

## Chapter 10

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### Spiritual Friendship in the Works of Alfonso X of Castile: Images of Interaction Between the Sacred and Spiritual Worlds of Thirteenth-Century Iberia<sup>1</sup>

Friendship has always been a multifaceted subject affecting several spheres of human life, the interpretation and value of which have evolved and transformed in time and spaces. During the Middle Ages the predominant Christian mentality played a fundamental role in establishing the rules according to which both personal and emotional connections between individuals, and the links between humans and the supernatural, were forged.<sup>2</sup> Considering this, the present study will focus on a topic largely unexplored, the medieval Iberian interpretation of friendship, which will be examined through the analysis of the thirteenth-century production ascribed to Alfonso X of Castile's scriptorium. In particular, special emphasis will be devoted to the Marian collection of the *Cantigas de Santa María*

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter has been elaborated within the theoretical frame of the research project *El ejercicio del poder en los reinos de León y Castilla en la Edad Media: ideología, discurso y estructuras políticas (siglos XI–XIII)* (Junta de Castilla y León, SA085A08).

<sup>2</sup> *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Julian Haseldine (Stroud: Sutton, 1999); *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex and Marriage in the Medieval World*, ed. Robert Edwards and Stephen Spector. Suny Series in Medieval Studies (Albany: State University of New York, 1991); Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 50 (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1994); Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: The Political Importance of Group Bonds in the Early Middle Ages*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt, 1990; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

(henceforth *CSM*), together with several references to the legal corpus of the *Siete Partidas* (henceforth *SP*).<sup>3</sup>

Significantly, in the *CSM* the type of friendship experienced between secular and sacred figures clearly resembles more pragmatic agreements and it goes beyond the parameters and formulae inherited from both classical eastern and western traditions presenting, instead, some undeniable Alfonsine peculiarities. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that some of these ideas bear the unmistakable mark of these classical philosophical traditions.<sup>4</sup> Aristotle's (384 B.C.E.–322 B.C.E.) *Ethica Eudemea* and *Ethica Nicomachea*, which reached the Iberian Peninsula in 1240, when Herman el Alemán translated Averroes's commentary from Arabic to Latin, were particularly influential in shaping the Alfonsine interpretation of friendship.<sup>5</sup> According to Aristotle, friendship as *philia* was related with φύσις (*physis*, nature), since man was considered to be naturally endowed with human generosity which spontaneously compelled him to love others.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, friendship was regarded as a necessity, without which man could not achieve any happiness.<sup>7</sup> A friend was

<sup>3</sup> Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettman. Clásicos Castalia, 3 vols. (Madrid: Castalia, 1986–1988); *Las siete partidas del Rey don Alfonso el Sabio: cotejadas con varios codices antiguos por la Real Academia de la Historia* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1807); *The Siete Partidas*, ed. Robert I. Burns, trans. Samuel Parsons Scott. The Middle Ages Series, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Kathleen Kulp-Hill, with an introduction by Connie L. Scarborough. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 173 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*. Key Themes in Ancient History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5–6, 28–31; “Greek Friendship,” *The American Journal of Philology* 117.1 (1996): 71–94; Gabriel Herman, *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 38; Paul Millett, *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 120–21; *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*, ed. Brad Inwood and Lloyd P. Gerson, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1988; Indianapolis and Cambridge Hackett Publishing, 1997); Lynette G. Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435–323 B.C.* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); *Aspects of Friendship in the Greco-Roman World: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the Seminar Für Alte Geschichte, Heidelberg, on 10–11th June, 2000*, ed. Michael Peachin. Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series, 43 (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Eudemea*, trans. M. Woods, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); *Ethica Nicomachea*, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). Herman el Alemán probably translated Averroes' commentary in the monastery of the Santísima Trinidad, as stated in the fifteenth-century *Itinerarium Hispanicum* by Jerónimo Monetarius: “de monasterio sancte Trinitatis [ . . . ] in hoc loco traductus est liber ethicorum et addicio Averrois, ut in fine libri ethicorum Averrois scriptum est.” Hieronymus Münzer, *Itinerarium Hispanicum*, ed. Ludwig Pfandl, *Revue Hispanique* 48 (1920): 1–178; here 121.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship*. Suny Series in Ethical Theory (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Sherman, “Aristotle on Friendship and Shared Life,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 47 (1987): 589–613; Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

“the other self,” a physically autonomous individual who was connected to his friend by sharing with him a single soul.<sup>8</sup>

Such interpretation gradually changed with the early Stoics, Seneca (4 B.C.E.–65 C.E.), Cicero (ca. 106 B.C.E.–43 B.C.E.), up to the transition from the Roman Republic (509 B.C.E.–27 B.C.E.) to the Empire, when friendship coincided with patronage.<sup>9</sup> With the advent of Christianity, the Fathers of the Church elaborated new theories aimed at providing a divine justification for the world and for nature.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, after a substantial chronological gap, this topic was readdressed only in the sixth century, when Isidore of Seville (ca. 562–636) tried to combine the pagan and Christian thoughts by defining a friend as the guardian of the soul.<sup>11</sup> Further reflections on friendship appeared in Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when, with the disclosure of the paradigm of signs and representations attributed to friendship, it was believed that between the pure feeling and its public accomplishment there was only an apparent separation, which was overcome in practice.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1166a: 31; *Ethica Eudemea*, 1245a: 30. Moreover, Aristotle created a threefold analytical framework—the good, the useful and the pleasant—to catalogue all the potential outcomes of *philia*. In the *Rhetoric* (1359b:2–17) Aristotle also listed all the characteristics that a man should possess in order to be regarded as a friend, which contingencies drove men to join together and which, instead, turned them into enemies. He also presented a sort of transitive rule of friendship according to which a friend’s friend is one’s own ally, as well as a friend’s enemy is inevitably one’s own foe. His meditation on the subject went further and it drew upon the characteristics which individuals should possess in order to be considered friends, which features they should have in common and how many of them could claim that position.

<sup>9</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. Charles D. Yonge. Bohn’s Classical Library, 43 (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 7–33; *Topics in Stoic Philosophy*, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 181; Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 9.5–6; Karl Julius Holzknrecht, *Literary Patronage in the Middle Ages* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966); Barbara K. Gold, *Literary Patronage in Greece and Rome* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Richard P. Seller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Miguel Rodríguez-Pantoja, “Con Cicerón por los caminos (zigzagieantes) de la amistad,” *Anuario Filosófico* 34 (2001): 433–62.

<sup>10</sup> Philippe Delhaye, *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, trans. S. J. Tester (London: Burns & Oates, 1960); Mary Dorothea, “Cicero and Saint Ambrose on Friendship,” *The Classical Journal* 43 (1948): 219–22; Eoin G. Cassidy, “He Who Has Friends Can Have No Friend: Classical and Christian Perspectives on the Limits to Friendship,” *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Julian Haseldine, 45–67; Marie Aquinas McNamara, *Friendship in Saint Augustine*. *Studia Friburgensia*, New Series, 20 (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 1958); Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Donald X. Burt, *Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine’s Practical Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> *Isidori Hispalensis Sententiae*, ed. Pierre Cazier (Turnholt: Brepols, 1998); here *Sententiarum Libri* III, XXX, 30.2b.

<sup>12</sup> Jean Claude Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes dans l’occident médiéval*. Bibliothèque des Histoires (Paris: Gallimard, 1990); John A. Burrow, *Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Benedicte Sère, “De la vérité en amitié. Une phénoménologie médiévale

## Friendships in Medieval Europe: Exploring the Case of the Iberian Peninsula

In the Iberian medieval context the term *amistad* (friendship) was recurrently used as a synecdoche to indicate numerous and different relationships, among which were spiritual and sensual love, kinship and companionship, formal and private alliances, pacts of mutual support, as well as any ritualized form of brotherhood. One of the earliest scholars to adopt an historical and sociological approach to define these relationships was Eduardo de Hinojosa, who pointed out the strict connection existing between friendship, peace, security and treaty, which he regarded as parts of a wider range of agreements including *hermandades*, *amizdades* and *fraternitas*.<sup>13</sup> Most of these relationships were established in order to achieve material and commercial profits. Nonetheless, on several occasions, they also represented a social tool of integration and protection. With this in mind, it may be argued that the majority of the alliances signed in medieval Iberia rotated around two main points: first, the community of properties, profits and inheritances; secondly, the moral and pragmatic duty of mutual defence and protection.<sup>14</sup> Considering this, it might be argued that the Iberian situation did not differ excessively from that experienced elsewhere in Europe, since friendship was perceived as a *pactum amiciarum*, that is to say a social agreement aimed at protecting both public peace and the constituted order.

