortes* (vol. 1, 62).

¹⁷⁹ On breastfeeding in the *Cortes*, see also Fildes (39–41).

prevent cross-confessional intimacy and familiarity. But another aspect of Alfonso X's policy towards the non-Christian communities of his kingdom is highlighted by the *Cortes*: a decided effort to put non-Christian subjects under his direct control.

The interest of Alfonso X in the intellectual legacy of Jewish and Muslim Andalusí scholars addressed in Chapter 2 may seem at odds with the emphasis in his legal production on keeping religious communities apart. However, we must resist trying to find a coherent position on religious alterity concerning the two aspects of Alfonso X's rule that addressed very different needs. In the case of the *CFB*, the emphasis on breastfeeding across religious alterity occupies an ambivalent position. As part of the textual tradition of the *EE*, the *CFB* should have been received as an authoritative text. However, the intertwining of the preexisting chronicle with the romance materials results in significant changes in its representation of the Spanish past. The intercalated chapters dedicated to Flores and Blancaflor are the most recent addition, but their inclusion also led the compiler to adapt the historiographical chapters to fit the characters into the events occurring in the Iberian Peninsula at their time. The following section focuses on the story of the two lovers discussing the role of Berta's care and breastfeeding in their relationship and eventual conversion to Christianity to address the implications that those events have for the transformation of their dynastic origins.

From Milk to Conversion

The shared pregnancy and delivery of Berta and the queen result in an intercultural affective bond within the domestic setting of the court of Almería. The birth of Berta and Blancaflor on the same day reinforces this bond. After Berta proposes to breastfeed them, both are raised in an identical, specular fashion that evades gendered divisions about infant

learning.¹⁸⁰ A part of their parallel development, both children share a multilingual education.

The *CFB* associates their shared spaces and education with the growth of mutual love:

[T]an sutil ingenio auien estos niños en aprender que en seys años aprendieron hablar en logica e fablar en latyn, tanto como en arauigo. E en latyn escriuien versos de amor en que tomauan amos muy grand plazer, e por aquesto se amauan mucho ademas, e otrosy porque en vn dia nasçieran, e en vno los criaran, e mamauan vna leche, e en vno comien e beuien, e en vn lecho se echauan. E porque fazien vna vida querianse bien ademas. E desde que fueron de diez e ocho años amaronse naturalmente como omne a muger. E quando el Rey Fines entendio el grand amor que auien en vno, apartose con la reyna en poridat e dixole asy:

—Reyna, muy grand amor me semeja que han en uno nuestro fijo e Blancaflor, por que vos digo que en todas las cosas del mundo la quiero yo mandar matar, ca por aventura podrie nuestro fijo perder casamiento por ella (57, fol. 8v–9r).

These children had an ingenuity so subtle for learning that, in six years, they learned to speak in logic, and Latin, and Arabic. And they took great pleasure in writing love verses in Latin. And for this, they also loved each other very much. And because they were born on the same day, and they nursed from the same milk, and they ate and drank as one, and slept in one bed. And because they shared one life, they loved each other too. And when they were eighteen years old, they loved each other naturally as a man and a woman. And when the King Fines understood the one love that they had, he moved away with the queen and secretly told her this:

—Queen, it seems to me that our son and Blancaflor have a great love. Hence I tell you that, among all the things in the world, I want to command that she be killed; because our son might lose the chance to marry because of her.

This account of the infancy and youth of the two protagonists brings together breastfeeding, education, and cohabitation as reasons for their shared affection. The narrator emphasizes this process as a shared coming of age by the stylistic enumeration of actions they performed as “one” (*vn día naçieran... en vno los criaran... mamauan vna leche*¹⁸¹ ... *en vno*

¹⁸⁰ Writing about the French tradition of the romance, Kinoshita characterizes the evolution of the protagonists as guided by a “specular identity” (“In the Beginning” 227). I have taken this suggestion to expand it to the relationship between Berta and the Queen. Despite some difference in this version, it is also insightful for understanding the infancy of Flores and Blancaflor in the *CFB*. As Kinoshita shows, their separate travels to the East are an important part for their specular construction as characters. I do not address their travels to the East in detail. However, I would argue that Flores’s travel to the East in Castilian version concerns other aspects of his identity as member of the Umayyad dynasty. His displacement towards the place of origin of his ancestors runs parallel to a more individual representation of him according to masculine normativity. This results in a notable contrast with the representation of Flores and Blancaflor’s Eastern encounter in the French aristocratic version.

¹⁸¹ From the perspective of Islamic rules, Berta’s breastfeeding would make the protagonists milk-siblings. As such, sex between them would be forbidden. Even if the implications of milk kinship in Islam were known by its Christian author, a representation of that legal aspect should not be expected in the *CFB*. The love of Flores and Blancaflor structures the plot of romance in all its medieval versions.

comien... en vn lecho... fazien vna vida). Those shared actions result in a *becoming with* that overcomes the differences in religion, language, and the social rank of their lineage. From this commonality, the affective bond turns into a romantic and sexual relationship. Once they realized the love that his son has for the daughter of a Christian captive, the king and queen of Almería force their separation.

The reference to the education of Flores and Blancaflor is notably shorter in the *CFB* than in the French “aristocratic” version. There, the teacher of the young nobles is a clerk named Gaidon (*Conte* 12, v. 203). The French text offers details about how Gaidon teaches Latin to the protagonists who use the language to communicate without being understood by other members of the Muslim court: “et consillier oiant la gent / en latin, que nus nes entent” (“When they spoke Latin, those who heard / Them could not understand a word”; *Conte* 16, vv. 269–70; *Romance*, trans. Hubert 31, vv. 267–68). Thus, the French “aristocratic” version refers to Latin as a language external to the Islamic court. In the Arabic-driven court of the Muslim King, this foreign character of Latin enables Floire and Blancheflor to create an intimate space for amorous communication. This space is expanded following the example of scholastic Latin literacy: two lovers make use of the Latin tongue to write love poems in the style of Ovid.¹⁸²

The Castilian *CFB* lacks references to this context of Latin education following the classics. Instead, it pursues an economy of language in which education conflates with other shared actions as equally representative of their affective bond. Consequently, Arabic, Latin, and logic receive equal consideration as languages in a horizontally conceived multilingualism. Instead of providing a space of secrecy, multilingualism appears in the *CFB* as a component of the social fabric of medieval Iberia. This is particularly notable if we consider that the term

¹⁸² See *conte* 14–16, vv. 227–36, 253–64; English: *Romance* 29–30, vv. 225–34, 251–62).

“Latin” could also refer to the Latin vernaculars of the Iberian Peninsula. Abū al-Muṭarrif ibn Muthannā (d. 1066), offers an illuminating description of how “Latin” vernaculars were viewed as a challenge to Arabic and Islamic culture at the Toledan *taifa* of Toledo, where he was vizier during the time of al-Maʾmūn (r. 1043–1075):¹⁸³

Aren't we, people of this peninsula which is far away from the best nations, neighboring the Barbar (*al-ʿajam*) masses, aren't we the worthiest of excuse for [our] incorrect speaking (*lukn*) [...]? Because, isn't it true that since one of the sons of your nobility starts to hear when he is born [...] he does not hear but the words of a despicable, Romance speaking (*a ʿjamiyya*), simple minded slave-woman, and the baby does not suckle but from her breast, and does not acquire but her incapability of expression, and is not calmed but in her lap, and is not trained but under her direction? To the point that when he becomes a man, culminating his growth, he is in touch with the Christian kingdoms since he speaks to them in their languages, he makes an effort in keeping their language, he is concerned about their social classes and tolerates their habits (Quoted and translated by Gallego, 134).

Ibn Muthannā's highly expressive description of wet nursing underscores the danger of Christian language and culture for the Muslim nobility of Toledo. His description of the Romance vernacular as “simple minded,” “despicable,” and “incapable of expression” qualifies Christians as subaltern inhabitants of the city of Toledo. The infidel Christians and their tongue are defined as intellectually inferior to their Muslim neighbors. Yet, for this vizier of the culturally prosperous *taifa*, the foreign and imperfect language of wet nurses leads to the acculturation of young Andalusī nobles into the customs of those “Barbaric masses.” Consequently, the language of enslaved Christian women challenges the preservation of a social order based on Arabic as a language of culture and administration.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ As discussed in Chapter 1, this is the same ruler who offered patronage to Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī when al-Istijī composed his version of the *Libro de las cruces*.

¹⁸⁴ The social and linguistic dynamic described by ibn Muthannā also establishes an interesting contrast with the process of acculturation into Arabic and Islam of young Andalusī Christians after the Muslim conquest. In their case, poetry and the high culture of al-Andalus caused acculturation. The contrast between both moments of acculturation within al-Andalus is indicative of the different prestige of Arabic and Latin vernacular culture in medieval Iberia. This was the case of Alvarus of Cordova's attack of young Christian Mozarabs adopting Islamic Customs. On this subject, see Szpiech “Latin.”

As the *CFB*, Ibn Muthannā situates the education and breastfeeding of young Muslims at the center of the problem. For him, the breastfeeding of Muslim children by Christian women creates a dangerous contact. Moreover, day-by-day contact familiarizes the child with a foreign language that the wet nurse uses to articulate Christian values, putting the children at risk of acculturation. Thus, the consequences of breastfeeding go beyond the intended physiological transaction of childrearing, making noble Andalusī infants culturally proficient in the customs of the neighboring Christian kingdoms.

