

## The marriage of Alfonso VIII of Castile and Leonor Plantagenet : the first bond between Spain and England in the Middle Ages

Much of the nuptial arrangements and the diplomatic context surrounding the betrothal of Henry Plantagenet's daughter to the king of Castile have been considered in a recent publication<sup>1</sup>, so the following study will focus on the cultural and political exchange between these kingdoms after her marriage to Alfonso VIII in 1170, the very first alliance formally established between rulers of England and Spain in the Middle Ages.

There is very little evidence to suggest any link between Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England with any of the peninsular kingdoms and this might explain the dearth of research on Anglo-Iberian exchange in the medieval period, a subject first addressed by a collection essays published in 2007<sup>2</sup>. Yet with the arrival of the Plantagenets to the English throne and especially after the betrothal of one of Henry II's daughters to Alfonso VIII, the relationship between these kingdoms grew steadily and was preserved in dynastic memory for decades.

Anthony Goodman has explained that Anglo-Iberian diplomacy in the Middle Ages was defined by « fragile attempts to create a common bond between powers whose spheres of geographical interests and ambition were difficult to keep align »<sup>3</sup>. Gascony provided such a bond in the 1160s. The policies concerning this region were to shape as well the relationship between these kingdoms in the later medieval period and royal marriages were paramount to any attempts at establishing alliances. In the words of Georges Duby, noble wives to be were the « valuable currency with which to buy friendships and peace »<sup>4</sup> in twelfth-century Europe. A number of strategic considerations came together to explain the unprecedented alliance that resulted from Leonor's betrothal to the king of Castile, most of which are somehow

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<sup>1</sup> J.M. Cerda, « La dot gasconne d'Aliénor d'Angleterre. Entre royaume de Castille, royaume de France et royaume d'Angleterre », *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 54, 2011, p. 226-233.

<sup>2</sup> *England and Iberia in the Middle Ages (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century)*, dir. M. Bullón Fernández, New York, 2007. It is significant that this publication begins with the twelfth century. Refer also to A. Goodman, « England and Iberia in the Middle Ages », *England and her neighbours, 1066-1453. Essays in honour of Pierre Chaplais*, dir. Michael Jones and Malcolm Vale, London, 1989, p. 74; J. Goodman Wollock, « Medieval England and Iberia : A Chivalric Relationship », *England and Iberia...*, p. 11-12; D. Lomax, « The first English pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela », *Studies in Medieval History presented to R.H.C. Davis*, London, 1985, p. 48; A. Echevarría Arsuaga, « The Shrine as Mediator : England, Castile, and the Pilgrimage to Compostela », *England and Iberia...*, p. 47-65; A. Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilitas. Estudios sobre la Península Ibérica Medieval*, Granada, 2006, p. 58-60. Fernando de Ybarra has made a useful -but not very academic- survey of Anglo-Iberian royal marriages from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries in *Matrimonios Reales Hispano-Británicos en el Medioevo*, 2 vols., Salamanca, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Goodman, « England and Iberia... », p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> G. Duby, *Women of the Twelfth Century*, Chicago, 1998 [1995], vol. II, p. 62.

related to Gascony and the rivalry between the Plantagenets and the Capetians<sup>5</sup>. It is possible that in 1159, Henry was already thinking of Iberian alliances against the county other than of the rulers of Catalonia, and a letter written by John of Salisbury in 1168 points to Navarre<sup>6</sup>. In 1162, count Raymond Berenguer IV of Barcelona had died leaving his son, Alfonso, under the protection of Henry II, who was then intending to send a ring with a panther engraved to Alfonso of Castile, then a boy of seven.

Alfonso reached his majority in 1169 and needed a worthy queen and one that might serve Castile's interests and projects in Iberia. Assembled at Burgos with the king, the Castilian nobles « knew that Henry of England had a very beautiful daughter nine years of age to marry, who was called Leonor, so they sent four good men from among the best in the court (...), two magnates and two bishops », reports the later account of the *Crónica de Veinte Reyes*<sup>7</sup>. Castilian ambassadors were sent to Bordeaux to negotiate the terms and the marital alliance was forged, probably with an active intervention of Eleanor of Aquitaine and the king of Aragón, her relative and friend of her future son-in-law.

The kings of Castile and Aragón had assembled at Sahagún in June 1170 and then at Zaragoza in July to establish a confederation against everyone « *pretera regem Anglie, quem pro patre habemus* », (« except the king of England, whom we both have as father »)<sup>8</sup>. Not only was Alfonso VIII's diplomatic confidence boosted by Castile's friendship with the rulers of Aragón, but also by his acceptance into the Plantagenet network of influence.

Leonor was born at Domfront Castle in Normandy in 1161 and the following year the royal family celebrated Christmas at Cherbourg and then crossed to Southampton, spending much of 1163-4 in southern England<sup>9</sup>. However little time the baby princess spent on the island, she was identified by Spanish scribes as *Angrica* o *Elionor Anglica* (English Leonor) and two stoles embroidered in the 1190s, decorated with red castles over golden background, were made by *Alienor Regina Castelle Filia Henrici Regis Anglie*<sup>10</sup>. Although the new queen of Castile was not at all English, she was often identified as the daughter of the king of England in scribal records and chronicles, and to this day the carvings of her sarcophagus bear memorial testimony to her Plantagenet ancestry<sup>11</sup>. As such, Leonor kept in touch with English affairs

<sup>5</sup> J. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, London, 2001, p. 30-32; Cerda, « La dot gasconne... », p. 228-230.