In fact, according to historical, juridical, religious and literary sources proceeding from medieval central Europe (mainly France and Germany) friendship was regarded as a contractual link endowed with utilitarian goals.<sup>15</sup> It

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du sentiment dans les commentaires de l'Éthique à Nicomaque: (XIIIe–XVe siècle),” *Revue Historique* 636 (2005): 793–848; here 800. About the scholastic period: John M. Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory. Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 227; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Latin Text and English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices and Glossaries* (London: Blackfriars in conjunction with Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964–1981), I–II q. 99 a. 2c.

<sup>13</sup> Eduardo de Hinojosa y Naveros, “La fraternidad artificial en España,” *Revista de Archivos, Museos y Bibliotecas* 13 (1905): 1–18; published also in *Obras. T. I. Estudios de investigación* (Madrid: Ministerio de Justicia y CSIC, 1948), 259–78. See also Eduardo de Hinojosa y Naveros and Francisco Tomás Valiente, *El elemento germánico en el derecho español* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1993), 380. Terms such as *fides*, *pax*, *foedus* and other variants also appeared, since friendship was not always strictly defined as such. Huguette Legros, “Le vocabulaire de l’amitié et son évolution sémantique au cours du XII siècle,” *Cahiers de Linguistique Hispanique Médiévale* 23 (1980): 131–39.

<sup>14</sup> Hinojosa, *Obras*, 257–66.

<sup>15</sup> Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965); George Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980); *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Adam Kostó, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia: Power, Order, and the Written Word, 1000–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Johannes

was considered to be one of the most privileged and strongest social bonds together with kinship, *consanguinitas*, godfatherhood and feudal relationships, and it was defined as a consequence of certain pre-existing companionships of arms.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, kinship and family provided the protection universally required against hostility and violence; therefore, friendship, a similar social bond, also assumed an enormous importance both as a private and a political link.<sup>17</sup>

However, as Prieto Bances suggests, a distinction between the concepts of friendship and alliance should be made, since they were stringently dependent although not perfectly coincident:

. . . pero la paz es diversa según su origen; hay paz nacida del amor y paz nacida del interés mutuo o de la violencia, y a estas distintas paces corresponden amistades distintas; en el primer caso tendremos la amistad natural, aristotélica; en el segundo, la amistad pactada, y en el tercero la amistad impuesta.<sup>18</sup>

[ . . . but peace is different according to its origin; there is peace born from love, peace originated from mutual interest and peace created by violence; and different kinds of friendship correspond to these different kinds of peace; in the first case, we will have natural friendship, the Aristotelian one; in the second case, an agreed friendship, and in the third case, an imposed friendship.]

Two other crucial aspects of the Iberian interpretation which conformed to a more general European perspective are the adoption of the vocabulary and code of friendship to describe vassalic relationships, and the semantic coincidence between the terms *amor* (love) and *amicitia* (friendship). The first point will be exemplified by the following example, which has been extrapolated from a thirteenth-century poem depicting Charlemagne's mourning for his friend and vassal Roland's demise:

Tanto bueno amjgo uos me soljades ganare,  
Por uuestra amor ariba, muychos me soljan amare.<sup>19</sup>

[Thanks to you I gained very good friends,  
because by loving you first, they also loved me.]

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Fried, Patrick J. Geary. Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2002); Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*.

<sup>16</sup> George Fenwick Jones, *The Ethos of the "Song of Roland"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press 1963), 143.

<sup>17</sup> *Medieval Concepts of the Past*, ed. Althoff, 71–88.

<sup>18</sup> Prieto Bances, "Los amigos en el fuero de Oviedo," *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 23 (1963): 203–46.

<sup>19</sup> *Textos lingüísticos del medioevo español*, ed. Douglas J. Gifford and Fredrick W. Hodcroft, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Dolphin Book Co., 1966), 147.

Evidently, alongside the emotional experience suggested by the word *amor*, some traditional clichés persisted, such as the inheritance of friendship that the king has gained through his friend's deeds, as well as the status of companion of his friend's friends and enemy of his friend's foes.

As far as the second aspect is concerned, according to a general medieval perspective the relationships of *amor* and *amistad* had very loosely-defined borders, at least from a purely lexical point of view. This rendered any attempt at a clear definition and classification very difficult to undertake since "love between man and woman was expressed in terms of friendship, and friendship between man and man was expressed in terms of love."<sup>20</sup> In medieval French, for instance, *amor* signified both "amour" and "amitié."<sup>21</sup> The same polyvalent connotations of *amare* are noticeable also in the vernacular Italian.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, a neater separation might be envisaged in the early medieval Latin production in which *amicitia*, though defined as both a personal and private link, was regarded as a bond much stronger than love, since "itaque amicitia semper prodest, amor etiam aliquando noce" (whereas friendship is always worthy, love can sometimes cause harm).<sup>23</sup> Similarly, in medieval Castilian *amigo* and *amiga* were frequently adopted to define those who were linked in a sexual or amorous relationship.

However, as Paden has claimed examining the verses of the *cantigas de amor*, *cantigas de amigo*, and *cantigas d'escarnho e de maldizer*, despite the fact that the courtly formulae had a striking correspondence in their mirror-like vassalatic rituals, the wide range of semantic connotations related to the term *amigo* went beyond the political and amorous implications which the title of lord used to

<sup>20</sup> Garvase Mathew, "Ideals of Friendship," *Patterns of Love and Courtesy, Essays in Memory of C. S. Lewis*, ed. John Lawlor (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), 45–53; here 46; Klaus Oschema, "Reflections on Love and Friendship in the Middle Ages," *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300–1800*, ed. Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter and Miri Rubin (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 43–65; *Ami et Amile: chanson de geste*, ed. Peter F. Dembowski (Paris: Champion, 1969); Alexander H. Krappe "The Legend of Amicus and Amelius," *The Modern Language Review* 18 (1923): 152–61; Emma Herrán Alonso, "«Amicus» o la historia de la amistad verdadera. Otro testimonio peninsular," *Hispanic Review* 71 (2003): 549–63; Aelred of Rievaulx, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Anselm Hoste and Charles H. Talbot. *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), PL 195; *Spiritual Friendship: A New Translation*, trans. Mark F. William (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994); Peter de Blois, *Un Traité de l'amour du XIIIe siècle: (De amicitia christiana et de dilectione Dei et proximi)*, trans. Maria M. Davy (Paris: Boccard, 1932).

<sup>21</sup> Legros, "Le vocabulaire de l'amitié," 131–39.

<sup>22</sup> The thirteenth-century *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri is a case in point. In fact, the examples of friendship which appear in this work lack a proper definition and they are explained, instead, by adopting the words *amore* and *amare*. For a definition of "amistade" or "amistate" and "amico," see *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, ed. Aldo Ferrabino, 5 vols. (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1970–1976), 1: 202–12.

<sup>23</sup> Frederic J. E. Raby, "Amor and Amicitia: A Mediaeval Poem," *Speculum* 40 (1965): 599–610; here 601. The quotation is attributed to Seneca, *Epistulae morales*, VI (35).

bear.<sup>24</sup> Paden argues that in the *cantigas d'amor*, the poetic male voice addresses his lover using the title of *senhor*, which was a female appellation referring to the lady who owned the poet's heart. Conversely, in the *cantigas d'amigo* the key-word which identifies the genre and which most frequently recurs is *amigo*, an epithet which the female poetic voice—which is the protagonist in this case—uses to address her counterpart. What needs to be remarked upon is that the term *amigo* was used, in this context, as a surrogate for “lord,” a title that the female protagonist was unable to use to define her lover, since it was already the appellation adopted to name the king. Therefore, *amigo* was a polyvalent expression, used to indicate the lover, the companion, the vassal bounded by a fief, and also “a freeman who had committed himself to a lord, who enjoys his protection and serves him as his dependent.”<sup>25</sup>

### Alfonsine Perspectives

Before continuing with the analysis of the various typologies of friendship recognizable in medieval Iberia, and in particular in the works produced in the Alfonsine scriptorium, a few notes on Alfonso X's (1221–1284) biography and his production would be helpful.<sup>26</sup> After inheriting the throne of Castile and León in 1252 from his father Ferdinand III (1199–1252), Alfonso's political activity was marked by the failure of his imperialistic ambitions, the rebellion of the Castilian nobles in 1272 and the deposition by his son Sancho IV (1258–1295) in 1282.

<sup>24</sup> William D. Paden, “Principles of Generic Classification in the Medieval European Lyric: The Case of Galician-Portuguese,” *Speculum* 81 (2006): 76–97.

<sup>25</sup> Jan F. Niermeyer and Co van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, rev. by Johannes W. J. Burgers, 2 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002), 1, 53; cited in Paden, “Principles of Generic Classification,” 91.