This emphatic warning against the risks of breastfeeding across religious communities was written only a few decades before the conquest of Toledo by King Alfonso VI in 1089. In the aftermath of the *taifa* period, Ibn Muthannā's association of breastfeeding with the Castilian vernacular offers a different view of the linguistic situation of the Iberian Peninsula than the cultural enterprises of King Alfonso X studied in Chapter 2. When addressing this period, scholars have frequently centered their attention on Castile's territorial expansion as the guiding principle of the evolving relationship between Christian and Muslims. However, Ibn Muthannā's text unveils a fear about a different way by which Christian influence may prevail through the work of Christian slave women within domestic Andalusī spaces.¹⁸⁵

The *CFB* expands on concerns about breastfeeding, language, and conversion as the King of Almería sends Flores away from the court to separate him from her beloved Blancaflor. That decision puts in motion a series of displacements of the two lovers away from Almería that ends up with their reencounter, conversion, and marriage. At one point, Flores explains the

¹⁸⁵ Ibn Muthannā's text was preserved in a work written after the conquest of Toledo, Ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī's *Al-dhakhīra fī maḥāsīn ahl al-Jazīra* (*Treasure, on the Merits of the People of the Peninsula*, 1100–1109). Ibn Bassām's work is notable for its description of the relations between Christians and Muslims during the eleventh century. It includes details and stereotypes about the Christians and a discussion about conversion "as a way of escaping from social and religious marginalization" (Meouak "Al-dhakhīra").

circumstances that provoked his separation from Blancaflor as a consequence of the evolution of his relationship with Blancaflor from their specular infancy to a romantic and sexual couple: “por el muy grand amor que era e es entre nos, vendiola el rey mi padre porque non era su voluntad que yo casase con ella porque vinie de linaje de cristianos” (“Because of the great love that we had and have, my father, the king, sold her. Because it was against his will that I marry her, since she came from a lineage of Christians”; 85, fol. 24r) According to Flores, his father perceived the relationship with Blancaflor as a challenge to the continuity of their lineage. Despite her Muslim upbringing, the Muslim king perceives the Christian affiliation of Blancaflor’s ancestors as inappropriate for the future ruler of Almería. Thus, lineage and ancestry—and not coexistence—emerge as destabilizing aspects of the multilingual and multicultural shared space built around Berta.

Flores enunciates his father’s dynastic anxieties to his hosts in “Babilonia” (Babylon), which refers here to the city of Cairo in Egypt. The prince of Almería arrived there trying to reunite with Blancaflor. After learning that she was sold to a group of merchants, he decided to travel to the East and find her. With his travel, Flores undoes the route of his ancestor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I (r. 756–788), who, as noted above, escaped the massacre of his family in Damascus to found the Andalusī Umayyad dynasty and rule independently from the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.¹⁸⁶

The *CFB* stresses Flores’s identity as Umayyad as he prepares his travel. Fearing for his son’s health without Blancaflor, King Fines advises Flores to visit his grandfather Ysca Miramomelin—the historical Caliph Hisham I, who ruled Damascus between 724 and 743 (72,

¹⁸⁶ Prince ‘Abd al-Raḥmān fled from the Abbasids from Damascus to the Ifriqiya, the place of origin of his mother, a Berber slave called Rah. From there, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān sailed to the south of al-Andalus where he gained control of the territory, becoming a *de facto* independent ruler, and prolonging the Umayyad dynasty in the Westernmost regions of the Islamicate world. Flores’s travel emulates this path in the opposite direction.

fol. 16v). Fines finds Ysca in Berberia, probably a reference to the region of Ifriqiya, place of origin of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I maternal family. From there, Flores continues to Egypt with the military support of three thousand knights granted by his grandfather (75, fol. 17v–18r). This military representation of Flores’s eastwards travel contrasts with that of Floire in the French “aristocratic” version, reinforcing his dynastic filiation as a locus of Andalusī *imperium*; that is, in his demonstration of the military and political might of the Umayyads against other Muslim dynasties in the East Mediterranean. Gandifer, the adviser of Flores, explains the association between lineage and *imperium* at a later moment of the plot:

Señores, el Rey Fines, padre deste nuestro señor, es de tan grand linaje que en toda la tierra de los moros non ay rey que pueda dezir que es mejor que el, e de otra parte es muy buen cauallero de armas e mucho esforçado, e de muy buenas costumbres. (102, fol. 32v)

Milords, the King Fines, father of our lord, is of a lineage so high that there is no other king in all the land of the Moors who can say that he is better than him. And he is also a very good knight of arms, and very zealous, and of very good customs.

The young prince performs Umayyad *imperium* in battle in two different settings. First, during his eastern sojourn, Flores serves the King of Babilonia—who holds Blancaflor captive in a tower and plans to marry her—in his conflict against the Sultan of Persia (79-80, fol. 20r-21r). A second military demonstration occurs at the end of the romance, once Flores has gained the title of King of Andalusia. At that point, his Umayyad *imperium* guarantees what the Christian lineages of the northern kingdoms could not achieve, a Christian rule over all Spain, even spanning beyond the limits of the Iberian Peninsula. Between these two military demonstrations, Fines expands its dynastic affiliation beyond the blood-based Umayyad ancestry into the milk-based kinship as he converts. This shift underscores the impact of Berta’s breastfeeding in his decision to convert to Christianity. But before he reaches that point, the *CFB* problematizes the danger of a mixed marriage through the decisions that Flores’s blood family takes to avoid a marriage with Blancaflor because of the Christian identity of her ancestors. Once the king and

queen of Almería realize the strong affinity between their son and Blancaflor, they plot to impede what they perceive as an unfavorable marriage. The queen suggests:

Señor, enbemos nuestro fijo al castillo de Montor, e enbemos dezir a mi hermana doña Seuilla por qual razon lo enbiamos alla, e que punen por todas guisas del mundo de fazerle olvidar a Blancaflor, e amar a otra que le pertenezca para casamiento e que sea pagana de nuestra ley. Ca desaguisada cosa me semeja que nuestro fijo sea casado con fija de cristiano. (58, fol. 9r).

Milord, we could send our son to the castle of Montor and tell my sister, Lady Seuilla, why we are sending him there. And they should try to make him forget Blancaflor by any means. And they should try to make him love someone that may belong to him through marriage. And she should be a pagan of our law since it seems unreasonable to me that our son marries the daughter of a Christian.

The Queen's proposal aims to guarantee that Flores's potential offspring ensure a religious continuity in their kingdom. Here, the *CFB* continues with an association between the identity and future of the realm and that of its rulers concurrent with ideas about genealogy and *translatio* addressed in Chapters 2 and 3, an idea later confirmed by the rapid changes in Almería once Flores ascends to the throne as a Christian ruler. Trying to avoid that outcome, the Queen suggests relocating her son Montor, a space supervised by his blood relative Seuilla and away from the dangerous milk-based bond of the domestic circle shaped by the Christian Berta. The king accepts his wife's suggestion, displacing their son outside his natal Almería. However, their attempt to switch Flores's kinship ties with Berta to a new one with his aunt Seuilla proves ill-fated:

sallole a reçebir su tia doña Seuilla con muchas dueñas e donzellas muy fermosas, fijas de reyes e de altos omnes, pero que muy bien lo reçibien e auien grand gozo con el, Flores non auie sabor de si, pues que non vey a Blancaflor. (59, fol. 9v).

His aunt Lady Seuilla came out to meet him accompanied by many damsels and very fair maidens: daughters of kings and noblemen. They received him well and had great pleasure with him. But Flores did not enjoy himself since he was not seeing Blancaflor.

Despite the abundance of suitable Muslim mates in Montor, Flores can only think about Blancaflor. The sexual availability of the maidens is further exposed after Gaydon is introduced

in the passage. Contrarily to the French “aristocratic” version, the teacher of Flores and Blancaflor the *CFB* omits his presence during the narration of Flores and Blancaflor’s coming of age. If the French “aristocratic” version shows the role of his equivalent (Gaidon) as a support for the Latin literacy of the protagonists, in the *CFB*, Gaydon is mentioned for the first time in this passage. This subtle change creates a continuity between the birth and breastfeeding of the two babies and their education. As a result, the textual construction of the two children’s educational space suggests that Berta—the wet nurse/nursing mother—and not Gaydon directs Flores and Blancaflor’s education.

The presence of Gaydon in this passage introduces a masculine figure of authority along the blood female relative Seulla that, overshadowing Berta, supports the coordinated attempt to push Flores towards a Muslim sexual partner.¹⁸⁷ He backs Seuilla in her effort to drive her nephew’s sexuality to the Muslim maidens at her court: “sed aqui con estas, mis donzellas, e trebejad con qualquier que quisieres a toda vuestra voluntad” (“stay here with these, my maidens, and engage with anyone you want to all your heart’s content”; 59, fol. 9v).¹⁸⁸ The sexual availability of the Muslim maidens underlines the impulse of keeping the reproduction of the Andalusí Umayyad lineage without Christian interference.

The swift inclusion of sexuality in Montor responds to the already initiated sexual engagement of the two protagonists before their separation announced by the compiler as “amaronse naturalmente como omne e mugger” (“they loved each other naturally as a man and a woman”; 57, fol. 9r). In the same way that Flores’s mother viewed sex with Blancaflor as jeopardizing a marriage with a “pagana de nuestra ley” (“pagan of our law”), the abundance of

¹⁸⁷ This textual function of Gaydon as an authoritative voice protecting Flores’s Muslim genealogical origins is reinforced by his refusal to convert to Christianity in the episode of the island discussed below. His final acceptance of the Christian faith seals Flores’s success as a Christian Umayyad king.

¹⁸⁸ Arbesú’s edition notes the sexual connotation of the verb “trebejad,” which I have translated as “engage.”

maidens offered to Flores in Montor exacerbates the underlying assumption that an entirely Muslim ancestry is indispensable for a proper perpetuation of the lineage.¹⁸⁹ Thus, Flores's displacement to Montor articulates anxiety about dynastic origins that the *CFB* locates in a historically inexistent Andalusí court. Nevertheless, this anxiety ultimately corresponds to the Christian context where the work is produced. The *CFB* projects into the remote temporality of early al-Andalus the unresolved problem of intermarriage in the fourteenth century Castile.