<sup>6</sup> *The Letters of John of Salisbury, Volume 2 : The Later Letters (1163-1180)*, éd. W.J. Millor and C.N.L. Brooke, Oxford, 1979, p. 606-7.

<sup>7</sup> *Crónica de Veinte Reyes*, éd. G. Martínez et al., Burgos, 1991, p. 273.

<sup>8</sup> J. González, *El Reino de Castilla durante el reinado de Alfonso VIII*, Madrid, 1960 (=AVIII), n. 147 (Zaragoza, July 1170); *Alfonso II Rey de Aragón, Conde de Barcelona y Marqués de Provenza. Documentos (1162-1196)*, éd. Ana Sánchez Casabón, Zaragoza, 1995, n. 92. See also G. Martínez, *VIII. Rey de Castilla y Toledo*, Burgos, 1995 p. 223-224.

<sup>9</sup> R.W. Eyton, *Court, Household, and Itinerary of King Henry II*, London, 1878, p. 59, 61.

<sup>10</sup> « Inventario de Bienes Muebles de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro (León) », n. 11C-3-089-002-0024: Embroidered in silk (277 cms x 6,5 cms) dated 1197, and with inscription : « + *Alienor Regina Castelle Filia + Henrici Regis Anglie Me Fecit + Sub Era M CC XXXV Annos +* ». Object : n. 11C-3-089-002-0025 : same material (156 cms x 6,5 cms) dated 1198, with inscription : « ...*M CC XXX VI..* ». See also González, *El Reino...*, p. 191.

<sup>11</sup> O. Pérez Monzón, « *Cuando el Rey perdemos nun[qu]ia bien nos fallamos*. La muerte del rey en la Castilla del siglo XIII », *Archivo Español del Arte*, LXXX, 320, 2007, p. 387-9; R. Walker, « Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile : Anglo-Iberian Marriage and Cultural Exchange in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries », *England and Iberia...*, p. 77-83; M. Shadis, « Piety, Politics, and Power : The Patronage of Leonor of England and Her Daughters Berenguela of León and Blanche of Castile », *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, dir. J. Hall McCash, Athens and London, 1996, p. 227-8; M.J. Herrero Sanz, *Guide to Santa María la Real de las Huelgas, Burgos*, Madrid, 2002, p. 27-9.

and appears as the axis of the increasing relations between Castile and the kings of England from 1170, acting as a « Plantagenet outpost » in Iberia.

Patronage and diplomacy were the means by which such queenly agency was exercised by English Leonor and so family and property were geared towards wielding political influence. A number of entries in the Pipe Rolls from the 1180s indicate the presence of Spaniards in England and the expenses concerning the functioning and repair of ships sailing to and from the peninsula in the service of King Henry, « *ad transfretandum in Hispanias in servitio regis* »<sup>12</sup>. Some of these journeys must have carried presents from Henry to his daughter, like silver vessels and fabrics, and so a craftsman was paid in 1180, « *ad faciendas malas et alia minuta vasa ad portandum vassellam et pannos quos Rex misit filie sue in Hispaniam* »<sup>13</sup>. The presence and agency of Leonor in Castile not only prompted the arrival of Plantagenet art and crafts to Iberia, but could have also encouraged some exchange of school masters and illuminators, the importation of architectural innovations, books, and courtly trends, as well as the promotion of the cult to the recently canonised Thomas Becket and the pilgrimage to Compostela.

In fact, the life and miracles of St Godric of Finchale -the very first Anglo-Saxon who travelled by sea to the shrine of St James- were compiled around the year Leonor and Alfonso got married, and Henry II asked king Fernando II of León for safeconduct to travel on pilgrimage to Compostela in 1177<sup>14</sup>.

Such a relationship also extended to politics and diplomacy. Henry II had settled a dispute of jurisdiction between the kings of Castile and Navarre in 1167 and a truce was accorded for ten years, thus for 1176<sup>15</sup>. Alfonso of Castile is identified in Henry's verdict as « *dilectus filius noster* » and the 1167 peace had been violated in 1172 by a Navarrese attack on Alfonso of Aragón, an ally of both England and Castile. The verdict was impartial in spite of the family ties and the fact that some of the disputed land between Castile and Navarre concerned Leonor's dower gift (*arras*) granted in 1170 by Alfonso. This case not only shows Henry's judicious character, the prestige of his court and the impartiality of his judges, but the detailed

<sup>12</sup> *The Great Roll of the Pipe*, London, 1884- (= *Pipe Rolls*), 7 HEN. II., p. 37 : « *Henn' de Hispania. redd' Comp'* » Other similar entries : 9 HEN. II., p. 58; 11 HEN. II., p. 47; 12 HEN. II., p. 37; 13 HEN. II., p. 79. There is also a « Johannes de Hyspania » mentioned (*Pipe Rolls*, 31 HEN. II., p. 179). *Pipe Rolls...*, 30 HEN. II., p. 58 : « *Et Alano Trenchem .xxxij. l. et .xj. d. ad emenda necessaria navis Willelmi de Braiose que abiit in Hispanias in servitio Regis per breve Rannulfi de Glanwill* » (see also 30 HEN. II., p. 80, 86. Most of these ships belonged to William of Braose, lord of Brecon and Builth, and Henry of Shorne (*Pipe Rolls...*, 30 HEN. II., p. 119, 136, 144, 155).