<sup>26</sup> For an introduction to Alfonso X's biography, see Evelyn S. Procter, *Alfonso X of Castile, Patron of Literature and Learning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951; Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, [1980]); Antonio Ballesteros-Beretta, *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Barcelona: Salvat, 1963); John E. Keller, *Alfonso X, el Sabio*. Twayne's World Authors Series, 12: Spain (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967); *Alfonso X, el Sabio, vida, obra y época*, ed. Juan Carlos de Miguel Rodríguez, Angela Muñoz Fernández, Cristina Segura Graiño (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales, 1989); *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X the Learned of Castile and his Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, ed. Robert I. Burns. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1990); Manuel González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio, 1252–1284*. Corona de España, 2, Serie de Reyes de Castilla y León (Palencia: Editorial La Olmeda, 1993); *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2004); Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); id., *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa María: A Poetic Biography*. The Medieval Mediterranean, 16 (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 1998); H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, el Sabio: una biografía*. Crónicas y memorias (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2003); Peter Linehan, *Spain, 1157–1300: A Partible Inheritance*. A History of Spain (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 106–214.

Despite his political failures, he was, by contrast, one of the most active and notable patrons of arts and sciences, dubbed for this reason “the Wise” and “the Learned” king. He supervised a significant number of scientific and literary translations from the Arabic into the vernacular language of Castile and patronized the production of other original works of history, poetry, law and leisure.<sup>27</sup> Among them the aforementioned CSM deserve special attention. This poetic collection, composed in the vernacular Galician-Portuguese, is estimated to include about 420 canticles, albeit a number prone to variation within the four different manuscript versions.<sup>28</sup> The CSM, considered by many the expression of Alfonso’s personal devotion, are admired as the most exhaustive example of Iberian narrative and lyric production dedicated to the Virgin, as well as a milestone in medieval monophonic production.<sup>29</sup> Its harmonious *unicum* of verses, music and miniatures generates a complete artistic and religious product which Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo defined as the aesthetic Bible of the thirteenth century, in which all the elements of medieval art—visual, melodic and verbal—appear to be encyclopaedically collected.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> For an introduction, see *El scriptorium alfonsí: de los Libros de astrología a las ‘Cantigas de Santa María,’* ed. Jesús Montoya Martínez and Ana Domínguez Rodríguez (Madrid: Complutense Editorial, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> The four surviving manuscripts of the CSM are the following: T known as “Toledo Ms,” T known as “Códice Rico;” F known as “Florence Codex;” and E (Escorial) known as “Códice de los músicos.” For a clarifying overview on the editions of the CSM see *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettman, 3 vols. (Madrid: Castalia, 1986–1988), 1, 7–42; Stephen Parkinson, “The First Reorganization of the *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Bulletin of the Cantigueiros de Santa María* 1 (1988): 91–97; Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, “Primo contributo all’analisi delle varianti redazionali nelle *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Cobras e Son: Papers on the Text, Music and Manuscripts of the ‘Cantigas de Santa María,’* ed. Stephen Parkinson (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre of the University of Oxford, 2001), 106–18; Martha E. Schaffer, “The ‘Evolution’ of the *Cantigas de Santa María*: The Relationships Between MSS T, F and E,” *Cobras e Son*, 106–18; here 186–213.

<sup>29</sup> See Gerardo V. Huseby, “Musical Analysis and Poetic Structure in the *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Florilegium Hispanicum: Medieval and Golden Age Studies Presented to Dorothy Clotelle Clarke*, ed. John S. Geary et al. (Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1983), 81–101; Higinio Anglés, *La música de las Cantigas de Santa María del Rey Alfonso el Sabio. 1, Fasímil del códice j.b.2 de El Escorial* (Barcelona: Diputación Provincial de Barcelona, 1964); Israel J. Katz, “Higinio Anglés and the Melodic Origins of the *Cantigas de Santa María*: A Critical View,” *Alfonso X of Castile, the Learned King (1221–1284): An International Symposium, Harvard University, 17 November 1984*, ed. Francisco Márquez-Villanueva and Carlos Alberto Vega. *Harvard Studies in Romance Languages*, 43 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1990), 46–75; Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, “Claves de retórica musical para la interpretación y transcripción del ritmo de las *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Literatura y cristiandad: homenaje al profesor Jesús Montoya*, coord. Antonio Rafael Rubio Flores, María Luisa Dañobeitia Fernández, Manuel José Alonso García (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2001), 685–718; “Las *Cantigas de Santa María*. La música y su interpretación,” *El scriptorium alfonsí*, 347–59; David Wulstan, “The Rhythmic Organization of the *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Cobras e Son*, ed. Stephen Parkinson, 31–65.

<sup>30</sup> Richard P. Kinkade, “Scholastic Philosophy and the Art of the *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, 95–109.

A degree of scholarly attention has been devoted to the thorny issues of authorship, dating, subject matters, sources and diffusion of the CSM, questions which in part still remain unsolved.<sup>31</sup> The first problem arises from the attempt to date the collection, for which the admittedly rather tentative dates 1257–1283 have been accepted as two valid *post* and *ante quem* limits.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, neither the possibility that Alfonso X was the material author of some of the *loors* (religious hymns in praise of the Virgin inserted every tenth song), nor that he was supported by one or more professional writers can be excluded. What needs to be borne in mind is that authorship and direct composition of the book did not necessarily coincide; in fact, in many cases the sovereign supervised those who were responsible for the material composition of the texts.<sup>33</sup> The king is portrayed in precisely this “editorial” position from the outset, as the first illumination of the CSM proves, by depicting him on his throne, dictating the work to a group of *scriba*, surrounded by musicians and cantors who seem in all likelihood about to perform the pieces.<sup>34</sup> Alfonso X built up his troubadour *persona* through the personal elaboration of Marian hymns and the account of events from which he was rescued thanks to the Virgin’s aid.<sup>35</sup> The “poet-king” used secular versification, metrical and semantic structures of the art of *troubar* to worship the

<sup>31</sup> Walter Mettmann proposed three likely conclusions: first, most of the *cantigas* were written by a certain Airas Nunes (whose name appears in MS E, between two columns of CSM 223), collaborator-poet and coordinator of the Alfonsine scriptorium. About the identity of other possible collaborators working in Alfonso X’s scriptorium see Antonio Ballesteros, “Sevilla en el siglo XIII,” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 66 (1915): 50–53. See also Walter Mettmann, “Algunas observaciones sobre la génesis de la colección de las *Cantigas de Santa María* y sobre el problema del autor,” *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, 355–66. Mettmann’s second hypothesis was that other poets contributed to the elaboration or translation of the miracles to the point of overshadowing Nunes’s eminent role. Third, the authorship of Alfonso X cannot be ruled out for at least a group of *cantigas*, narrated in the first person and recounting episodes personally experienced by the sovereign, which can be easily highlighted by their style and themes (CSM 169, 180, 200, 209, 279, 300, 360, 401, 406). See *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettmann, 17–20; Anthony J. Cárdenas, “A Study of Alfonso’s Role in Selected *Cantigas* and the Castilian Prosification of Escorial Codex T.I.1,” *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, 253–68; Antonio G. Solalinde, “Intervención de Alfonso X en la redacción de sus obras,” *Revista de Filología Española* 2 (1915): 283–88; Joseph Snow, “A Chapter in Alfonso X’s Personal Narrative: The Puerto de Santa María Poems in the *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *La Corónica* 8 (1979): 10–21.

<sup>32</sup> Jesús Montoya Martínez, “Algunas precisiones acerca de las *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, 374–78.

<sup>33</sup> Roger D. Tinnell, “Authorship and Composition: Music and Poetry in *Las Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 28 (1981): 189–98; David Wulstan, “The Compilation of the *Cantigas* of Alfonso el Sabio,” *Cobras y Son*, ed. Stephen Parkinson, 154–85; Montoya Martínez, “Algunas precisiones acerca de las *Cantigas de Santa María*,” 355–86.

<sup>34</sup> Martin G. Cunningham, *Alfonso X El Sabio, Cantigas de Loor* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2000), 17–18.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Snow, “The Central Role of the Troubadour Persona of Alfonso X in the *Cantigas de Santa María*,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 56 (1979): 305–16.

worthiest lover—the Virgin Mary—who was also “the exemplification of the perfect qualities of womanhood.”<sup>36</sup> The result is a collection which is revered as the sovereign’s spiritual and “poetic biography”—as O’Callaghan has defined it—as well as a model of Christian and moral devotion for the readers. In fact, as Keller has argued, the Alfonsine scriptorium was orientated toward the production of works aimed at generating pleasure as well as spreading erudition—*utile et dulce*—to both the court’s members and the lower classes.<sup>37</sup>

Significantly, most of the miracles contained in the first 100 songs of the CSM were not new to the Iberian people, who had acknowledged other European Marian legends previously diffused throughout the Peninsula. With the expansion of the plan of the work—from its original 100 songs to the final 400 or so—which the monarch is believed to have personally devised, the collection assumed a progressively increasing Iberian dimension.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, elements from the French, German, English, Portuguese and Islamic traditions—imported by the artists gathered at the Alfonsine court—are identifiable throughout the entire collection.<sup>39</sup> The considerable number of examples proceeding from Biblical references and the presence of abundant historical, geographical, political, and folkloristic elements also contributed to enhance the narration with a realistic tone which has been considered by modern critics to be a powerful contribution to modern readers’ ability to understand, or at least to imagine, Iberian medieval life.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, in the CSM there is no picture of the unearthly reality. Unlike the inflamed sinful abyss and the Heavenly circles experienced by Dante Alighieri, for example, in his metaphysical journey described in his *Divina Commedia*, in the CSM there is no Pindaric fly, and no access for the readers/listeners to the upper spheres; therefore, the interaction of the two worlds has only one way-access, that is toward the lower world. It does not mean, however, that the secular dimension was the only one experienced, dreamed or described by medieval subjects. Within the Christian context apparitions of celestial figures in the eyes of humans were not such a rarity. The only *sine qua non* element to connect the two spheres was the presence of some intermediary characters, such as the Virgin, the saints and the angels, who were very often labelled as friends.