The representation of remote origins in the *CFB* addresses within the spatial limits of Spain the ambivalent approach to the legacy of al-Andalus discussed in Chapter 3 concerning the *Libro del caballero Zifar*. In the *CFB*, this ambivalence comes from the projection over the Umayyads—as the paradigm of Muslim Andalusí lineages—ideas about the continuity of Visigothic blood in the Castilian historiographical tradition discussed in Chapter 1. Notably, those ideas were a central aspect of the reconstruction of the royal lineages of Christian Spain in the *Versión primitiva* of the *EE* that the compiler intertwines with the story of Flores and Blancaflor. The ambivalence of Andalusí alterities in the *CFB* is further constructed as an act of ventriloquism that comes from the reference to Sigiberto as a witness and author of one of the sources used by the compiler.

Thus, the dynastic anxiety of the Muslim king and queen of Almería narrativizes an ambivalent attitude towards intermarriage among the Christian elites that ruled over a multicultural fourteenth-century Castile. At the root of this ambivalence lays the tension between accepting Andalusí legacies as an integral part of Castile or preventing intermarriage and other forms of intermixing. Thus, if the initiatives of Flores's parents and relatives push for

¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, the surplus of sexually available Muslim women points to the construction of Muslim masculinity as inclined to an immoderate sexuality common in European Christian circles. This same notion is put on display by the figure of the King of Babylon, who besides Blancaflor has multiple women confined in a tower.

monocultural origins for their community, Berta's breastfeeding generates a space for intermixed roots, even if they ultimately lead to a monocultural reality under a Christian worldview.

The repercussions of Berta's breastfeeding of the Muslim prince Flores are further emphasized in an episode only present in the *CFB* version of the *Floire et Blancheflor* tradition, a sojourn of the two lovers on an unmapped island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. This sequence occupies a chapter of the *CFB* uninterrupted by materials from the *EE*, resulting in the protagonists' conversion to Christianity. Consequently, their conversion occurs under different circumstances than in other versions of the romance, emphasizing the implications of Berta's breastfeeding in Flores's abandonment of the Islamic faith of his forefathers.

After a storm takes their vessel out of their returning route to Almería, Flores and Blancaflor arrive at an uncharted island in the Atlantic Ocean ("mar Oçeano"). Previously, Flores had traveled to Egypt to find Blancaflor, whom his father had sold to merchants so that they could not pursue their love. Blancaflor was kept in a tower by the King of Babylon. When trying to rescue her, Flores is discovered. They are subject to a courtly trial and ultimately liberated thanks to Flores's early service to the King in his fights with the Caliph. Thus, the arrival at the island is part of an already present theme of travel to remote places within the romance tradition. The *CFB* expands on this theme by adding a highly symbolic Christian space outside of the known world that shares characteristics with the literary and hagiographic tradition about oceanic islands as spaces for Christian illumination.¹⁹⁰ The symbolically Christian character of the island starts with the conditions of their arrival: "E quando fue el terçero dia

¹⁹⁰ Grieve discusses the Christian symbolism in the episode of the unknown island (*Floire* 134–38). The episode of the *Ínsulas Dotadas* in the *Libro del caballero Zifar* is another example of a highly symbolic Christian construction of islands in Castilian literature. There, the construction of an ideally Christian space in remote an island is further pushed away by its location at the Easternmost areas of the known world. Pinet offers an excellent history of the significance of islands in medieval mapping—physical and conceptual—that illuminates the significance of these spaces in medieval Iberia (*Insular* 29–74).

amansso la mar e la naue aporto a vna ysla que es en el seno del mar oçeano, e esta es vna de las yslas que andudo el bienauenturado señor confesor Sant Bernaldo” (“And when it was the third day, the sea calmed and the ship arrived at an island that is in the bosom of the Ocean Sea. And it is one of the islands where the blessed confessor Saint Bernaldo walked”; 115, fol. 41r). The period of three days—reminiscent of the three days between Christ’s death and resurrection—, the unexpected storm that separates this vessel from the rest of Flores’s army, and the reference to the saintly figure project onto the island motifs common in medieval hagiography and travel literature.¹⁹¹ According to these recognizable generic topoi, the description of the island announces the symbolically charged character of the events that occur in this chapter.

As Flores and Blancaflor arrive on the island, they experience their first contact with a Christian community formed by the monks of an Augustinian congregation. This first encounter underscores the conception of the newly arrived as alien to the Christian character of the island: “[Q]uando vieron venir la gente contra el monesterio, sallio el prior con pieça de gentes de monges a reçebirlos. Mas quando entendieron que eran moros ouieron muy grand miedo que les querian fazer algunt mal” (“When they saw people coming towards the monastery, the prior left with several monks to receive them. But, when they understood they were Moors, they greatly feared they want to do them some evil”; 116, fol. 41v). The frightened reaction of the monks appears as an immediate result of recognizing the religious alterity of Islam as evil. This identification turns an initial welcoming attitude into a fearful prejudice against the unfamiliar

¹⁹¹ An example of these motifs contemporary to the *CFB* is the tale “De santa Maria Madalena” contained in MS h.I.13 of the Biblioteca de El Escorial—edited by Moore as *Libro de los huéspedes*. This tale describes the death of a woman during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. However, her newborn child survives by miraculously suckling the breasts of her deceased mother thanks to the intervention of the Saint Maria Madalena. The reference to Sant Bernaldo may be related to the tradition of Saint Brendan, who—as the *CFB*—describes a cenobitic life in an unmapped island located at some undetermined point of the Atlantic Nascimento edited to Latin Portuguese manuscripts of this tradition along with two related vernacular texts: *Viagem de Tenzónio ao Praíso, na Illa do Solstício* and the *Condo de Amaro*.

religion. This process of signaling cultural alterity in negative terms is turned around by the practice of translation:

[M]as el infante defendio a su conpañã que les non fiziesen ningunt mal. E vinien y con el infante pieça de omnes que sabien fablar de todos los lenguajes, e quando vieron que aquellos monges fablauan en el lenguaje de Santsoña preguntaronles que omnes eran. E ellos dixeronles que eran cristianos e omnes religiosos que biuien en aquella ysla siruiendo a Jesucristo. E quando el Ynfante Flores oyo en como eran cristianos, acordosse en como oyera dezir muchas vezes a la madre de Blancaflor, e como le viera retraer muchas cosas de la ley de los cristianos. E por esto reçibio al prior de aquellos monges muy bien e fizole mucha onrra. (116, fol. 41r–v)

However, the young prince commanded his company not to harm them. And there were with the prince some men who knew how to speak every language. And when they saw that the monks spoke the language of Santsoña, they asked them who they were. And the monks told them that they were Christians, religious men who lived on that island serving Jesus Christ. And, when Prince Flores heard that they were Christians, he remembered what he had heard from the mother of Blancaflor multiple times and how he saw her explaining many things about the law of the Christians. And for that reason, he received the prior of the monks very well and honored him very much.

This quote corresponds to the only moment when translation explicitly appears as part of the plot.¹⁹² As already discussed, the *CFB* refers to a multiplicity of languages as part of Flores and Blancaflor’s education. There, multilingualism is associated with creating a multicultural space shared by them. Meanwhile, the encounter on the island requires translation to prevent a more negative reaction towards the newcomers. Notably, the reference to the need for translators suggests that the transformation of Flores and Blancaflor’s identity resulting from their conversion is completed through continuous acts of translation. Even if silenced during the rest of the chapter, translation becomes necessary to bridge the alterity of Islam as Flores decides to

¹⁹² The compiler refers to Sigiberto as author/translator of the Arabic text he allegedly translates: “E segunt cuenta Sigiberto, vn sabio que saco esta estoria del fecho de Flores e Blancaflor de arauigo . . .” (“And as Sigiberto tells, a wise man who took this history (*estoria*) of the deeds of Flores and Blancaflor from Arabic . . .”; 57, fol. 8v) As in the *Libro del Caballero Zifar* discussed in Chapter 3, this claim of translation from Arabic ambivalently plays with the cultural authority of al-Andalus. This ambivalence starts with the identity of the historian. Previous versions of the *EE* refer to an author named Sigiberto. According to Fernández-Ordóñez, those references point to Sigebert of Gembloux (ca. 1030–1112), a monastic scholar from the region of Namur, in current Belgium (*Las estorias* 208–11, see also Arbesú, Introduction 27–29). However, the *CFB* presents Segiberto/Sigiberto as a native of Córdoba who witnessed Flores’s ceremony of enthronement there (122, fol. 45r). This discrepancy has been addressed by Bautista (*Materia* 150 n.2) and Wacks (“*Crónica*” 278–79, *Medieval* 115–17).

adopt the religion of their Christian mother/wet nurse. Notably, this passage includes the first reference in the *CFB* to Berta as informing them about Christianity and narrates their first experience with a Christian community.

Up to this point, the *CFB*'s silence about their Muslim identity has allowed its expected Christian audience to sympathize with the couple's struggles to overcome the obstacles to their love posed by two male Muslim rulers: King Fines to preserve a purely Muslim continuity of his lineage and the king of Babylon to make the Christian captive his spouse and sexual partner. As the first Christian space known by the couple, the island becomes a place to escape the oppressive masculinity that the *CFB* projects onto Muslim male rulers. Instead, it is the celibate life of monks and the miraculous apparition of St. Augustine—who, according to his *Confessions*, overcome the sexual excesses of his Pagan life (Bk. 3 Ch. 1)—that provides an appropriate space for the couple to pivot towards the Christian faith.