<sup>13</sup> *Pipe Rolls...*, 27 HEN. II., p. 157 : Furthermore, Master Walter is paid « *ad emenda vasa argentea que Rex misit ultra mare per breve regis* ». See also Eyton, *Court...*, p. 240; Walker, « Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile... », p. 58, 84, n. 5; R. Walker, « Leonor of England, Plantagenet queen of King Alfonso VIII of Castile, and her foundation of the Cistercian abbey of Las Huelgas. In imitation of Fontevraud? », *Journal of Medieval History*, 31, 2005, p. 348.

<sup>14</sup> Echevarría, « The Shrine as Mediator... », p. 49-50. No evidence is cited for this safeconduct and it is known that Henry II did not go on pilgrimage in the end.

<sup>15</sup> *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, éd. J.S. Brewer, J.F. Dimock and G.F. Warner, 8 volumes, London, 1861-91, vol. V, p. 376-7. Henry's arbitration is recorded in several sources, such as AVIII, vol. II, n. 99, p. 267-9; *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I*, éd. R.C. van Caenegem, 2 volumes, London, 1990-1, vol. II, p. 546-7, n. 494. See also Roger of Howden's *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*, éd. W. Stubbs, London, 1868-71, vol. I, p. 151-154; and Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, éd. W. Stubbs, 4 volumes, London, 1868-71, vol. II, p. 129-131; F. Luis Corral, « Alfonso of Castile's Judicial Process at the Court of Henry II of England : an effective and valid arbitration? », *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, p. 22-42. See also J. Favier, *Les Plantagenêts : Origines et destin d'un empire, XI-XIV siècles*, Poitiers, 2004, p. 420-421; and R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225*, Oxford, 2000, p. 145-6; AVIII, vol. II, n. 99, p. 267-9; *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I...*, vol. II, p. 546-7, n. 494.

record of such events also reveals the unprecedented interest of English chroniclers in Spanish affairs. It may be argued that many of the dower lands and privileges of Leonor were located along the frontier with Navarre so to secure the involvement of the king of England should conflict arise with Sancho VI, and that some dower jurisdiction significantly concerned the Cantabrian region and thus the ports that looked north to the English island<sup>16</sup>. In any case, the ruler of Castile was proudly married to the daughter of the king of England and peninsular matters can no longer be ignored as distant or overlooked as insignificant.

In consequence, the marriage between Alfonso and Leonor in 1170 had, in the words of María Bullón-Fernández, a « wide range of implications »<sup>17</sup>, the most important of which concerned the debatable concession of her dowry. In any case, whether Gascony was granted by Henry as his daughter's dowry or not, Castilian claims in the thirteenth century show that the marriage between Alfonso and Leonor had important consequences. Ironically then, although Leonor inaugurated a new period of Anglo-Castilian relations, her husband's kingdom would play a role -albeit a discreet one- in such crucial events in history as the end of Plantagenet Normandy, the demise of English jurisdiction in the continent, and the shift of power towards France in the thirteenth century. Undeniably, the marriage of Leonor to Alfonso was at the heart of such Castilian involvement in European affairs<sup>18</sup>.

Alfonso claimed his wife's dowry by attempting to invade and conquer southern Gascony in 1202 but he failed and an agreement between the Castilian king and John was agreed in 1208 and in November 1254, Alfonso X definitely renounced to Castilian claims over Gascony. Prince Edward -the future king Longshanks- was knighted at the Monastery of Las Huelgas and promised in marriage to princess Eleanor of Castile; a ceremony that was vested with much symbolism and diplomatic significance for the Cistercian house was founded by Alfonso and Leonor in the 1180s and had become Castile's royal mausoleum. According to the account of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, Eleanor had been named after her Plantagenet great-grandmother, and in a letter sent by Henry III to Alfonso X, he addressed the Spanish king as « *magnifico principi et consanguineo karissimo, domino nostro* »<sup>19</sup>. The monarchs proudly found common ancestry in Queen Leonor, whose body rested nearby the place where the future king of England was being knighted. Castile's rights over Gascony had been taken away from England's kings by a princess named *Alienor*, and now it was another *Alienor* who returned such jurisdiction back to the island's rulers.