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<sup>36</sup> Keller, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 79.

<sup>37</sup> Keller, “The Threefold Impact of the *Cantigas de Santa María*: Visual, Verbal, and Musical,” *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, 7–33.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Snow, “Self-Conscious References and the Organic Narrative Pattern of the *Cantigas de Santa María* of Alfonso X,” *Medieval Renaissance and Folklore Studies in Honour of John Esten Keller*, ed. Joseph R. Jones. Hispanic Monographs. Serie homenajes, 1 (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1980), 53–66.

<sup>39</sup> Keller, *Alfonso X, el Sabio*, 73–74.

<sup>40</sup> John E. Keller and Annette Grant Cash, *Daily Life Depicted in the Cantigas de Santa María*. Studies in Romance Languages, 44 (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1998).

Alfonso X put himself at the centre of such connections; in fact, while being regarded as friend and vicar of God for his royal status, he also wanted to be regarded as a friend of his people, without denying the unbridgeable gap which existed between them. His works, without omitting the differences existing between the various typologies of relationships, as well as between the individuals involved, outline a perfectly-balanced system within which the general and untouchable rules of friendship predominated, although in some cases certain exceptions were allowed. Relying on these premises, the present study seeks to demonstrate, mainly through the examples of the *CSM*, how the secular typologies of friendship, including political agreements, vassalic bonds and sensual relationships, found their parallels in a spiritual dimension where even perfect and ideal connections, here defined as “spiritual friendships,” were subjected to the formulae and pragmatic rules of *amicitia*.

### Spiritual Friendship: A Definition

From its first recorded Latin use—*spiritualis amicitia*—found in the Venerable Bede (ca. 672–735), until its adoption in the later medieval context, “spiritual friendship” has been used to define the most desirable connections between humans and God.<sup>41</sup> In medieval Iberia, beyond the moral and theological justifications for the creation of such links, there were also political and social motivations. Since for a long period ethnic, linguistic and social boundaries were not rigidly enforced, Christian believers tried to safeguard and legitimize their position in society by forging their identities as “amigos de Dios” and antagonists of the infidels. In order to do so, as also confirmed by the law, they resorted to the standardized sacramental rituals which “facen ayuntar amor de home con Dios” (connected God’s and human love; *SP*, I:IV:VI):

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

[ . . . every Christian should know and truly believe that this is the genuine Creed of God which unites man and God by means of love. And he who does so believe, is a true Christian, and he who does not so believe, cannot be saved, nor is he a friend of God.]

Christian theology preached that humankind could enter in contact with God thanks to the support given by sacred or human intermediaries who behaved as

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<sup>41</sup> Brian P. McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience 350–1250*. Cistercian Studies Series, 95 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1988), 94.

ministers and performers of the conventional rituals. At this point it is fundamental to clarify who those intermediaries were and to what extent they might be defined as friends. There is a pyramidal segmentation which goes from the lowest level, occupied by individuals of different social statuses, to an intermediate position where the king and the Pope—vicars of God each in his own sphere—dwell. At the top the Virgin stands out from the others, subordinated to the Divine Father only. Although this pattern suggests that its constituents are rigidly entrenched, in fact there was the possibility of moving from one level to the other of this hierarchy. For example, it was not necessary for the highest located figures to go through all those “steps” of intermediation. In this regard, the king’s status is emblematic: he is represented simultaneously as one of the Virgin’s and the saints’ closest friends, but he is also connected to the Father directly since he is His vassal and envoy.

### God and Mankind: “Christianos de Dios Amigos”

The definition of spiritual friendship, among its various polysemous implications, also includes the connections between God, the Virgin, the saints, the apostles and the angels, either among them or with their subordinated fellows. St Thomas Aquinas had already elaborated on the definition of *amicitia Christiana* in his *Summa Theologiae* by stating that “*caritas non est simplex amor, sed habet rationem amicitiae . . .*” (charity is not merely love, but friendship . . .).<sup>42</sup> Such a connection between man and God implied, besides pure love, certain mutuality since “*praeterea amicitia non est sine reamatione*” (there is no friendship without return of love).<sup>43</sup> Clearly this statement represents the rejection of the previous philosophical theories of human unidirectional love according to which man could shower his affection on worthless or inadequate subjects without being rewarded equally.<sup>44</sup>

Alfonsine law abounds with examples conforming to these parameters of spiritual friendship. From the outset of Book I of the *SP*, for example, both the abstract love for God and the far more pragmatic relationships involving the Church and its representatives are presented as follows: “. . . demostró Dios á los que eran sus amigos muchas de sus poridades por fecho et por semejanza” (. . . God revealed many of His secrets directly or metaphorically to His friends; *SP*, prologue). God is frequently described as the stereotyped image of the perfect

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns, Oates & Washburn, 1920–1924), Q. XXV, art. 2, 310.

<sup>43</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Q. XXIII, art. 1, 262.

<sup>44</sup> The complete discussion about charity and friendship is carried out in Aquinas, *Summae Theologiae*, QQ. XXIII–XLIV, 262–553.

friend, endowed with all of the characteristics which a counterpart should have in order to merit such an appellation. In fact, He is loyal, careful, respectful, driven by the other's good and protection, ready to die for a friend's sake, as He did through Christ, whose crucifixion was a manifestation of His love toward mankind. According to the aforementioned rule of mutuality, man should behave in a faithful and charitable manner toward God as well. However, a careful analysis of the Alfonsine works shows a compelling paradox: since such an ideal friendship is so rare to fulfil, only few are allowed to enter in contact with God directly, but—and here is the impasse—their privileged status is a gift that they received from divine Grace, which endows them with uncorrupted souls.

The title "Christianos de Dios amigos" (God's friends), which frequently appears in the Alfonsine works, was recurrently used to address all the professed Christian believers performing their faith, and to create a sign of identification for those who made alliances in the name of God or in defence of His people. In the wars fought in the name of orthodoxy against the infidels the title of "God's friends" was assumed by warriors in order to legitimize their roles and missions. In that context God was often portrayed as a feudal lord, whose subordinates were regarded as vassals and servants rather than as real friends.<sup>45</sup> Despite God's divine and eminent position, however, the relationships in which He took part could not escape the *sine qua non* conditions of mutuality, love and respect. The same feudal model also emerges from the *SP*, whose title IV of Book I remarks that God "demuestra grant amorio de amigo et mayormente de señor á vasallos" (he demonstrates a friendly affection which resembles more the benevolence of a lord to his vassal) toward His believers. Moreover, in most of those cases, directly or indirectly, the gift of divine advice occurred through the intermediation of God's ministers.

The abundance of lexical devices depicting Christian believers as God's friends or "compañna de cristianos" suggests that spiritual amity was an essential element to strengthen the sense of a common religious background which could also have led to the building of a solid social identity. However, it would be extremely simplistic and reductive to approach the subject from a Christian perspective exclusively, underestimating in this way the threefold context of the medieval Iberian Peninsula, where Muslims and Jews held strategic positions from demographic, social and economic points of view.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X: A Poetic Biography*, 16–17.

<sup>46</sup> Several studies have been carried out on the image of Jews and Muslims as presented in the Alfonsine works, see Albert I. Bagby Jr, "The Figure of the Jew in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X," *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, 235–46; "The Moslem in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X, El Sabio," *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 20 (1973): 173–207; "Alfonso X, el sabio compara moros y judíos," *Romanische Forschungen* 82 (1970): 578–83; Dwayne Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews: An Edition of and Commentary on Siete Partidas 7.24 'De los Judíos.'* University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 115 (Berkeley: University of California

At this stage, one might wonder whether or not declaring themselves Christians constituted a mechanical guarantee which allowed those who professed it to achieve a blessed companionship with God by avoiding any further mediation. In fact, it was believed that God revealed his power through the saints' intervention and they, similarly, received their holy gifts through the Virgin's intercession. Only two figures of the human race were directly touched by divine Grace, becoming themselves "vicars of God": the king and the Pope. However, moments of crisis were not infrequent between these two powers, erupting whenever their spheres of influence overlapped. For this reason Alfonso X tried to keep them separated, as *SP II:I:I* clearly states:

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

[For the lord on whom God confers such an honor is both king and emperor, and to him belongs, according to law, the power granted by the people in former times to govern and maintain the empire with justice. For this reason he is styled emperor, which means commander, because all persons of the empire obey his commands, and he is not bound to obey anyone except the Pope, and that only in spiritual matters.]