Despite the weight that religious difference has on the development of the plot, it is only after their arrival to the unmapped island that the *CFB* presents Christianity as familiar. Flores and Blancaflor find their intimate familiarity with Christianity while forced away from their return to Almería and displaced outside the chartered spaces in medieval geography. Each of them discovers an intimate relationship with Christianity shaped not by their equal upbringing but by the religious community of their ancestors. In the case of Blancaflor, the compiler explicitly mentions a connection with Christianity that emerges from her blood ancestors:

Luego que Blancaflor sopo en como aquellos buenos omnes eran cristianos, vinole emiente como le dixera su madre cuya fija era, e como vinien de cristianos. E desde estonce tenia ella en coraçon de ser cristiana si en logar fuesse que lo pudiese ser. (116, fol. 41v)

When Blancaflor knew that those good men were Christians, she recalled how her mother told her whose daughter she was, and how they came from Christians. And, since then, she had in her heart the desire to be Christian if she was in a place where she could be one.

In this quotation, the interplay between family origins, familiarity with Christianity in the domestic sphere, and the practice of Islam reproduce the complexity of religious life in some Iberian contexts—as in the passage from ibn Muthannā quoted above. Here, Blancaflor’s relationship with Christianity is framed as a memory of her dynasty received from her mother. In particular, Blancaflor recalls her father, who died in France before her birth. This separation from the native land of her ancestors is one of the two ways by which displacement shapes Blancaflor’s identity. Her conversion to Christianity comes from a desire to experience a connection with blood relatives she never met and from whom she was physically separated due to her pregnant mother being made captive.

Displacement into the island fulfills her willingness to convert, which the passage describes as relying upon an appropriate place. The encounter with a Christian monastic community in the remote and symbolic space of the island allows Blancaflor to resituate herself within her dynastic origins, which the *CFB* characterizes as noble and Christian. Yet, such agenealogical reconstruction of Blancaflor’s lineage is only partial unless we pay attention to the conditions that allowed it to emerge. Those conditions bring to light the third dimension of Blancaflor’s displacement: her affective and biological relationship with her mother, Berta. Through Berta’s words—part of her construction of a shared affective space between them that includes Flores—Blancaflor situates herself in dynastic terms. Thus, Blancaflor’s switch from her lived Muslim identity to the learned identity of her ancestors results from an unspecified maternal language that translated her origins into memorable words.

Similar to the dynastic past told by Zifar’s grandfather, stories rumored during Blancaflor’s childhood set her transformation in motion. However, in the *CFB*, Blancaflor’s and Flores’s transformation comes from a space where breastfeeding emphasizes the feminine

dimension of lineage. Precisely, Flores's conversion to Christianity is described as spanning from his milk-based bond with Berta. Following Blancaflor's memories of her Christian ancestry, a conversation between her and Flores leads him to discover an embodied connection with Christianity:

E vna noche fablolo con el Ynfante Flores, su señor, diziendole que bien deuie el entender que quantos peligros passaran el e ella fasta que vinieran a aquella ysla que non fuera por al sinon porque Jesucristo querie que fuesen cristianos e que muriesen en la Su santa ley, e que le rogaua, pues que en aquel logar estauan do lo podien ser, que lo fuesen por el su amor. Quando esto oyo dezir el ynfante a Blancaflor non lo estraño mucho, ca la naturaleza de la leche de la cristiana lo mouio a ello. (116–17, fol. 41v)

And one night, she talked about it with Prince Flores, her lord, telling him that he should understand that the dangers they endured up to their arrival to that island were not for other reasons than because Jesus Christ wanted them to be Christians and die within his sacred law. And that she begged him that, since they were in the place they could do so, they should be Christians because of his love. When the Prince heard Blancaflor saying this, he was not surprised because the nature of the Christian milk moved him towards accepting it.

After talking with Blancaflor, Flores immediately associates the possibility of converting with the Christian milk of his wet nurse. While Berta's milk appears as the reason for a preconceived Christian destiny for Flores, Blancaflor's arguments favor his conversion according to the divine will of Jesus Christ. Grieve describes this situation as a "providential scheme," pointedly underlining the resonances of Christian theology that run throughout this chapter of the *CFB* (*Floire* 6).¹⁹³

The references to Jesus Christ signal a providential intervention in the protagonists' lives leading to their conversion. Yet, the narrator steps away from that "providential scheme" to enunciate Flores's reaction as an internalized movement ("lo movio") that, coming from the *naturaleza* (nature) of Berta's milk, predispose him to accept the Christian faith. By presenting

¹⁹³ Thus, my translation of the neutral possessive "su" in the expression "por el su amor" as referring to Jesus Christ (*his love*) instead of as an appellation to the couple's mutual love (*their love*). Grieve also notes that Berta's milk "imbued him with the desire for Christianity" (*Floire* 137–38).

this reaction as an immediate and non-rationalized response from the Christian *naturaleza* of the milk he suckled, the compiler points to his bond with Berta resulting from breastfeeding. Milk, it is suggested, had a radical and lasting influence on Flores's own embodied *naturaleza*.”¹⁹⁴

Wacks intriguingly writes about this reference to the role of the milk in Flores's conversion as an “idea of a biological/chemical basis for religious identity predates by some centuries the concept of *limpieza de sangre*” (“*Crónica*” 278). In my view, the impact of Berta's milk *naturaleza* on Flores shares with the notion of “*limpieza de sangre*” the association of religious identity with biology and its capability to be physiologically transferred. These characteristics situate the passage in relation to other examples of medieval racialization discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Nevertheless, in the *CFB* any racializing dimension of Berta's milk radically differs from later developments of the idea of “*pureza de sangre*.” Those ideas argue for an inherent and indelible embodied alterity in those Jewish or Muslim ancestry. By contrast, in the *CFB* the trace of Berta's nurturing transforms Flores from his previous identity as an Abbasid Muslim to an embodied dimension of his soon-to-be-accepted Christian identity.¹⁹⁵

Either from blood or milk-based kinship, both Flores and Blancaflor arrive at the idea of converting through the role of Berta, who offered to nurture and educate them in the Muslim court of Almería. Their space of intimacy shared by the three of them blurs the limits between blood and milk filiation as they conflate to fulfill the “providential scheme” of a mixed lineage:

¹⁹⁴ This idea resembles an important point of the position of the Church against the presence of Christian wet nurses in Jewish and Muslim households, from the III Lateran Council to at least 1246. For conciliar documentation on this matter, see Grayzel 296–99, 306–07, 316–17, 328–33. This position was championed by Pope Innocent III, whose personal correspondence suggests that some Jews may have believed that Christian wet nurses who received the Sacrament transmitted it through their milk. This issue is associated with the Church's implementation of the doctrine on transubstantiation and its attempt to enforce religious uniformity in domestic spaces. Ultimately, it reflects the idea that non-Christian bodies may contaminate the Christian community. Scholars have disagreed on the implications of Innocent III correspondence. On these issues, see Jeremy Cohen, Grayzel (25), Tolan (“On Milk”).

¹⁹⁵ There is a vast bibliography on the notion of “*pureza de sangre*.” Hering Torres, Maria Elena Martínez (25–60), and Nirenberg (“Was there race”) are good points of entry into this issue.

the Carolingian Dynasty.¹⁹⁶ The monastic community of the island channels the revelation of that dynasty to come. After the arrival of the foreigners to the island, the members of the monastic community offer prayers and processions that are answered by the miraculous apparition of Saint Augustine:

[A]quella noche misma apareçioles Sant Agostin al prior e a otros monges e dixoles que la voluntad de Dios era que aquel señor de aquellos moros e vna muger que traye consigo, e todos los mas de la su conpañia que vinieran en aquella nave, fuesen cristianos. E que esto querie Jesucristo por amor de la madre de aquella muger, que sienpre le siruiera bien e lealmente, e que fuera catiuada en el su serviçio. E por esto, que le querie dar en gualardon que aquella, su fija, que fuesse cristiana, e que del linaje della ouiesse en el reyno de Françia quien a El sienpre siruiesse. (117, fol. 42r)

Saint Augustine appeared to the prior and other monks that night. And he told them that it was the will of God that the lord of those Moors and a woman that he took with him, and most of the company that came in that ship, they all should be Christians. And that Jesus Christ wanted this because of love for the mother of that woman, who always served him well and faithfully and was made captive in his service. And, because of that, he wanted to give her as a reward that her daughter would be a Christian and that the kingdom of France would always have someone who serves Him from her lineage.

Augustine's miraculous apparition turns the Carolingian lineage that will span from Flores and Blancaflor into an active element of the plot. As in the *Zifar*, the transformation of the lineages is followed by its projection into the future position as holding the kingdom of France. Divine intervention resolves the problem raised by the Christian origin of Blancaflor's lineage. As compiler affirms, the will of God and his son Jesus Christ is that the impediments of Flores's parents to a marriage of their Umayyad son into a Christian dynasty should fail. Furthermore, Augustine's announcement stresses the role of Berta as the reason for the providential intervention in the future of *her* lineage.¹⁹⁷ There is a parallelism between the paternal filial

¹⁹⁶ The tight dynastic affiliation between the Umayyads and the Carolingians is absent from any other version of the romance about Flores and Blancaflor. However, it is mentioned in an earlier Iberian chronicle, the twelfth-century *Liber regum*—written in the vernacular of the Kingdom of Navarre: “Est rei Pepin lo Petit priso muller la reina Bertha con los grandes pedes, qui lo filla de Floris e de Blanca Flor, et ovo en ela filla a Charle Mayne” (“This king Pepin the Short married Queen Berthe of the Big Feet, who was the daughter of Floris and Blanche fleur, and with her he had Charlemagne as son”; *Liber regum* 39, quoted and translated by Arbesú, Introduction 21).