The Anglo-Castilian connection in this period is also represented by the queen's efforts to cleanse her father's memory after the murder of Thomas Becket. Leonor had married Alfonso only a few months before the murder of the archbishop of Canterbury in his own cathedral, events that left Christian Europe in shock. News of his brutal assassination caused immediate reaction all over Europe and must have soon reached the Castilian court and Leonor's ears. Her father was blamed for the prelate's murder and the mighty king of the English was brought to his knees through public repentance and expiation. But soon after

<sup>16</sup> The document of the queen's dower was published with image and text in González, *El Reino...*, p. 193-194 and some thoughts about it are offered in Berenguela of Castile (1180-1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages, New York, 2009, p. 26-29.

<sup>17</sup> M. Bullón-Fernández, « Introduction : Not All Roads Lead to Rome : Anglo-Iberian Exchanges in the Middle Ages », *England and Iberia...*, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Cerda, « La dot gasconne... », p. 225-241.

<sup>19</sup> *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae, et Cujuscunque generis Acta Publica (...)*, (=Foedera), éd. T. Ryder, London, 1816, vol. I, p. 357; Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispaniae sive Historia Gothica*, éd. J. Fernández Valverde, CCCM, LXII, Turnhout, 1987, IX, chapter xviii.

Becket's horrid death, Henry II's expiation turned into veneration and so the martyr of Canterbury - canonised in 1173- having been a victim of Plantagenet wrath was then becoming an object of Plantagenet piety and devotion<sup>20</sup>.

Kay Brainerd Slocum has studied the spread of the cult in Europe due to the patronage of Henry's daughters and has suggested that the queen of Castile « departing from the usual practice, wished to establish her own very close connection, and that of her natal family, to the Canterbury martyr »<sup>21</sup>. The wonderfully coloured prayerbook of Henry of Saxony and Bavaria, married to Matilda of England, and the stunning mosaics of Monreale in Sicily, commissioned during the queenship of her youngest sister, Joan, bear witness to the agency of Henry II's daughters in the promotion of Becket's cult across the continent<sup>22</sup>. Leonor paid her dues in Castile and her contribution to the cult was manifest and resolute. The queen joined her father's cry for divine forgiveness in the dedication of altars at the cathedrals of Sigüenza and Toledo and perhaps in the commission of wall paintings at a church in Soria.

The only document drafted at the queen's chancery and preserved in magnificent condition to this day is a charter of protection extended on 30 April 1179 to an altar erected for the devotion of Saint Thomas in the most eminent ecclesiastical see in Castile<sup>23</sup>. As Miriam Shadis points out, the protection of the altar « demonstrates a queen in control of her resources and a continued attention to her family's affairs in England »<sup>24</sup>. The altar had been originally erected and endowed by Count Nuño Pérez de Lara during the siege of Cuenca in July 1177. Perhaps at the request of his English chaplain, the Castilian noble had invoked the intercession of the martyr just as Henry Plantagenet had prayed to Becket for victory against his rebellious sons in 1174.

The Monastery of Fontevraud, much privileged by Leonor's parents, offered a Plantagenet model of powerful female monasticism, and was also a place for royal retirement and burial. Henry II was buried at Fontevraud in 1189 and the monarchs of Castile committed themselves to an annual payment to the monastery, for the benefit of his soul and possibly so to honour the memory of Leonor's father, and as a reward for the education she may have received there<sup>25</sup>. The endowment was also at the very heart of the political bond that united England and Castile in this period.

<sup>20</sup> *The Chronicle of Jordan Fantosme*, éd. R.C. Johnston, Oxford, 1981, verses 1605-6, 1918-9.

<sup>21</sup> K.B. Slocum, « Angevin Marriage Diplomacy and the Early Dissemination of the Cult of Thomas Becket », *Medieval Perspectives*, XIV, 1999, p. 220.

<sup>22</sup> According to Anne Duggan, « the marriage alliances of Henry II's three daughters (and one daughter-in-law) played some part in spreading devotion to their father's chief ecclesiastical adversary » (A. Duggan, « The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Thirteenth Century », *St Thomas Cantilupe Bishop of Hereford: Essays in his Honour*, dir. M. Jancey, Hereford, 1982, p. 26). Refer also to D. Matthew, *Britain and the Continent 1000-1300. The Impact of the Norman Conquest*, London, 2005, p. 96; E. Jamison, « The alliance of England and Sicily in the Second Half of the Twelfth Century », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 6, 1943, p. 24; D. Matthew, *The Norman kingdom of Sicily* Cambridge, 1992, p. 205.

<sup>23</sup> Archivo Catedralicio de Toledo, A-2-G-1-5. The diploma is preserved in its original form and is very similar to those produced at Alfonso's chancery (35.5cms x 25.5 cms, a seal drawn in the document depicting the hand of the queen, and another wax seal of 9 cms x 6.5 cms with some wear and damage, depicting a full-length image of the queen, attached by leather tag).

<sup>24</sup> Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile...*, p. 36-7.

<sup>25</sup> AVIII, vol. II, p. 946 : « *pro remedio anime felicissime recordationis famosissimi H. regis Anglie* ». AVIII, vol. I, p. 509; Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilitas...*, p. 61; Shadis, « Piety, Politics, and Power... », p. 203; M.P. Marchegay, « Chartes de Fontevraud concernant l'Aunis et la Rochelle », *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 19, 1857-8, p. 134-6, 329-39; González, *El Reino...*, p. 191.