### Friendships Between Sacred Figures

In the imaginary descent down the hierarchical pyramidal segmentation presented before, the next step is occupied by the Virgin Mary. The connections established with her are regarded as the most profitable, at least as far as the CSM are concerned, and for this reason they occupy a central position in such a network

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Press, 1986); Carpenter, "Christian Attitudes Towards the Jewish Sabbath in the Light of Medieval Spanish Legal Texts," *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Conference*, ed. Villanova University, Augustinian Historical Institute. Annual Publication of the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Conference (Villanova, Pa.: Augustinian Historical Institute, Villanova University, 1979), 51–62; Carpenter, "Jewish-Christian Social Relations in Alphonsine Spain: A Commentary on *Siete Partidas*, Book VII, Title XXIV, Law 8," *Florilegium Hispanicum*, ed. John S. Geary et al., 61–70; Carpenter, "Tolerance and Intolerance: Alfonso X's Attitudes Towards the Synagogue as Reflected in the *Siete Partidas*," *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 31 (1984): 31–39; David Romano, "Los Judíos y Alfonso X," *Revista de Occidente* 43 (1984): 203–17; here 204–05; Robert I. Burns, "Jews and Moors in the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X the Learned: A Background Perspective," *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence, Studies in Honour of Angus MacKay*, ed. Roger Collins and Anthony Goodman (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2002), 46–62.

connecting spiritual and secular spheres. To quote only a few of the manifold examples, one could mention CSM 360, where the Virgin is named “de Deus filla | e criad e amiga” (God’s daughter, servant and friend) and CSM 399 where she is defined “de Deus Madre | falar e amiga” (God’s mother, company and friend). Most of the invocations and prayers that the believers devote to Mary are on behalf of the supreme Lord, who is defined simultaneously as her father, son and friend. In this case, since friendship is listed together with the familiar bonds of childhood and motherhood, there are grounds to supposing that the perfect amity occupy one of the highest levels among the other social relationships in the Alfonsine perception, as they also did in classical and religious thought. In fact, this idea recalls the Aristotelian thought of parental connections, considered as forms of *affectus naturalis* (natural love), the same natural love which includes pure friendship. In the aforementioned case the *affectus naturalis* experienced by the Virgin is inevitable, in whichever way God’s position toward her would be interpreted, since He deserves to be the object of love and respect, both as her creator, father and original master of love.

Thus, the affection that Mary feels for God resembles the definition of *spiritualis* in all its aspects, since it involves her most intimate and true essence, it lacks any secular implications, it is mutual, and, last but not least, it is an immaterial chain connecting her originally earthly essence with the supernatural world. However, whereas family ties were considered either genetically or divinely created, the title of “friend” could be achieved only by proving virtues, loyalty and honesty. This vision also contrasts the evangelical idea of bestowing love indiscriminately to any human beings as God’s creatures who are, for this reason, subjects of *agapé* (Christian love). The specific case of the Virgin Mary shows at least two personal values which make her eligible as God’s companion: her innate virtues and her loyal and trustful behavior. All these positive characteristics allow her to mediate between the saints and God, as well as between the human believers and the celestial court.

Her position toward the believers, belonging to both the highest and the lowest spheres of the physical and metaphysical worlds, is characterized by plentiful and different aspects. In the CSM the fact that she embodies the closest relationships man could establish in his life is highlighted in verses such as:

Tal foi el meter entre nos e ssi  
e deu por avogada,  
que madr’, amiga ll’ é, creed’a mi,  
e filla e criada. (CSM 30, lines 16–19)

[He placed Her between us and Himself  
and gave Her as advocate,  
for, believe my words, to Him she is mother, friend,  
daughter, and handmaiden.]

Besides being Christ's mother, the Virgin is also endowed with numerous virtues and values which make her the icon of a perfect friend, an uncorrupted lover, a wise counselor and a successful intermediary between God and humankind. All these roles are frequently combined under the unique definition of "amiga." This appellation incorporates a wide range of semantic subtleties including mutual help, advice and affection, as well as marital, sensual and parental connections. In fact, the Virgin Mary is frequently portrayed as "amiga e amada | de mui santa companhia" (friend and loved one | holy companion; CSM 70, lines 12–13). She is defined as "amiga companeyra" (friend and companion)<sup>47</sup> of individuals who have the privilege to enter in contact with her, without reaching ever an absolute state of equality. As Queen of the Heaven, the Virgin Mary is surrounded and accompanied in her apparitions by a celestial court whose members are saints, apostles and angels.<sup>48</sup> The saints are elevated to the position of her friends, which they achieved thanks to their holy lives and the unconditional affection with which they shower the Blessed woman. The holy characters, endowed with miraculous skills and sometimes extraordinary abilities, held the positions of *primi inter pares* since not only did they achieve divine Grace, but they also received sacred gifts, signs of God's reward for their exemplary behavior and faith.

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

Significantly, if we leave aside the devotional message, we might question whether the verses of CSM 278 contain another and more pragmatic meaning: the attempt to deflect part of the pilgrims toward Villasilarga on their route to

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<sup>47</sup> CSM 70, 213 and 231 among others.

<sup>48</sup> See CSM 28, 132, 419, 420, 421, 422.

Compostela.<sup>49</sup> This would have generated prestige for Alfonso X's kingdom, but it would have also brought inevitable economic and financial benefits supplied by the pilgrimage and all its connected activities. It is worth mentioning the fact that, even if the existence of numerous pilgrimages in honor of saints was widely spread, Marianism in the thirteenth-century acquired renewed prestige while the other cults lost ground and adherents. In fact, many of these revered saints were themselves devotees of the Virgin. They had acquired their celestial positions through her intercession before God and they had frequently spent their lives preaching and worshipping the Holy Lady, contributing in this way to spread the acknowledgment of her power among the believers.

At this point, the focus should turn again to the portraits of the saints given in the Alfonsine production, whose positions toward the Virgin vary according to the works taken into account. Their representations sometimes even contradict the previous statement about the Virgin's uncontested superiority in common beliefs. On a few occasions, in both the *SP* and the *Estoria de España*, for example, the Virgin's role is undermined by the saints' positions, since they hold the uncontested titles of God's friends and unique intermediaries between the Heavens and Christendom. An interesting passage from Book I of the *SP* informs us about the saints' roles in both the celestial and human cosmos:

. . . onde pues que Dios los honra en este mundo asi, mostrando que los tiene por amigos et haciendo mucho et maravillosos miraglos por ellos . . . derecho es que los homes lo honren et mayormiente los cristianos. (*SP* I:XXIII)

[ . . . wherefore, since God honors them in this world by showing that He considers them His friends, and by performing many and marvellous miracles through them . . . ; it is just that all men and especially Christians, should honor them.]

With regard to this point one might question whether or not the fact that the role of the Virgin is partially debilitated in the *SP* was influenced by the earlier Visigothic law, which was later filtered and reshaped through the new Alfonsine perspective. In fact, the Visigothic *Fuero Juzgo* was deeply permeated with misogynous elements which might have also influenced the subsequent Alfonsine orientation and legal enactments. Similarly, in the *Estoria de España* the Virgin Mary is simply invoked through standardized formulae and she neither shines nor predominates, as she does, instead, in the *CSM*.

While acknowledging all this, another category to be examined within this supernatural system of relationships is that of the angels, who also occupy a privileged position in such a pyramidal structure. They are defined as a uniform and indistinct mass lacking individual identity, with the exception of Gabriel. The

<sup>49</sup> Connie L. Scarborough, *A Holy Alliance: Alfonso X's Use of Marian Poetry*. Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs. Estudios de literatura medieval "John E. Keller," 6 (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2009), 127.

archangel gained a definite position by acting as God's messenger, fulfilling in this way the original gap separating Christ's mother—still unaware of her future—and God. Gabriel was the initial intermediary which the Virgin herself would become once she consciously recognized her role and mission in supporting human redemption. Moreover, thanks to his actions and attitudes, he embodies an incomparable and *non plus ultra* model of friendship:

E nunca non podia | ja mayor amizade  
mostrar . . .  
Quen viu nunc' amizade | que esta semellasse

(CSM 210, lines 10–15)

[And never could he show us greater  
friendship . . .  
who ever saw greater friendship than this]

To complete this overview of the possible connections between sacred figures, the position of the apostles cannot be forgotten either, since they constitute the first model of Christian community which relies on concord among its members. Their association may be described, using St Augustine's definition, as a form of *societas amicalis* (similar to monastic corporations), whose members are linked by their love for God and by Christian charity. The figures of the apostles appear in both the *SP* and the *CSM*, but in the legal code they are presented as the highest positioned members in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, regarded for their knowledge of the Holy Word no longer as "siervos, mas amigos" (servants, but rather friends; *SP I:V:I*) of God.<sup>50</sup> By accepting the idea of a "transitive rule" of friendship—according to which any relationship generated by pure love can be inherited and transmitted from father to sons and vice versa—the apostles, as God's friends, are legitimized to become also Christ's friends and, following the same transactional passage, friends of Christ's mother. This theory, however, does not exclude the assumption that they managed to reach such an elevated position mainly because of their genuine beliefs and performances as good Christians. Moreover, their merits also justify their becoming exemplary models for the rest of the religious community.