¹⁹⁷ There are other dimensions to the presence of Augustine in this chapter. The religious community of the island is said to follow the rule of Augustine of Hippo (“monjes de la orden de Sant Agostin”; 116 fol. 41r). In view of this, Catalán

relationship between God and Jesus Christ and the maternal one between Berta and Blancaflor. God rewards with a service Berta's daughter (being the ancestor of France's royal dynasty) Berta's service to Jesus Christ (going on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela). In terms of their transformative effects, Berta's decision to breastfeed Flores runs parallel to God's will to convert the two lovers.¹⁹⁸

The intersection of space, lineage, and memory in the episode of the island highlights Berta's central role in the transformation of Flores's identity—thanks to her breastfeeding—and that of her direct descendants—as a consequence of God's reward from her pilgrimage. The two transformations converge in a new lineage that, challenging the patrilineal character of the *EE*—recognizes maternal and paternal ancestry alike. Divine intervention validates their love and underlines the worth of the members of this mixed marriage.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, it truncates the monocultural approach to dynastic politics by Flores's parents. On the island, the two protagonists can locate the source of their intimate familiarity with the Christian faith in their bond with Berta, regardless of whether it comes from blood or milk affiliation. After this discovery, they fully embrace that bond through the ceremony of conversion.

The day after Augustine's apparition, the two protagonists request that the prior baptize them, encouraging him to preach to them and their Muslim companions.²⁰⁰ Both Flores and Blancaflor are baptized simultaneously, a circumstance that returns to their specular upbringing.

suggests that the *CFB* was copied in a monastery, instead of the courtly production of earlier versions of the *EE* (Baranda "Los problemas" 30). In my view, the reference to Augustine provides yet another symbolic impulse to conversion, since Augustine's life was a model for religious conversion thanks to the influence of his *Confessions*.

¹⁹⁸ Another parallelism with the Holy family is the resemblance of Berta's representation as breastfeeder with that of Virgin Mary as a nurturing mother in Christian iconography. Grieve connects the reference to God's plan in this passage with Berta's milk emphasizing that milk also operates as metaphysical Christian symbol (*Floire* 162).

¹⁹⁹ The manuscript containing the *CFB* goes on with the intertwining of the *EE* with stories about Flores and Blancaflor's daughter, Berta, and their grandchild Charlemagne. Bautista provides detailed information about them (Estudio). On the Alfonsine version of the *Mainet*, see also Fraker ("Alfonso"), Funes (54–60).

²⁰⁰ The chapter includes a subplot about the conversion of the other Muslims who arrived at the Island with Flores and Blancaflor. The monks refrain to share their food with them until they convert. This use of violence towards the non-noble Muslims points to different attitudes towards the alterity of Islam dependent on of social rank that, despite their interest, fall outside of the genealogical logic built around nobility and lineage addressed in this dissertation.

As the previously Muslim lovers are jointly transformed into fully Christian selves, the description of their baptism highlights physicality. The passage refers to their nudity, the drops of water over the heads, and the signal of the cross in their foreheads, chests, and backs (118, fol. 42v). After converting, their previous names are deemed appropriate: “non les puso otros nombres synon aquellos que se avien, ca por los vio a amos ydos muy fermosos entendio que les cayen mucho bien aquellos nombres” (“he [the prior] did not give them other names but those they already had. Since he had seen that they were both very handsome, he realized that those names fit them well”; 118, fol. 42v). Beyond the compiler’s allusion to the lovers’ physical beauty, the decision of the prior points to their conversion as the fulfillment of a Christian identity already shaped by Berta’s breastfeeding.

The sequence of the baptism leads to the celebration of the Christian marriage of the couple: “Estonçe el prior desposolos tomando los anillos e casolos en vno, e dioles la bendiçion ante el altar segunt manda la ley de Roma” (“then the prior, taking the rings, espoused them and married them as one, and gave them the blessing according to the law of Rome”; 118, fol. 42v). This contiguity between baptism and marriage underscores the centrality of lineage in the romance. Ultimately the separations and displacements of the two lovers function as narrative obstacles to the central problem of intermarriage. Conversion and marriage resolve those challenges, opening an opportunity to rewrite Spain’s past through Flores’s victorious conquest as a converted Christian ruler in the following chapters of the *CFB*.

Christian Conquests and Mixed Lineages

The specular connection of Flores and Blancaflor narrativizes the porous separation between Muslim and Christian communities during the Iberian Middle Ages. Following stylistic

features of the romance genre, the emplotment of Spain's history around the story of the two lovers explores the potential consequences of mixed dynasties. So far, I have addressed this issue concerning the feminine practice of breastfeeding. The rest of this chapter elaborates on its implications for the historiographical tradition that informed the *EE*, whose preexisting materials are intertwined with the romance story in the *CFB*.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the reconstruction of Spain's past in the historiography of the Christian kingdoms at the North-West of the Iberian Peninsula relied on a patrilineal conception of ruling dynasties. A recurrent aspect of that conception was the defense of a continued genealogical succession from the noble families of the Visigothic kingdom to the early Asturian kings and, from them to the later rulers of Galicia, León, and Castile. However, the uniformity created by that type of overarching historical narrative fades out when faced with historical information about the family structures of early Asturias.

Pick's research on that period reveals the historical inaccuracy of medieval historiography about the first generations of the kingdom of Asturias concerning women in the royal dynasties: "When they pay attention to those who inherited because of women, something which, as we have seen, has no royal Visigothic precedent, we can conclude that we are confronting something outside their neo-Gothicizing ideology" (*Her Father's* 45). Pick bases this conclusion on the contrast between Visigothic royal practices and the construction of political continuity and royal legitimacy in the chronicles. Thus, despite the historiographical articulation of the Asturian kingdom around each king's reign, queens had a fundamental role in establishing sovereignty.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Asturian, Leonese, and Castilian historiographical tradition vertebrates their past around the deeds and rulings of the male monarchs of those kingdoms. As Fernández-Ordóñez notes regarding Alfonso X's historiography, the election of the reign as a structural unit reinforce this gendered conception of history: "Son los reyes, sus reinados y años de señorío los que sirven para situar los sucesos en el tiempo. Los *senhores* y su estirpe son, así, los protagonistas fundamentales de la Estoria" (Fernández-Ordóñez. *Las estorias* 33).

Among the few surviving sources about the early Asturian kingdom, chronicles offer the most comprehensive articulation of dynastic politics in the period. An important consideration about the ones preserved is that they are not contemporary to events that followed the Islamic conquest of the peninsula but produced several generations afterward, when the patrilineal primogeniture promoted in the chronicles was already established. Despite their attempts to present a coherent continuity according to laws of patrilineal inheritance, they reveal the instability of early royal successions in Asturias. For instance, Alfonso I (r. 739–757)—third king of Asturias—was the son of the *dux* Pedro of Cantabria. Alfonso acquired the throne thanks to his marriage to Ermesinda, daughter of King Pelayo (Lat: Pelagios), the founder of the Asturian kingdom. Alfonso became king over the sons of the previous ruler, his son-in-law Favila (See Table 4.1). The events following Flores’s conversion in the *CFB* occur during the reign of Fruela, the son and successor of Alfonso I in the kingdom of Asturias.

As Pick notes, the *Codex Rotensis* (ca. 990) conflates the lineages of *dux* Pedro and Pelayo describing Alfonso I and not Ermesinda as a member of Pelagius’s dynasty (47). This change in the family relationships of Pelagius, Ermesinda, Petrus, and Alfonso I evidences an erasure of Ermesinda’s role in the transmission of royal power. Thus, the *Codex Rotensis* seems to accommodate their dynastic relationships to the notion of a continued patrilineal blood filiation between the Visigoths, Asturias, and its subsequent divisions—what modern scholarship frequently denominates *Neo-goticismo*, as outlined in Chapter 1.

Escalona expands on the royal inheritance system of early Asturias, emphasizing the fragmentation of the realm in several regional powers. According to him, this situation impeded a formalized agnatic system of succession. Instead, Escalona argues, the main Asturian lineages followed a “complex pattern” in which “cognatic relations were equally important, if not more

important than agnatic ones. Linear agnatic succession did not establish itself until the crucial period of Ramiro I's reign ("Family Memories" 251). Along with Pick's study of royal daughters, the situation described by Escalona reveals an early Asturian kingdom in which women held a significant amount of political authority.²⁰² Royal daughters could favor their husbands' access to the throne, complicating patrilineal transmission. Nevertheless, the chronicles do not detail how their political authority functioned in these cases. Besides their presence in the genealogical trees of the Asturian lineage, there is little information about the impact of royal women in appears in the historiographical record as their husband's reign.

Table 4.1 Lineages of the early Asturian kings²⁰³

	1. Pelayo (r. 718–737)	
2. Favila (Pelayo's son, r. 737–739)	Ermesinda (Pelayo's daughter) ∞ 3. Alfonso I (son of Pedro de Cantabria, r. 739–757)	
Favila's children	4. Fruela I (Ermenesinda and Alfonso's son, r. 757–768)	Adosinda (Ermenesinda and Alfonso's daughter) ∞ 6. Silo (r. 774–783)
	7. Mauregato (Son of Alfonso I and a Muslim slave, r. 783–789)	5. Aurelio (Alfonso I's nephew, r. 768–774)

As their Asturian counterparts, Andalusí sources from the period provide scarce information about the role of women in the formation of dynastic identities. Ibn Ḥazm of Córdoba (994-1064) wrote that only three Abbasid Andalusí caliphs were *not* born from slaves between 750 and his lifetime. One of the enslaved concubines of Andalusí rulers was Al-Shifa', mother of one of the sons of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822–852) and wet nurse of the child 'Abd al-

²⁰² Asturian historiography also presents Adosinda, daughter of Ermesinda and Alfonso I, as giving access to the kingdom to her husband Silo (r. 774–783).

²⁰³ For a more complete visualization of family relationships among the first Asturian kings, see the figure in Pick 46.