Las Huelgas was charged with dynastic symbolism : not only was it a place for royals to rest, for princesses to develop an ecclesiastical career, and for widow queens to take vows of retirement. The monastery was also, and perhaps most significantly, the first and only dynastic mausoleum of Castile in the Middle Ages; a place of remembrance appropriately entrusted to the careful vigilance of the nuns and designed to serve the development of Castilian identity. Shadis has argued that like Fontevraud, the royal necropolis in Burgos served to perpetuate the influence and legacy of the queen and her relatives, as well as to exalt her lineage<sup>26</sup>. It could be argued that Las Huelgas set in stone a grandiose and confident period in the reign of Alfonso, and a significant boost to Castilian grandeur was the marriage pact established with England. The alliance is proudly sculptured into the Gothic stone of Las Huelgas. Although they were probably made in the early fourteenth century, the shields carved on Alfonso's sarcophagus -the first royal crest used in Castile- show a golden castle on a red background; perhaps inspired by the Plantagenet leopards in gold on red background that identify Leonor's tomb, and was the royal emblem of his father. It is very likely that an English master, named Richard, was commissioned by the monarchs to participate in the construction of Las Huelgas, work for which he was generously rewarded in 1203, « *pro laudabili obsequio quo in constructione Burgensis monasterii nostri Sancte Marie Regalis nobis exhibuistis* »<sup>27</sup>. Thomas Tolley indicates that he « was either an Englishman or an Angevin. The former seems more likely because the architectural style, particularly of the chapter house, is distinctly English, and the form of the vaults are not of the Angevin kind »<sup>28</sup>. An entry in the English Pipe Rolls for 1184 registers some expenses concerning the repair of utensils by some named Richard and Edward for the use of those who travelled to Spain in the king's service<sup>29</sup>. The monastery so embodied the diplomatic links between the kingdoms that the son of Henry III was knighted by the Castilian king next to the royal pantheon in 1254. The English connection is further asserted in a magnificent belt of Fernando de la Cerda, also buried at Las Huelgas in 1275, which has two of several crests depicting his Plantagenet ancestry.<sup>30</sup>

The exchange of masters at the emerging schools at Palencia and the presence of troubadours, musicians and learned men at the courtly sessions held at Burgos and Toledo, may also reveal the queen's part in the cultural development experienced by Castile in this period, the

<sup>26</sup> Shadis, « Piety, Politics, and Power... », p. 203-4. Refer also to J.M. Cerda, « Leonor Plantagenet y la consolidación castellana en el reinado de Alfonso VIII », *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 42/2, 2012, p. 633-634.

<sup>27</sup> AVIII, n. 747, vol. II, p. 310; T. Tolley, « Leonor of Castile and the 'Spanish' Style in England », *England in the Thirteenth Century, volume 1 : Proceedings of the 1989 Harlaxton Symposium*, dir. W.M. Ormrod Stamford, 1991, p. 186; J. González, « Un arquitecto de las Huelgas de Burgos », *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 53, 1947, p. 47-50; J.M. Lizoáin Garrido and J.J. García, *El Monasterio de las Huelgas : Historia de un Señorío Cisterciense Burgalés (siglos XII-XIII)*, Burgos, 1988; Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilitas...*, p. 82. The oldest surviving parts of the building, contemporary with Alfonso and Leonor, are the small Romanesque cloisters known as the *claustrillas* (c.1180-90), followed by the early Gothic church built in the first decades of the thirteenth century (Herrero Sanz, *Guide to Santa María la Real de las Huelgas...*, p. 16, 46, 54; AVIII, vol. I, p. 654-6).

<sup>28</sup> Tolley, « Leonor of Castile... », p. 186.

<sup>29</sup> *Pipe Rolls...*, 30 HEN II., p. 137 : « *Et Ricardo filio Reineri et Edwardo Blundo .xxxvij. s. et .ix. d. ad emendas nappas et patellas et alia utensilia ad opus eorum qui transfretaverunt in Hispanias in servitio regis per breve Rannulfi de Glanuill* ». On this point, refer to E. McKiernan, « Monastery and Monarchy : The Foundation and Patronage of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas and Santa María la Real de Sigena », unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2005, p. 167-8, 176, 179-82; G. Palomo and J.C. Ruiz, « Nuevas hipótesis sobre las Huelgas de Burgos. Escenografía funeraria de Alfonso X para un proyecto inacabado de Alfonso VIII y Leonor Plantagenet », *Goya*, 316/317, 2007, p. 27; Herrero Sanz, *Guide to Santa María la Real de las Huelgas...*, p. 9-10.

<sup>30</sup> Fernando was the first son of Alfonso X and this belt was found in his tomb. It is reproduced and described in *Vestiduras Ricas, El Monasterio de las Huelgas y su época 1170-1340*, dir. J. Yarza, Madrid, 2005, p. 164-165.

increasing links established with other European kingdoms, and another important aspect of the rightful exercise of medieval queenship<sup>31</sup>. Along with these works of charity, the king was inspired by the Holy Spirit, reports the vernacular prose of the chronicle, to require wise men from lands beyond the Pyrenees so that the discipline of knowledge might be exercised in his kingdom<sup>32</sup>. The presence of a Plantagenet princess in Castile may have facilitated the search and settlement of some of these masters. Just as an English architect had arrived in Burgos to build Las Huelgas, the Pipe Rolls register the expenses concerning the movements of John, « *clericus A[lianore] Regine Hispanie qui moratur in scolis apud Northampton* », who was in the queen's service and had been in the schools at Northampton<sup>33</sup>.