### The Virgin and her Devotees

In the *CSM* the Holy Lady's noble and appreciable qualities of motherhood and friendship are complemented by her portrait as a woman and a lover, whose characteristics received renewed emphasis, above all once they are compared with those of her Biblical antagonist: Eve. The latter, unlike Mary, deserves a derogatory

<sup>50</sup> The same kind of reference is also in *CSM* 187.

description due to her sinful and treacherous behavior. It is not unreasonable to assert that the Virgin represents Eve's purified alter ego, who might even redeem the value of the human female figure. With regard to this point it is significant to quote the lines from CSM 320:

O ben que perdeu Eva  
 a nossa madr'antiga.  
 cobrou Santa Maria  
 u foi de Deus amiga. (Lines 14–17)

[The good which Eve,  
 our ancient mother, lost,  
 Holy Mary recovered  
 when She befriended God.]

Both women are God's offspring, generated from His act of love, although only one of them adopted her free will properly in order to keep that link and to consolidate her role as one of the Almighty's friends. The message conveyed by this biblical episode has a double meaning; on the one hand the focus is on Eve, the first woman created by God in order to be the complementary part of man, who in fact became his worst enemy. On the other hand, the reproach is addressed to Adam, representative of everyman, who trusted his wife as a loyal friend and whose blind reliance caused his damnation. The metaphor and the didactic warning are quite clear: man should prove who his real friends are and only afterwards should he trust them completely. The risk he takes in not respecting this test (which also includes a deep acknowledgment acquired over time) leads to the end of friendship or, even worse, to irreparable damage in his own life.<sup>51</sup>

At this stage, the lexicon adopted to define the relationships involving the Virgin and her devotees should also be considered. A significant case in point is CSM 259, whose protagonists are two minstrels linked by a manifest affection which is, however, never alluded to as a "friendship" in the entire poem. Contrarily, the description of their relationship is limited to "de dos joglares que fez ben querer" (for two minstrels whom She caused to love each other; line 8) and "foron-s' ambos dali en grand'amor" (they both went from there in great love; line 36). A radical change was experienced once the Virgin entered their relationship and addressed them as "amigos." Not only did that title ennoble their personae and the bond linking them, but it also made the appellation of friendship impossible to be used (almost in the same sentence) in referring to the two men's emotional, but entirely worldly, relationship. Their case also demonstrates that the believers' proof of amity toward the Virgin often appears to be shaped on the model of an opportunistic love, aimed at achieving personal benefits and advantages, such as

<sup>51</sup> Carlos Heusch, "La Philosophie de l'amour dans l'Espagne du XVe siècle," *Atalaya* 4 (1993): 233–39.

recovery from mortal illnesses, rescue from imprisonment and dangerous situations, protection for relatives and loved ones, and the claim for eternal salvation. Admittedly, this point prompts other questions about the real possibility of associating spiritual friendship with pure love. In fact, the hypothesis that man might love the Virgin unselfishly and without thinking of her as the intermediary before God is highly questionable.

Another aspect which needs to be observed is the sensual representation of the Virgin Mary and the description of the amorous bonds that she established with her believers. This representation is probably due to the process of humanization to which the Virgin was subjected: a metamorphosis which did not exclude the acquisition of some worldly imperfections. As pointed out by Catherine Guzmán in her article about antifeminism in the CSM, the Virgin is often displayed as a “jilted lover” (refer to CSM 42, lines 77–80), pleased by anyone who writes a poem in praise of her or simply who chooses her rather than another human lover.<sup>52</sup> The counterpart is usually a knight and their relationship seems to be forged on the code of courtly love and chivalric manners. A clarifying example is CSM 16, which tells the story of a tormented handsome and generous knight who was going to lose his senses and even to die for a lady who openly refused him. The unbearable suffering led him to open his soul to an abbot in order to reach God’s piety through his spiritual aid. The mediator-clergyman, who addressed the knight with the appellation of “amigo” (line 40), wisely suggested that he should pray for the Virgin’s intercession. Inasmuch as the Holy Mary is concerned, she acted as if she were the direct antagonist of the human lady with whom she was contending for the knight’s heart. When she appeared in her majestic splendour in front of the man’s eyes she asked him to choose between her and the other earthly woman. The love-game involved a choice that the knight had to make “se me por amiga queres aver” (if you wish me for your beloved; CSM 16, line 76), the rules of which forced him to pick the right option in order to deserve the Virgin’s priceless love. Needless to say, in this case the title “amiga” does not imply any sexual connotation, although the atmosphere and the adopted vocabulary are manifestly sensual. In fact, the Virgin’s roles of mother and daughter are here subordinated to the other side of her profile, that is to say the passionate, emotional and sometimes fickle woman.<sup>53</sup> As far as the voluble and impulsive Virgin’s behavior

<sup>52</sup> Catherine Guzmán, “Antifeminism in the *Cantigas de Santa María* and the *Dialogo de mujeres* of Cristóbal de Castillejo,” *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, 279–86.

<sup>53</sup> There is a striking coincidence between this miracle tale and one recounted in Gautier de Coincy, *Miracles de la Sainte Vierge*, ed. by Abbé Poquet (Paris: Parmantier : Didron, 1857), 637; in the introduction of Johannes Herolt, called *Discipulus*, *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. C. C. Swinton Bland. Broadway Medieval Library (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928), xvii. Their plots are identical as well as the vocabulary and approaches adopted by the Virgin to address her lover-knight.

is concerned, it is also interesting to recall the example of CSM 132, in which she reproaches one of her devotees, who was pressured by his family to marry a wealthy woman, as follows:

Porqué outra fillar yas  
 amiga e desdennavas  
 a mi, que por amor ti avia? (CSM 132, lines 105–07)

[Why are you going to take  
 another love and spurn me,  
 who loved you?]

These words would hardly tell us that the speaker is not an outraged human lover disappointed by her partner.

The Virgin Mary occupies a central position not solely in the aforementioned amorous performances, in motherhood and friendship, but also in companionship and counselorship. In fact, it was believed that the best and wisest advice that man could receive during his life came from the Virgin or from her ministers. There is evidence to illustrate this in CSM 155, which is the story of a wicked and proud knight of Alexandria who, once he realized how miserable his sinful life had been, decided to find some rescue in confession and penitence. He visited a holy hermit who suggested a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Unfortunately, the knight was unable to undertake such a long and risky journey; therefore, the hermit changed his advice and asked the knight to bring him a tankard of water, which would have been considered the sign of his redemption. The apparently easy task turned to be, in fact, impossible to accomplish because the water drained away from him. The turning point was experienced only when the knight addressed his pleas to the Virgin, without whose succour he would have never succeeded. Nonetheless, the miracle happened without the direct intervention of the Blessed Lady on the scene; in fact, she did not appear in front of the supplicant, who managed to fill the tankard with the tears shed during his invocations to her. However, one should not draw the conclusion that the hermit, who had first advised him, represented a malevolent guide; he was, rather and simply powerless, above all if compared with the Holy Lady who was the perfect counselor of those who behaved as God's friends:

Du o pecador promete | de seer amigo de Deus  
 e se partir de pecado | e enmendar tortos seus (CSM 155, lines 7–8)

[When the sinner promises to be God's friend  
 and amend his misdeeds]

Not only was the Virgin Mary's advice more valuable than any human guidance, but it was also the most powerful weapon against the devil's temptations. The latter was depicted as the bad advisor *per antonomasia*, since he had the power to

drag man to damnation; moreover, his corruption represented the hardest obstacle to overcome along the journey toward redemption. The examples of devils tempting religious and lay characters abound in the *CSM* where at least 47 songs depict such situations.<sup>54</sup> Most of them describe the devil's performances, transformation and his taking possession of minds, souls and bodies, as well as his deft ability to transmorph into an apparently reliable shape in order to drag those who followed him toward great pains and, finally, damnation. The most powerful remedies are Mary's aid and advice, as the invocation of *CSM* 350 suggests:

.....  
 e porend', ai, piadosa,  
 ta mercee nos escude  
 contra a compann' astrosa  
 do demo, e nos ajude;  
 ca tu na coita mayor  
 vales ao peccador. (CSM 350, lines 19–24)

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

With regard to this subject the comparison with another contemporary Marian collection, the *Milagros de nuestra Señora* by Berceo, comes to mind. Miracle XXIV of Berceo's work narrates the story of a generous and charitable man named Theophilus, respected and appreciated by his entire religious community since he was the *factotum* of the bishopric.<sup>55</sup> After the bishop's death and the election of his successor, jealousy and frustration led Theophilus to be easily deceived by a Jew who was in fact a devil's vassal. He fell into a miserable state because of such an evil counselor: "este nuestro canonigo e nuestro compannero / moviólo su locura, un falso conseiero" (this churchman and companion of ours was driven to madness by a deceitful advisor; line 840). These accounts underline the fact that even Mary's devotees, including churchmen, could be tempted. The *SP* also give a series of commandments against those "que parescen amigos de fuera et son falagueros de palabra que han la voluntad contraria de lo que muestran" (who appear to be friend but are merely flatterers, and whose characters are the opposite

<sup>54</sup> *CSM* 11, 14, 17, 26, 38, 41, 45, 47, 58, 67, 72, 74, 75, 82, 85, 96, 109, 111, 115, 119, 123, 125, 154, 157, 182, 192, 197, 201, 213, 216, 238, 241, 254, 259, 267, 272, 273, 274, 284, 298, 311, 343, 365, 378, 392, 404, 409.

<sup>55</sup> Gonzalo de Berceo, *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, ed. Fernando Baños Vallejo. Biblioteca Clásica (Barcelona, Spain), 3 (Barcelona: Crítica, 1997), 157–87.

of what they seem to be; *SP IV:XXVII:III*), in other words against false and treacherous friends. However, this did not deny the possibility for man to find humble, honest and wise friends, endowed with exemplary virtues which would enable them to act out of pure benevolence.

Considering all of this, the conclusion one may draw is the existence of a direct dependence between good advice and the advisor's personal wisdom and acknowledged fame. This assumption would explain the impossibility for wicked men to be chosen as reliable guides, while also suggesting further reasons for which the Virgin Mary merits the title of perfect friend and counselor. In fact, she appears in such a role in several of the *cantigas* (for instance *CSM* 64, 119, 140, 248, 273, 275, 291, 313, 355), and in particular *CSM* 418 explicitly tells us that her task of counselorship was one of the seven gifts that Christ donated to her: "O terceyro de consello l' ést, e con mui gran razon o ouve Santa Maria" (the third [gift] was good advice, which Holy Mary utterly deserved; lines 18–19). Beyond her role of exemplary advisor and guide toward salvation, we should not underestimate the degree to which the Virgin Mary also helped man in coping with personal and daily concerns and difficulties.

### The Virgin and the King: Between Friendship and Vasallic Relationships

Among the examples of perfect friends and devotees the king emerges from the lines of the *CSM* as an idealized figure characterized by his uncorrupted love and his submission to the supreme authority of God, though not to that of the Church. Despite his portrait as a model for his subjects to emulate, he was far from being considered a superior creature (as the theory of *christomimētēs* required), and he was rather regarded as a true believer endowed with the gift of Holy Grace.<sup>56</sup> The *CSM*, as both a product of Alfonso X's personal spiritual experience and a collection addressed to everybody, even if at different reading levels, contributed to make his subjects believe that everybody could achieve such a status of grace, as a reward for noble actions. Additionally, the vernacular language, in which the collection was written, played a fundamental role, since it corroborated the idea of a shared religious experience and supported the royal project of transition toward a nationwide identity.<sup>57</sup> The *CSM* show an idealized picture of Alfonso X, submissive to the supreme authority of God, the Virgin and the saints. But the

<sup>56</sup> Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (1957; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 61–78.

<sup>57</sup> David Rojinsky, "The Rule of Law and the Written Word in Alfonsine Castile: Demystifying a Consecrated Vernacular," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 80 (2003): 287–305.

paradox is that thanks to such reverential behavior, the sovereign gained sufficient prestige to be recognised as a moral authority.<sup>58</sup>

The “Reconquest” also contributed to strengthen the idea of his uncontested superiority; in fact, by fighting against the enemies of the faith, regaining the Muslim territories and reconverting them into Christian spaces, Alfonso X gained the epithet of champion of Christianity and defender of orthodoxy. Complementary, the major tasks of his law, policy and administration—all depicted as divinely bestowed tools—were to accomplish God’s will and to guide people in living an honest life which would constitute their passport to Heaven. It has to be noted, however, that the king never tried to usurp the sacred role of mediator held by the Virgin. Contrarily, she continued to be the main addressee of his claims and to embody a perfect companion which no other human figure could have equalled. For all these reasons, it is not unusual to come across images of the Liege Queen providing support in the battlefield or rescuing devoted sovereigns in need. The *CSM* present some cases of monarchs imploring the Virgin for political and military aid and it is not surprising to find literary accounts of the support they received in their campaigns against the Muslim armies. Cases in point are *CSM* 28, describing the conquest of Constantinople, and *CSM* 181, which tells of the Almohad ruler of Marrakech, Umar al-Murtada (1248–1266), who was supported by the Virgin’s intervention against Abu Yusuf of the Merinids when he allowed a group of Christian mercenaries to go out of the city carrying with them the banner of the Holy Mary:

E assi Santa Maria | ajudou a seus amigos,  
 pero que d’ outra lei eran, | a britar seus ãemigos  
 que, macar que eran muitos, | nonos preçaron dous figos,  
 e assi foi ssa mercee | de todos mui connoçuda.

(*CSM* 181, lines 40–43)

[Thus Holy Mary helped Her friends,  
 although they were of another faith, to defeat their enemies,  
 for although they were many, they did not give two figs  
 about them. In this way was Her mercy made manifest to all.]

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

Ben parte Santa Maria | sas graças e seus tesouros  
 aos que serven seu Fillo | ben e ela contra mouros.  
 Desto direi un miragre | que avêeo en Espanna,

<sup>58</sup> For example, Alfonso X avoided rituals of anointing and coronation, unlike other European sovereigns. Read more in my forthcoming article “The King as Subject, Master and Figure of Authority,” *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies in Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Mediaeval Worlds*, ed. Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2010).

que mostrou Santa Maria, | a piadosa sen sanna,  
 contra un rei que de gente | levava mui gran companna  
 por onrrar a fe de Cristo | e destroyr a dos mouros.

(CSM 348, lines 3–8)

[Holy Mary generously shares Her blessing  
 and Her treasures with those who serve Her and Her Son well  
 against the Moors.

Concerning this, I shall tell a miracle which happened in Spain  
 which Holy Mary, the gentle and compassionate One,  
 performed for a king who led a great army  
 to honor the faith of Christ and destroy that of the Moors.]

The king is depicted as a valorous knight fighting against the enemies of orthodoxy in the name of his love for God and, in particular, for Castile, emblematically represented by the Virgin Mary. The divine support that the sovereign received by the Holy Lady was also interpreted as a form of divine consensus which authorized his expansionistic plans and justified his inheritance of the throne. This assumption is also exemplified by CSM 200:

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

.....

Ca mi fez de bõa terra  
 sennor, e en toda guerra  
 m'ajudou a que non erra  
 nen errou, u a chamei.

(Lines 9–12; 29–32)

[She caused me  
 to descend from good lineage  
 and willed that I should justly reign  
 and be king.

.....

For She who does not err made me  
 lord of a fine land  
 and helped me in every war  
 when I called on Her.]

Similarly, a reflection on the supposed divine origin of royal power recurs in CSM 409:

Reis e emperadores,  
 todos comũalmente  
 a todo seu ciente

deven de bõa mente  
 dar-lle grandes loores,  
 ca per ela sennores  
 son de toda a gente,  
 e cada ùu sente  
 dela compridamente  
 mercees e amores;  
 e macar peccadores  
 sejan, a Virgen bõa  
 mui toste os perdõa,  
 sen nulla dovidança.

(CSM 409, lines 36–49)

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

Not only was the sovereign endowed with full authority, but he was even forgiven in case of any mistake. Amy G. Remensnyder has discussed this point further by arguing that Alfonso X was engaged in a process of identification with the Virgin, supported also by the visual coincidence—evident in the CSM's panels—between his and the Holy Lady's gestures, positions, crowns and thrones; coincidences which strengthened and vouchsafed his position and mission in the audience's eye.<sup>59</sup> In such an emulative attitude Alfonso X distanced himself from the former high medieval Christological theories, according to which the sovereign retained an ontological status of icon for Christ, and he rather acquired the functional role of friend and intermediary. In the footsteps of his father, Ferdinand III, Alfonso X stressed his dependence and cooperation with the Holy Mother by declaring himself her lover, friend, vassal and first of her devotees.