Raḥmān had with another concubine named Buhair. Buhair's child, born from and nurtured by enslaved concubines, succeeded his father as the Caliph Muḥammad I (r. 852–856).²⁰⁴

Another significant inheritance in Asturias raised Fruela's half-son Mauregato. Mauregato succeeded his uncle Silo, who inherited the throne by the same type of cognatic transmission as Alfonso I, thanks to his marriage with Alfonso's daughter Ermesinda. Mauregato's ascension to the throne evidences another aspect of early Asturian lineages obscured by the principles of *Neo-goticismo*, the dynastic intermixing between the Christian and Muslim nobility of the peninsula.

Mauregato was the son of Alfonso I and a Muslim slave. After the death of his uncle King Silo in 783, Mauregato deposed the expected successor in the throne, Alfonso, son of his half-brother Fruela I (r. 757–768) and a Basque woman named Munia—who would eventually be named king as Alfonso II (see Table 4.1 above). Thus, Mauregato's Muslim ancestry was not an obstacle to acquiring the throne with the support of the Asturian aristocracy. Yet, later legends about his reign presented him as a usurper who used black magic and allied with the Muslims to become king (Francomano "Legend"). Moreover, the "Tributo de las cien doncellas" legend describes him agreeing to send an annual tribute of a hundred Asturian maidens to al-Andalus. Francomano addresses the implications of this legend in the context of ideas about the so-called "Reconquista" that defended a monocultural view of Spanish origins:

The *doncellas*'s imagined roles as the currency exchanged for peace and as the guardians of Christian honor are, in fact, key elements in the articulation of late-medieval Spain's narrative of *ethnoregenesis* in the wake of its eighth-century "Fall" and its attendant injury to Visigothic identity, an identity which could only be fully regained through the virile enterprise of Reconquest. ("Legend" 10).

²⁰⁴ See Ruggles 69–74. Among the Andalusi Umayyads, it was common to keep women from the northern regions of the Iberian Peninsula as concubines. In some cases, the sources specify this origin and even describe some of these women as having a Christian background. However, those sources only offer the name in most cases. Pointing out the illegality of enslaving Muslims, Ruggles suggests that Umayyad concubines were typically Christian, Pagan, or Jewish.

Francomano's remarks about the "Tributo de las cien doncellas" situate the treatment of this legend between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries in the context of the anxieties about intermarriage and conquest of Andalusian lands in the *CFB*. Beyond this scope of this legend, intermarriage was also common in early al-Andalus after the arrival of the Umayyad dynasty. Ruggles has traced this practice in Arabic sources to conclude that "once we examine the diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds of the women in the Umayyad dynasty that ruled Cordoba from 756 to 1011, we can no longer speak of the Umayyad house as if its members had a single shared identity and history" (66). Even if it is unlikely that the *CFB* intended to represent that multiplicity of origins found within the Umayyad lineage in the tradition of the *EE*, the resulting text achieves that effect as part of its imaginative path towards Christian rule over al-Andalus.

When the secretly Christian Flores and Blancaflor return to Almería, the political situation of the kingdom has changed. Several of the intertwined chapters coming from the *Versión primitiva* of the *EE* refer to the fictional King Fines along with historical Iberian rulers.²⁰⁵ Those chapters deal with the last years of the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus and the ascension of Abbassids. The *CFB* presents Fines as a member of the Umayyad dynasty who expanded his dominions beyond Almería during the internal wars. Accordingly, he somehow emulates the historical ascension to power of 'Abd al-Rahmān I, founder of the independent Umayyad emirate of al-Andalus after reaching the peninsula, fleeing away from the Abbasids.

As a result of the tweaked historical events of the *CFB*, when Flores arrives at his native land, his father has expanded the territories under his dominion to become "señor de la çibdat de Cordoua e de todo el Algarbe e del Andaluzia" ("lord of the city of Cordova and all the Algarve, and Andalusia"; 122 fol. 44v). The reference to Córdoba, the historical capital of the Andalusian

²⁰⁵ Bautista annotates the segments included by the compiler in his edition of the *CFB* (*materia*).

Umayyads, is particularly relevant. The *Versión amplificada de 1289* of the *EE*—that amended and completed the *Versión primitiva* after Alfonso X’s death—offers a detailed account of the Christian conquest in 1236. There, the city is described as “patriçia de las otras çipdades, esto es padrona et enxiemplo de las otras pueblas del Andalozia” (“patrician of the other cities, that is, master and example of all the towns of Andalusia”; *PCG* vol. 2, 733; my trans.). Given the symbolic importance of controlling the city, the designation of Fines as “King of Cordova” reinforces his dominant position as an Andalusi ruler.

Córdoba—the center of Islamic *imperium* in the peninsula—is selected as the place where Prince Flores ascends to the throne when King Fines decides to abdicate in his favor. After taking this decision, Fines summons the nobility of his kingdoms in Córdoba. The compiler narrates the ceremony stressing the presence of Segiberto as an eyewitness and source of his account:

E dize Segiberto—el que fizo esta estoria de Flores e de Blancaflor, que fue natural de Cordoua e que se açerco y aquel dia en Cordoua—que besaron la mano al rey Flores syete mil caualleros de alaraues, e bien mill e quinientos cristianos que fueran en el Andaluza e en el Algarbe bien dende el tiempo que fuera vençido el rey Rodrigo, quando perdieron los cristianos la tierra, asi como la *Estoria de los godos* lo cuenta. (122, fol. 45r)

And Segiberto—author of this story of Flores and Blancaflor, who was a native (*natural*) of Cordova and was there that day in Cordova— says that seven thousand Arab knights kissed the hand of King Flores; as did as many as one thousand and five hundred Christians that stayed in Andalusia and Algarve since the time King Rodrigo was defeated, when the Christians lost the land, as the *History of the Goths* tells.

The references to kissing the new king’s hand present Flores as a ruler accepted by his Muslim and Christian subjects alike. This shared approval depicts a multicultural Andalusi society with a sizable Mozarabic population during the still early days of Muslim rule. This situation projects into Córdoba an Andalusi *imperium* sustained not only by Muslim elites but also by the blood descendants of the Visigoths. The ambivalent identity of Sigiberto as a native

of Córdoba who wrote about the history of the Goths in Arabic encapsulates the challenge to strict boundaries between Muslim and Christian identities that same Christian and Muslim elites fostered in contexts such as the use of wet nurses across religious communities.

During the early period of al-Andalus, Mozarabic communities were subjected to the *dhimmi* status, which gave them “protection extended to future generations on condition of continued payment of the *jizya* and submission to Muslim rule” (Safran 10). As Safran shows, the religious dynamics of the period evolved according to a continuous negotiation of boundaries that emerged from that protected status of the Christian population. As a result, situations such as intermarriage, conversion, differences in dietary habits, and other quotidian activities blurred the clear separation between Christians and Muslims offered by historiographical testimonies.

Most scholars agree that conversions to Islam only started to become frequent during the mid-ninth century (Epalza 57–60). In this context, the implications of conversion remain unclear beyond the nominal acceptance of the new faith. As Bulliet points out: “In a sense a convert first became a member of the Muslim community and later discovered, or tried to discover, what it meant to be a Muslim” (131, quoted in Epalza 166). The extended presence of the Mozarabic community in al-Andalus played a vital role in the religious and political definition of the northern Christian kingdoms. Thus, the reference to a vast number of Christians among those recognizing the authority of Flores adds significant undertones to the discussion of dynastic origins around Berta in the *CFB*. As direct ancestors of the Visigoths, the decision of the group of Mozarabs to recognize Flores as their ruler confirms the legitimacy of the secretly Umayyad Christian to rule regardless of his ancestry. As pointed out above regarding King Mauregato, this type of support from the Christian nobility of someone with Muslim ancestors was part of the early history of the kingdom of Asturias.

After the first year of Flores's reign, his father dies. Flores reveals his new Christian identity and starts a series of initiatives to convert his subjects. They include forging an alliance with the historical Fruela I of Asturias (r. 757–768), who sends clergymen and bishops to Flores: “restolauan luego las mesquitas en iglesias, e bendizien e consagrauan todas las otras cosas que son menester para seruiçio de santa iglesia” (“Later, they restored the mosques, turning them into churches; and they sanctified and consecrated everything needed for the service of the sacred church”; 125, fol. 46r). Framed as a restoration of a previous stage, the transformation of mosques into churches situates Flores's impetus to turn al-Andalus into a Christian realm at all levels of society. This transformation emulates his abandonment of a previous identity by offering the Church the ability to convert the Muslim population from the same spaces that previously shaped them as Muslim.

The transformation of cult spaces was common in medieval Iberia, with the mosque turned into a cathedral of Córdoba as the most known example. The *Versión amplificada* of the *EE* details conquest of the once caliphal court in 1236 by Fernando III with references to the changes made to this mosque:

Et el rey don Fernando apoderado de la çipdat de Cordoua et de la mezquita que el fizo esa ora egleſia [...]; mas ese obispo don Johan con los otros obispos dichos, echada fuera la suziedat de Mahomad, çcarraron a derredor toda aquella mezquita, esparziendo agua bendicha por ella como deuie; et otras cosas annadiendo y que el derecho de sancta yglesia manda, restolaronla desta guisa, et restolarla es tanto como «conbralla a seruiçio de Dios». (*PCG* vol. 2, pp. 733–34)

And the king don Fernando took control of the city of Cordoua and the mosque, that he made a church at that time [...]; and that bishop *don* Johan with the rest of mentioned bishops, once taken out the filth of Mohamad, gathered around that mosque dispersing holy water above it as he should; and adding other things there that the law of the holy Church commands, restoring it this way; and to restore it means “to retake it for the service of God.”