There is only one surviving wax seal of the queen in which she is depicted holding a plant in one side of the seal and a bird on the other. Shadis has observed that the plant may be the fleur-de-lis, associated to the Tree of Jesse and the role of queens in the preservation of royal lineage, but it does not really look like the plant depicted in Eleanor of Aquitaine's seals<sup>34</sup>. Rather, the plant that the queen of Castile is holding in her hand may perhaps be a symbol of her Plantagenet lineage : the broom plant *genista* or *plante genest* worn by her grandfather, Count Geoffrey of Anjou, according to Wace's *Roman de Rou* and John of Marmoutier's *Gesta Consulum Andegavorum*. In fact, a similar broom was used by her brother Richard in his first great seal. According to Elizabeth Brown, the dove is a symbol of wisdom and intelligence, also linked to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and was used in the great seals of Henry I, Stephen and Eleanor of Aquitaine, so the dove could relate Leonor to the royalty of England<sup>35</sup>. If this is the case -and further research is required to confirm it- Leonor's wax seal may be added then to the stoles embroidered by her and the tomb carvings, as clear signs of the Anglo-Castilian alliance and the queen's desire to be remembered as the daughter of the king of England. It is significant that when the stoles were made, Leonor had been in Castile for nearly thirty and yet she was determined to publicise that she was not only *regina Castelle* but also *filia regis Anglie*.

Leonor was also a patroness of courtly culture and had several courtiers at her service. Among these officials was Andrew of Domfront, who in 1198 was granted by King Richard the rights over some mills in Normandy in reward for the service rendered to Leonor, sister of the English monarch<sup>36</sup>. There is enough evidence to suggest the presence of foreigners in the courts of Castile, who offered their services as teachers, troubadours, musicians, builders, painters and illuminators. Some of these may be associated with the patronage of the queen. The reign of Alfonso VIII witnessed the transition from Romanesque to Gothic in Castile, welcomed the fashionable Cistercian styles, and absorbed the new European influences prompted by the increasing transit of pilgrims to Compostela<sup>37</sup>. The daughter of Henry Plan-

<sup>31</sup> Such a phenomenon is explained in J.A. García de Cortazar, « Cultura en el reinado de Alfonso VIII de Castilla : signos de un cambio de mentalidades y sensibilidades », *Alfonso VIII y su época*, Aguilar de Campoo, 1990, p. 167-94; AVIII, vol. I, p. 626-60; and Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilitas...*, p. 47-85.

<sup>32</sup> *Primera Crónica General de España*, éd. R. Menéndez Pidal, Madrid, 1955, p. 686. See also Martínez, *Alfonso VIII...*, p. 285; AVIII, vol. I, p. 634-5; García de Cortazar, « Cultura en el reinado de Alfonso VIII... », p. 189, 191; Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilitas...*, p. 53-7, 87, 97-8, 103.

<sup>33</sup> *Pipe Rolls...*, 27 HEN. II., p. 67; AVIII, vol. I, p. 630, 634.

<sup>34</sup> Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile...*, p. 44. A picture of the seal is published in p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> E.A.R. Brown, « Eleanor of Aquitaine reconsidered : the Woman and her seasons », *Eleanor of Aquitaine. Lord and Lady*, dir. B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, London, 2008, p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> *Magni Rotuli Scaccarii Normannie sub Regibus Anglie*, éd. T. Stapleton, London, 1844, vol. II., p. lix, and p. 349, n. 20.

<sup>37</sup> AVIII, vol. I, p. 635-6.

tagenet was yet another channel facilitating the flow of artistic and cultural trends not only to, but also from, Castile. English influence, and particularly that of master Hugh of Bury St Edmund's, has been noted in the miniatures of the San Pedro de Cardena Beatus, the Bible of Burgos (c.1175), and the Paris Psalter, which was produced in Canterbury and sent to Castile in the 1180s. Although the channel through which English artistic influence was introduced into Castile is unknown, Rose Walker has argued that « given the likely dates for the manuscripts that contain it, that is ca. 1175, it seems plausible to suggest that one or more models came with Leonor on the occasion of her marriage to Alfonso VIII »<sup>38</sup>. In addition, the monarchs commissioned an English manuscript (MS Morgan 429) for their daughter Constanza, the abbess of Las Huelgas and David Raizman has suggested that it was completed in September 1220 to commemorate the sixth anniversary of Alfonso and Leonor's death.<sup>39</sup>