<sup>59</sup> Amy G. Remensnyder, "Marian Monarchy in Thirteenth-Century Castile," *The Experience of Power in Medieval Europe: 950–1350*, ed. Robert F. Berkhofer, Alan Cooper, and Adam J. Kosto (Aldershot, Hampshire, England, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 253–70. See also my article "The King as Subject, Master and Figure of Authority," *Every Inch a King*, ed. Lynette Mitchell (forthcoming 2010).

Another aspect to be borne in mind is that the sovereign did not invoke the supernatural intervention for matters of governmental policy and state affairs only. Physical handicaps, moments of crisis and sense of defeat were some of the main reasons for invoking the Lady's mercy and assistance. One example is *CSM* 209, which reports the story of the illness suffered by Alfonso X, his recovery in Vitoria and his request to have the book of the *CSM* brought to him in order to be rescued by its miraculous contact. The collection, as a physical object, was thought to have the capability to give relief to the body, just as its contents and moral advice could be helpful in curing human souls and in guiding man to everlasting salvation. In this case a material object, a book, turned into the key to access the supernatural life. It is not therefore unreasonable to state that the unselfish ideas of pure love and friendship were sometimes eclipsed by personal interests and material goals, additional reasons which led the king to call for supernatural intervention.<sup>60</sup>

Among the most common demands made by Alfonso X, there was also the request to be delighted by friends and to discern the true signs of amity in people who surrounded him. *CSM* 401 is revealing: the sovereign implores the Virgin Mary to make him able to select good friends and to be preserved from treacherous counselors:

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

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

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

.....  
 e, pois Rey me fez, queira | que reyn' a seu sabor,  
 e de mi e dos reynos | seja el guardador,

<sup>60</sup> See also *CSM* 221, which narrates the illness suffered by the young King Ferdinand III.

que me deu e dar pode | quando ll'en prazer for;  
 e que el me deffenda | de fals' e traedor,  
 e outrossi me guarde | de mal consellador  
 e d'ome que mal serve | e é mui pedidor.

.....  
 e dos que lealdade | non preçan quant' un pan,  
 pero que sempr' en ela | muito faland' estan.

.....  
 e me guarde meu corpo | d'ocajon e de mal  
 e d'amigo encuberto, | que a gran coita fal,  
 e de quen ten en pouco | de seer desleal,  
 e daquel que se preça | mui' e mui pouco val,  
 e de quen en seus feitos | sempr' é descomunal.

(CSM 401, lines 46–51; 70–71; 76–80)

[.....  
 and may He be guardian of me  
 and the kingdoms he gave me  
 and has power to give me when He so chooses.  
 May He defend me from false and treacherous men  
 and also protect me from bad advisors  
 and men who serve unwillingly and are never satisfied.

.....  
 and from those who care not a crumb for loyalty,  
 although they always speak of it.

.....  
 may She preserve my person from any damages  
 and adversities and from false friends,  
 who do not help in case of necessity,  
 and from those who do not care about being disloyal,  
 and from those who estimate themselves but they are unworthy in fact,  
 and from those who are always extreme in their deeds.]

Such a derogatory description of the courtly connections and the comparison with other forms of worldly links seems to emphasize the value of spiritual relations over any other connection, including those established within the royal circle. Another interesting case to analyse is CSM 292, the protagonist of which is Alfonso X's father, King Ferdinand III, whose relationship with the Virgin is described as follows:

Se el leal contra ela | foi, tan leal a achou,  
 que en todo-los seus feitos | atan ben o ajudou,  
 que quanto começar quisu | e acabar, acabou;  
 e se ben obrou por ela, ben ll'ar pagou seu jor[nal].

.....  
 Assi estes dous leaes | lealdade fez amar,

ca el sempre e servia | e a sabia loar ;  
 e quand' algũa cidade | de mouros ya gãar,  
 ssa omagen na mezquita | pôya eno portal. (Lines 16–19; 26–29)

[If he bore loyalty toward Her, he found Her to be equally loyal,  
 for in all his deeds She aided him so well  
 that all he chose to begin and carry out, he achieved.  
 If he performed good service for Her, She generously paid him his  
 wages in return.]

.....  
 Thus the bond of loyalty made these two loyal hearts love each other,  
 for he always served Her and rendered Her praise.  
 When he conquered some city from the Moors,  
 he placed Her statue in the portico of the mosque.]

As for any other form of pure friendship the key words remain mutual love, goodness, loyalty and respect. Although the relationship between the king and the Virgin would have been impossible according to Aristotle's theory of equality, in fact it was established thanks to the privileged and moral position of the king, which allowed him to bridge the gap existing between them, without reaching ever a perfectly symmetrical position. In fact, not only the sovereign's social prestige, but also his personal values and virtues, allowed him to be elevated to the role of one of the Holy Lady's friends.

Similarly, CSM 321 attests the king's virtuous and loyal behavior by showing how he never tried to take advantage from his privileged status. In a largely superstitious context, where the majority of people were uneducated, the monarch could have been easily tempted to overuse his power. This happened, for instance, in the medieval English and French courts, in which the rulers claimed the miraculous thaumaturgical power of curing illnesses associated with tuberculosis, creating in this way the myth of the royal touch. As pointed out by O'Callaghan, in the Iberian Peninsula there was neither literary nor historic evidence of the existence of the royal healing phenomenon.<sup>61</sup> The above-mentioned CSM 321 is a valid demonstration: a young girl suffering from an incurable throat disease, after many years of medical treatments given by doctors and physicians, was brought by her mother—who followed a good man's advice—in front of Alfonso X as the last attempt to rescue her. Wisely, Alfonso X did not claim any divine gift, although the devotee's invocation offered him the easy opportunity to make people believe in such a pretentious ability. On the contrary, he addressed the

<sup>61</sup> Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "The *Cantigas de Santa María* as a Historical Source: Two Examples (nos. 321 and 386)," *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María: Art, Music, and Poetry. Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa María of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221–1284) in Commemoration of Its 700th Anniversary Year—1981 (New York, November 19–21)*, ed. Israel J. Katz, John E. Keller, Samuel G. Armistead, and Joseph Thomas Snow. Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies (Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987), 387–402.

devotee's pleas to the Virgin, the only one who could have cured her sick daughter. In terms of love, respect and trust the king earned more by behaving in such a way than by entering into an ambitious competition with the Holy Lady which would have had as a result his being regarded as a betrayer.

Alfonso X, as revealed in some of his works, aimed at garnering both respect as a lord and love as a friend from his subjects. Obviously, had he taken on the role of Mary's antagonist, by promoting himself as her worldly peer, he would not have received supernatural aid. Therefore, we can infer that the necessity of equality between friends, in this case at least, has to be rejected in order to allow such connections between the two worlds to persist. The reason for such a statement appears quite clear: had the sovereign claimed supernatural powers arrogantly and unfairly, or professed an undifferentiated position with the Virgin, he would have lost the privilege to be considered her friend. Although it could appear contradictory, true friendship was possible only if the king acted in a respectful attitude of love and vassalage toward the Virgin. Needless to say, the Alfonsine Marian production illustrates this point: the poems dedicated to the Virgin represent the homage of a man who was at the same time her lover, vassal, friend and servant and who was always positioned, despite his royalty and his role of "vicar of God," a step lower than her golden throne.

To conclude, an interesting consideration emerges from the analysis of the different typologies of spiritual friendship hitherto examined, which is how the idea of mutuality challenged the innate antithesis existing between unequal parties and, in particular, between secular and supernatural figures. In fact, also in cases of connections between representatives of the two worlds, love could not be given univocally. Human believers had to show their pure affection and benevolence only if they were respected and awarded with mutual favours by their holy counterparts. Nevertheless, these connections could be regarded as forms of mutual, but not equal, love since the gap existing between the involved parties was unbridgeable. For this reason, most of the relationships between holy figures and humans, even if described in terms of friendship, presented signs and peculiarities typical of the bonds linking the highest figures with their subordinates and, in particular, they recalled the structure and rituals of vassalic relationships and, similarly, that of courtly love. Moreover, unselfish pure love and friendship were usually eclipsed by personal interests and material goals. On the one hand, the most common claims which the believers addressed to the Virgin and the saints were final salvation, redemption from their sins, and rescue from dangers and illnesses. On the other hand, the sovereign invoked the Holy powers and claimed, in the name of his friendship with them, to be supported in the Christian wars against the infidels, to be delighted by friendship and to discern the true signs of amity in those who surrounded him. With the CSM Alfonso X and

his scriptorium managed to create a work which explored such “spiritual connections,” even if they were clearly presented as metaphors of the most pragmatic and secular bonds established with and between men. Whether these two worlds, the secular and the spiritual, were factually connected or not, Alfonso X declared himself to be linked to both these dimensions in a sacred amity chain and, in such a way, he managed to hold the wide consensus of his subjects, without denying or usurping the roles and positions attributed to the Holy powers.