Given that the *CFB* derives from an earlier version of the *EE*, the compiler may not have been familiar with this passage. However, both texts resort to the idea of restoration of the

previous order as the way to impose Christianity over the lands formerly ruled by Muslims.²⁰⁶ Yet, Flores's initiative departs from that of Fernando III in the *Versión amplificada* in that his restoration does not result from military conquest but religious conversion. In this regard, the *CFB* is akin to the model of marriage and cultural adaptation proposed in the *Libro del caballero Zifar*. This is not to say that the works studied in this dissertation refuse military violence. While the chivalric deeds of Zifar and Roboán are presented as defensive, the *CFB* presents Flores in battle both defensively—during his travels to the East Mediterranean—and as part of a victorious military conquest of Iberian and North African Muslim territories. These conquests play a significant role in legitimizing Flores according to military discourses omnipresent in Asturian, Leonese, and Castilian historiography. Consequently, they show how Flores's political authority in the *CFB* conflates discourses of rulership that circulated in medieval Castile.²⁰⁷

After the return of Flores and Blancaflor to Almería, the position of Berta in the romance reaches a new dimension. The miraculous apparition of Augustine revealed a “providential scheme,” as Grieve pointedly frames it, whose ultimate motivation was to reward Berta for her pious service to Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Flores's ascension to the throne situates her in the twofold privileged position of being wet nurse and mother-in-law of the Andalusí king. Members of the Mozarabic community across Andalusia to honor her and the now queen Blancaflor:

E quando los cristianos sopieron en como el rey era cristiano, e tantos buenos caualleros con el, e como era casado a bendiciones con Blancaflor [...] apartauanse a compañías e

²⁰⁶ The *EE* highlights the relocation of the bells of Córdoba's mosque in Santiago de Compostela, from where they had been seized in 997. Tolan addresses this issue in relation to the *EE* and other sources (*Sons* 147–60).

²⁰⁷ The end of the romance is a clear example of the presence of ideas about military conquest in the *CFB*. Already ruling as a publicly Christian King, Flores fights the lord of Marruecos: “vn moro del linaje de Aben Humeya que auie nombre Abdurramen” (“a Moor from the lineage of Aben Humeya who was named Abdurramen”; 134, fol. 50v). This military conflict ends with Flores conquering territories in North Africa with the help of a group of Christians from Marruecos that the *CFB* identify as “farfanés.” This conquest fulfills the need of conquering all the territories once ruled by the Visigoths fomented by the aristocracy of Northern Christian kingdoms.

yuanse a la çibdat de Almeria, e besauan las manos a Blancaflor e a su madre la Condessa Berta. (122, fol. 45r)

And when the Christians knew that their king was a Christian and many good knights with him and that he was in a blessed marriage with Blancaflor [...], they departed in companies and went to the city of Almería, and they kissed the hands of Blancaflor and her mother, Countess Berta.

The displacement of these groups of Christians confirms the two women's rulership with the same gesture of submission that Flores received from the Christian and Muslim knights Córdoba. While the hand-kissings in the caliphal capital recognizes Flores in the symbolic center of Andalus *imperium*, the collective displacement of groups unidentified as nobles to Almería recognizes a *translatio imperii* of sorts from Muslim to Christian hands as a result of the feminine practice of breastfeeding carried out by Berta. The kisses on the hand by the Andalusí Mozarabs traveling to Almería recognize the importance that the Mozarabic community gives to Berta as the enabler of the political transformation of al-Andalus opened by their new Umayyad Christian ruler. The language chosen by the compiler presents Berta as the recipient of a symbolic homage that recognizes her as a milk-queen mother from whom the royal authority of Flores derives. Furthermore, the narrative voice of the compiler associates the arrival of those Christians to Almería with a pilgrimage by recalling the readers of Berta's pilgrimage to Santiago:

[E] Dios—que es poderoso Señor e da gualardon a aquellos que lo siruen—quiso que ella fuesse sallida de catiuo e fuesse mas honrada que ella era de ante. E que de aquella su fija que ella leuaua en su vientre a la romeria, que viniese quien lo a El sirviese. E aquellos que la prisieran e mataran al duque, su padre, que la obedesçiesen e fuessen sus vasallos, e de su fija. E metio en coraçon al Ynfante Flores que creyesse en El e que se fiziese cristiano, e que se casasse con su fija asy como la estoria lo ha ya contado. (123, fol. 45v)

And God—who is a powerful Lord and gives reward to those who serve him—desired that she ended her captivity and be more honored than she was before. And also that from the daughter she carried to the pilgrimage in her belly would come one who would serve Him. And that those who captured her and killed the Duke, his father, would obey her and be her vassals. And vassals of her daughter. And she put in the heart of the young

prince Flores that he would believe in Him and become a Christian. And that he would marry her daughter as the story has already told.

Like the chapter about the conversion on the island, the one dedicated to Flores's ascension to the throne moves from the changes in identity or social status of Flores and Blancaflor to the role of Berta in making them possible. On this occasion, the impact of Berta in the Umayyad prince is expressed bodily as an imprint on his heart in a language that complements the bodily transformation resulting from breastfeeding with her creating a shared space of education for her daughter and the heir of Almería.

Despite occupying a secondary position to that of the two protagonist lovers, the role of Berta throughout the *CFB* highlights the importance of feminine practices like breastfeeding and family relationships enabled by women in this historical fantasy about a fully Christian Iberia after the Islamic conquest. From this perspective, the *CFB* expands beyond the limits of the patriarchal structure that defines the historiographical tradition of the Christian kingdoms. Even if Berta evidences the silenced importance of women in the formation of lineage in such accounts, the *CFB* still participates in the same historiographical tradition. Patrilineal inheritance results in Flores's ascension to the throne after his father.

The separation of two spheres of influence in gendered terms is reinforced by the absence of the two women in Córdoba. Yet, instead of silencing Berta, this gendered compartmentalization bears witness to the relevance of a matrilineal formation of a dynasty that the *CFB* presents at the origin of the Carolingians. Therefore, the milk-based kinship fostered by Berta introduces into the tradition of the *EE* a fictional multicultural lineage unifying the Iberian Peninsula under Christian rule. But the impact of breastfeeding was already part of the *EE* manuscript family. The narration of the conquest of Córdoba in the *Versión ampliada* underscores Berenguela's breastfeeding of her son Fernando III in the following terms:

Et esa noble reyna donna Berenguella muy alegre por aquello que su fijo el rey don Ferrando auie conquerida la çipdat de Cordoua [...]. Ca esta reyna donna Berenguella, asi commo cuenta la estoria, así enderesço et crio a este fijo don Fernando en buenas costunbres et en buenas obras sienpre, que los buenos ensennamientos et las sus buenas acuçias quel ella ensenno dulçes como la miel, segunt diz la estoria, non çesaron nin quedaron de correr sienpre al coraçon a este rey don Fernando, et con tetas llenas de virtudes le dio su leche de guisa que, maguer que el rey don Fernando era ya varon fecho et firmado en edat de su fuerça conplida, ssu madre la reyna donna Berenguella non quedo nin quedaua de dezirle et enseñarle acuçiosamente las cosas que plazen a Dios. (PCG Vol. 2, 734)

And this noble queen Lady Berenguella was cheerful because his son the King *don* Ferrando had conquered the city of Cordova [...]. Since this Queen *donna* Berenguella, as the history tells, had always raised and straightened his son *don* Fernando with good habits and good actions, that the good teachings and good diligences that she taught him—sweet as honey, as the story tells—did not cease or stop ever running to the heart of this king Lord Fernando. And with breasts full of virtues, she gave him her milk in a way that, although he was a well-grown man and had reached the age of his full strength, his mother, the queen Lady Berenguella did not refrain then or ever from telling him and teaching him diligently the good things that pleased God.

The sudden recourse to the maternal transference of virtues in this passage recapitulates a series of elements laid out throughout the romance sections of the *CFB* that illuminate the role of Berta as the founder of a milk-based dynasty. Notably, breastfeeding also appears as a central aspect of Berenguela's relationship with her royal son. As in the *CFB*, the consequences of breastfeeding go beyond nurturing to be inextricably linked with the education that Fernando received from her before coming to age. By presenting Berenguela as nurturing with virtues his son Fernando, the *Versión amplificada* factors in the importance of queenship in the construction and legitimation of the Castilian ruling dynasty.

In this passage, the movement from King Fernando III to the role of his mother highlights a connection that—going beyond the narration of conquest of the former caliphal capital—relies on the affective bond created by the practice of breastfeeding. As in the *CFB*, this passage of the *Versión amplificada* underscores the long-lasting effect of the milk that the king ingested as an infant. Episodes like this may seem an anomaly within a historiographical genre that structures

history as a patrilineal succession of male rulers accomplishing a series of masculine deeds.

However, looking at female practices like breastfeeding may allow us to find breakdowns of that logic to understand otherwise silenced historical agents.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

In *El Victorial* (ca. 1448)—an account of the life of Pero Niño, count of Buelna (1378–1453)—Gutierre Díaz de Games describes the privileges received by Inés Lasa, Pero Niño’s mother, after serving as the wet nurse of the future King Enrique III (r. 1390–1406). According to Díaz de Games, Inés Lasa received various villages, generous economic compensation, and other privileges (89). The author writes about the directions of Queen Juana Manuel—daughter of the author Juan Manuel and wife of Enrique II—for selecting a wet nurse of the future king: “E la reina doña Juana, guardando esta orden en su nieto el príncipe, que ella mucho amava, fue buscada en Castilla tal ama que fuese buena, e de buen linaje e limpio, moça e apuesta” (“And the queen Lady Juana kept this command concerning his grandson the prince, whom she greatly loved, that a good wet nurse from a good and clean lineage, young and attractive, be sought in Castile”; 88; my trans.) This description of the expected qualities of the wet nurse points to a crucial change in the conception of religious alterity in medieval Castile.