The literary patronage of Eleanor of Aquitaine and the peculiarities of her Poitevin courts have recently been questioned by Ruth Harvey, so it may no longer be possible to argue the transmission of such trends to Castile by means of her daughter.<sup>40</sup> However, the princess may have carried with her a copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* across the Pyrenees, which is thought to have introduced Arthurian tradition into Iberia, mainly because there is an entry concerning Arthur's death in the *Anales Toledanos*, the first part of which was written in Castile by a contemporary of the queen<sup>41</sup>. A sculpture in the cathedral of Santiago has been interpreted as a representation of Tristan and some have daringly dated it to the early twelfth century, but as David Hook has asserted, the earliest peninsular references to the Arthurian tradition can only be attested for the later decades of the century. Some studies have attributed the entry of such literary influences to the Catalan court of Alfonso II (Alfons I) due to its proximity with the Pyrenean region and the movements of its poets, but the marriage of the king of Castile with a Plantagenet princess must have also established a new channel for literary exchanges<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Walker, « Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile... », p. 69-76. Refer also to D. Ocón, « Alfonso VIII, la llegada de las corrientes artísticas de la corte inglesa y el bizantinismo de la escultura hispánica a fines del siglo XII », *Alfonso VIII y su época...*, p. 307, 311-2; D. Ocón, « El papel artístico de las reinas hispanas en la segunda mitad del siglo XII. Leonor de Aquitania y Sancha de Aragón », *VII Jornadas de Arte : La mujer en el arte español*, Madrid, 1997; M. Diago Hernando, « Alfonso VIII y el concejo de Soria », *Alfonso VIII y su época...*, p. 356; *N.J. Morgan, Early Gothic Manuscripts 1190-1250, Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, vol. 1, London, 1982, p. 47-9.

<sup>39</sup> D. Raizman, « Piety, Patronage, and Production at Las Huelgas : New Observations on the Later Morgan Beatus (M. 429) », *Church, State, Vellum, and Stone : Essays on Medieval Spain in Honor of John Williams*, dir. T. Martin and J. Harris, Leiden and Boston, 2005, p. 248.

<sup>40</sup> R. Harvey, « Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Troubadours », *The World of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Literature and Society in Southern France between the Eleventh and Thirteenth Centuries*, dir. M. Bull and C. Léglu, Woodbridge, 2005, p. 101.

<sup>41</sup> W.J. Entwistle, *The Arthurian Legend in the Literatures of the Spanish Peninsula*, New York, 1975, p. 2-6, 47, 51-2. According to Diego Catalán, such entry was registered before in the *Anales Navarro-Aragoneses* (A.P. Hutchinson, « Reading between the Lines : A Vision of the Arthurian World reflected in Galician-Portuguese Poetry », *Arthurian Studies in Honour of P.J.C. Field*, dir. B. Wheeler, Cambridge, 2004, p. 120).

<sup>42</sup> W.J. Entwistle, « Geoffrey of Monmouth and Spanish Literature », *Modern Language Review*, 17, n. 4, 1922, p. 381; M.R. Lida de Malkiel, « Arthurian Literature in Spain and Portugal », *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages : a collaborative history*, dir. R.S. Loomis, Oxford, 1959, p. 406; D. Hook, *The earliest Arthurian names in Spain and Portugal*, St Albans, 1991, p. 1, 7-10; G. Susong, « Á Propos du rôle des Plantagenêts dans la diffusion de la Littérature Arthurienne : l'exemple d'Aliénor de Domfront, reine de Castille (1161-1214) », *Le Domfrontais Médiéval*, 19, 2006-7, p. 22-4.

In reference to Geoffrey's work, Walker has pointed out that « the new kingdom of Castile...had no equivalent mythologized history when Leonor arrived in 1170, but by the early thirteenth century Alfonso VIII's court provided the milieu for the production of the great Castilian epic *Poema de Mio Cid* »<sup>43</sup>. How much literary influence Arthurian tradition may have exercised on such Castilian verses is a very interesting question.

Moreover, Leonor was a patroness of troubadours from Gascony, Provence and Catalonia to the extent that during the reign of Alfonso VIII, their court became one of the centres of Occitan poetry and music in Europe<sup>44</sup>. Ramon Vidal, Guillem de Berguedà, Folquet de Marseille, Perdignan, Peire Roger, Guiraut de Calanson and Peire Vidal are among the distinguished poets associated to literary patronage in Castile at this time. The troubadour Peire d'Alvernia, perhaps a courtier of Alfonso II of Aragón, wrote one of his songs for the embassy that brought Leonor from Bordeaux in 1170, and the Catalan Guillem de Berguedà lovingly addressed the queen with lyrics that made her his vassal<sup>45</sup>. Ramon Vidal de Besalú left the only literary description of Queen Leonor in delicate Provençal verse that highlights the Plantagenet affiliation by making reference to her red mantle decorated with golden lions, similar to the crowned lions later carved in her tomb<sup>46</sup>. The political alliance established with the kings of England and Aragón is likely to have enriched courtly sessions hosted by Alfonso and Leonor and assisted the development of troubadour poetry in Castile. Shadis has suggested, however, that « it seems more fruitful to consider the impact of the troubadours' descriptions of Leonor as an ideal queen than to try to discern her hand in shaping that image through patronage »<sup>47</sup>.