About sixty years after the composition of the *CFB*, the representation of wet nursing in the *El Victorial* responds to a social context in which ideas about “limpieza de sangre” (“purity of blood”) had started to redefine the relationship between the family origins and religious alterity. Some scholars identify the origin of these ideas in the anti-Jewish campaign initiated by an archdeacon of the Andalusian city of Écija, Ferrán Martínez (who, ironically, shared a name with the Ferrand Martínez, the purported “translator” of the prologue of the *Zifar*). Unlike this earlier figure, who made possible the *translatio* of the dead body of Pérez Gudiel and its

subsequent reception by a multicultural crowd in Toledo, the Archdeacon Ferrán Martínez, in June 1391, after years of anti-Jewish preaching, succeeded in inciting the uprising of a very different crowd, which killed or forced the conversion to Christianity of thousands of Jews across the peninsula.²⁰⁸

The development of legal statutes around “pureza de sangre” and coordinated actions against Jews and descendants of Jews during the fifteenth century constituted a significant change in the conception of individuals with non-Christian ancestry in the Iberian Peninsula. However, the society in which the *Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor* was produced around 1390 was not radically different from the one of those who witnessed the massive killings of Jews shortly afterwards. As the new ideas started to filter into the kingdom’s nobility, the transformable character of intellectual and biological lineages associated with religious alterity began to disappear. For instance, ideas about milk and breastfeeding as carriers of a risk of pollution that existed since at least Papacy of Innocent III (1198–1216) could now support Queen Juana’s search for a wet nurse from a “clean lineage” for her grandson Enrique, as Díaz de Galmes writes in *El Victorial*.

Meanwhile, the interplay between continuity and transformation of earlier ideas continued in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. For example, the malleability of ideas about conversion is exposed by Pero Tafur in his travelogue *Andanças e viajes* (ca. 1454). He writes with affection about his host in Cairo, a Jew converted to Islam as a fellow “natural” of Sevilla who only married Christians because “por quanto avrien por gran

²⁰⁸ For a succinct but contextualized description of the circumstances leading to these events, see Wolff. Nirenberg has dedicated abundant scholarship to this event and its implications, his book *Communities of Violence* has been particularly influential in how these events are understood nowadays. In “Mass Conversions,” he addresses the impact of what he calls “genealogical mentalities” in the growing anti Judaism of fifteenth century Castile pointing out the existence of those mentalities across the religious communities of the Iberian Peninsula before 1391. His article “Was There Race Before Modernity?” outlines the deep impact of ideas about “Purity of Blood” not only in late medieval and early modern Spain, but also in modern scholarship about those periods.

desonra casar con mora de natura” (82) [“for they hold it a great dishonour to marry a Moor by birth” (trans. Letts 73)]. Tafur explains this situation arguing that the Mamluk society of Egypt preferred converts to Islam to those born in Muslim families, projecting into the same city where Flores and Blancaflor reunited Castilian anxieties about the relationship between blood genealogy and conversion.²⁰⁹

Moving into the early sixteenth century, both the *Libro del caballero Zifar* and the story of Flores and Blancaflor were brought to the presses in 1512. In the case of the *Zifar*, Cromberger’s 1512 edition cut the initial section of the prologue, depriving the romance of the original author’s effort to keep alive the memory of Pérez Gudiel and his multicultural Mozarabic identity. After this edition, the romance disappeared from print until 1872. Concerning the *CFB*, Arnao Guillén de Brocar edited in Alcalá de Henares a different version of the story of the two lovers adapted to the new tastes. This version does not connect their adventures with the contents of the *EE* or with the lineage of Charlemagne. Likewise, it does not present Flores as breastfed by Blancaflor’s mother—here, an Italian noble named Topacia who dies shortly after giving birth (*Historia* 98). Thus, the ingestion of Christian milk is not a part of this version, and Flores and Blancaflor’s conversion is neither related to the transformation of an embodied heritage nor connected with a historiographical reconstruction of the Spanish past.

According to Baranda and Infantes, the printed version of the *Historia de Flores y Blancaflor* (Story of Flores and Blancaflor) was a success, with at least six editions in the sixteenth century and continued printings until today (Estudio 27–30). The disparate afterlives of the *Zifar* and the *Historia de Flores y Blancaflor* have more to do with early modern readers’ preferences than the social conditions of the versions studied in this dissertation. Nevertheless,

²⁰⁹ I address the intersection between conversion, alterity, and racialization in *Andanças e viagens* in the article “Generación de Poniente.”

the continued interest in the love story between a Muslim prince and a Christian woman has something to say about the persistence of the imaginary of intermixing in the Spanish early modern period. While Spanish society processed the deep consequences of a new approach to religious alterity anchored in the statutes of “purity of blood,” north of the Pyrenees the development of ideas such as the “leyenda negra” (“black legend”) led the attempt to marginalize the imperial power of Spain as an “Orientalized” other, tainted by its Jewish and Muslim heritage. Fuchs refers to the creation of the *leyenda negra* during the early modern period with a strong emphasis on its racial implications:

In anti-Spanish propaganda—the *leyenda negra* that this volume examines—Spain is consistently associated with Islam, with Africa, with dark peoples. It is important to recover the essentializing ‘blackness’ of this cultural mythology: critics typically read it metaphorically [...], yet it often refers in unambiguous terms to Spain’s racial difference, its *essential Moorishness*. (94)

Fuchs’s emphasis on the conflation of religious and racialized alterity underscores some historical implications the studying different forms of genealogical filiation between Castile and al-Andalus in this dissertation. In her 1987 book, Menocal dedicated an entire chapter to criticizing what she called “The Myth of Westernness in Medieval Literary Historiography” (*Arabic* 1-25). Identifying the tendency of literary history to participate in myth-making and canonize “family trees” spanning from the myth of “Western” culture, Menocal invited literary historians to explore the heritage of Arabic traditions, challenging “[t]he resistance to a consideration of this different story of our parentage, of a displacement of our conception of our fundamental cultural lineage, [which] is quite deep-seated” (*Arabic* 3). The observations of Fuchs about the *leyenda negra* and Menocal regarding “Western” cultural history do not reflect on the specificity of medieval Iberia. However, they evidence how its multicultural reality was part of a broader struggle to find a place for non-Christian lineages within the worldview of the European Christian elites.

From the specificity of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile, the examples discussed in the previous chapters shed light on the existence of medieval discourses beyond the narrow monocultural origins of Europe fostered among medieval and early modern Christian elites alike. The objectives and limits of these stories about “remote origins” discussed in the previous chapters point to an unstable conception of medieval identities, even within the textual traditions—like that of the *Estoria de Espanna*—that more strictly aimed to create a fixed idea about the origins of Castile.

Other sources would lend further support to the readings presented here. A more detailed analysis of Alfonso X’s translation of the Arabic *Lapidario* (Lapidary, 1243–ca. 1250, 1276–1279) would sustain and give additional evidence to the ideas about the translation of Arabic sciences discussed in Chapter 2. The *Lapidario*’s prologue articulates the idea of “remote origins” through the travel of the Arabic author Abolays from Chaldea in search of ancient knowledge about the properties of the stones. According to the prologue Abolays a book on this matter and was able to translate it into Arabic. Alfonso’s commission of a translation of Abolays work completes the process of *translatio*(n) from the remote East to the Castilian vernacular.

The translations of the *Calila e Dimna* (1251), *Sendebār* (1253), and *Barlaam e Josaphat* (ca. 1290) would provide further insights on the role of Asian spaces in mediating the ambivalent heritage of al-Andalus discussed in Chapter 3. All these works correspond to factual translations widely disseminated across medieval languages and cultures thanks, in part, to the popularity of their Arabic versions. Their use of *exempla* is emulated in the *Zifar*. Furthermore, the *Zifar* includes *exempla* also present on those traditions. The approaches of Girón-Nigrón (“Go-Between”) and Kinoshita (“Translatio/n”) to the tradition of the *Calila e Dimna* evidence

the importance of the translation of exemplary literature for the study of the relationship between *translatio*, translation, and cultural adaptation.

Finally, the significance of breastfeeding for religious transformation would be supported in light of the rendering of the life of Saint Catherine of Egypt in the hagiographic text “Constantino.” According to this version of the legend, the emperor Constantine ordered to cut Catherine’s breasts as a punishment for her Christian faith. When she was later beheaded—the story follows—an abundance of milk emanated from her neck soaking the soil surrounding her body. This is just one of the examples of unexpected emanations of milk on hagiographic stories contained in the manuscript h.I.13 of the Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial that Moore edits as *Libro de los huéspedes*. Despite the absence of Islamic referents on them, a wider approach to the significance of milk in the Castilian sources would expand the limits of patrilineal genealogy discussed on Chapter 4.

The examples presented here suffice to show that medieval Castilian authors engaged in constructing strategies to find a place for intellectual and blood lineages coming from al-Andalus as an integral part of the origins of their kingdom. Furthermore, they illustrate an ambivalent representation of those non-Christian ancestries by discussing them as pertaining to remote times and spaces and transformed either by the decisive action of the Christian king (regarding Alfonso’s patronage) or within the limits of those remote origins (in cases of the *Zifar* and the *CFB*). This analysis has opened up a new view on early Castilian foundational texts and recasts them as part of broader cultural and historical trends that shaped our modern understanding of Spain well beyond the medieval period discussed in this dissertation.

After considering the limits of monocultural approaches to the origin of Castile across scientific, literary, and historiographical discourses, this dissertation has evidenced that “[t]he

very heart of culture as a series of contraries”—as Menocal would put it (*Ornament* 11)—not only lay in al-Andalus, but also in a medieval Castile that struggled to find an equilibrium between the Christian worldview of its elites and the reality of its multicultural past and present.

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