Builders, illuminators, poets, clerics, and masters thus came from the Plantagenet dominions to Castile during the reign of Alfonso VIII and as Adeline Rucquoi has suggested, the courts held by the king and his wife truly became cosmopolitan occasions<sup>48</sup>. This flow was not

<sup>43</sup> Walker, « Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile... », p. 71.

<sup>44</sup> Refer to C. Alvar, *La poesía trovadoresca en España y Portugal*, Barcelona, 1977, p. 75-164; Favier, *Les Plantagenêts...*, p. 465; Susong, « À Propos du rôle des Plantagenêts... », p. 22-4; A. Jeanroy, *Jongleurs et troubadours gascons des 12<sup>e</sup> 13<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, 1957, p. 64; G. Lomenech, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine et les troubadours*, Luçon, 1997, p. 163; García de Cortazar, « Cultura en el reinado de Alfonso VIII... », p. 181-2, 190; J. Carmi Parsons, « Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150-1500 », *Medieval Queenship*, dir. J. Carmi Parsons, New York, 1993, p. 75; R.A. Baltzer, « Music in the Life and Times of Eleanor », *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patron and Politician*, p. 62; M. Milá y Fontanals, *De los trovadores en España. Estudio de lengua y poesía provenzal*, Barcelona, 1861, p. 70-83, 112-26; AVIII, vol. I, p. 185-90; García de Cortazar, « Cultura en el reinado de Alfonso VIII... », p. 182; Susong, « À Propos du rôle des Plantagenêts... », p. 22-4.

<sup>45</sup> « I vós, senyora, reina noble i afable, / emperadriu, no cregueu que jo m'abstingui / d'amar-vos, sinó que dic obertament / que vostre vassall sóc en pla i en desert ». M. de Riquer, *Los trovadores. Historia literaria y textos*, 3 vols., Barcelona, 1975, vol. 1, p. 333, 339, 539-540; R. Menéndez Pidal, *Poesía juglaresca y juglares. Orígenes de las literaturas románicas*, Madrid, 1991 [1942], p. 114.

<sup>46</sup> « E cant la cort complida fo / Venc la reyn' Elionors / Et anc negús no vi son cors / Estrecha venc en un mantel / D'un drap de seda bon e bel / Que horn apela sisclatò / Vermelhs ab lista d'argen fo / E y hac un levon d'aur devis / Al rey soplega, pueis s'assis / Ad una part, lonhet de lui ». Refer to Milá y Fontanals, *De los trovadores en España*, vol. II, p. 133; C. Appel, *Povengalische Chrestomathie*, Leipzig, 1930, p. 27, n. 5; K. Pratt « The image of the queen in Old French literature », *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, dir. A. Duggan, Woodbridge, 1997, p. 245; Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile...*, p. 47. Peire Vidal was at Alfonso's court from 1195 to 1201 (*The Songs of Peire Vidal: translation and commentary*, éd. V.M. Fraser, New York, 2006, p. 3). A long list of troubadours associated with the court of Alfonso VIII can be found in J.T. Snow, « The Iberian Peninsula », *A Handbook of the Troubadours*, dir. F.R.P. Akehurst and J. M. Davis, Berkeley, 1995, p. 273.

<sup>47</sup> Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile...*, p. 47.

<sup>48</sup> Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilita...*, p. 58-60.

an entirely new phenomenon but it certainly found in the marriage settlement of 1170 an official channel.

The queen took care to prepare her children to be future monarchs and valuable assets of Castilian diplomacy<sup>49</sup>. The wedding of 1170 « was Henry II's metaphorical marriage to higher status. The experience of being a tool of such ambition must have been significant as Leonor prepared her daughters to be married women. She would expect no less of her children », observed Shadis and Berman<sup>50</sup>. Her influence in the marriage of her daughter Blanca to the future king of France is just as evident as in Berenguela's betrothal. Richard's death in 1199 had released England from the Navarrese alliance and the growing pretensions of Philip Augustus and Alfonso VIII over English-dominated territories may have convinced King John that a marriage between a Castilian princess of Plantagenet descent and a Capetian prince could provide a convenient diplomatic solution<sup>51</sup>. So crucial an option this was, that the king of England sent his own mother, an aged Eleanor of Aquitaine, to lead the embassy across the Pyrenees towards Burgos, the capital city of her daughter's kingdom and the seat of her court. Desmond Seward suggests that Eleanor « probably believed that the future of the Angevin empire could depend on this marriage »<sup>52</sup>. The old queen opted for Blanca and a treaty was drafted on 22 May 1200. The following day, the Castilian damsel married Louis and from this marriage was born Louis IX.

Alfonso gave up his soul in the company of his family and the queen, who had just turned fifty-three, sorely devastated and « deprived of the solace of so great a man, wishing to die because of the suffering and anguish », fell sick with malarial fever (*quartana*), and passed away twenty-six days later<sup>53</sup>. The joint sepulchres of the monarchs are now located in the main chapel of the monastery; the burial stone bears witness to a loving and fruitful marriage.

The kings of Castile were then represented as holy rulers in the only miniature of the *Tumbo Menor de Castilla*, a thirteenth-century cartulary of the Order of St James. The queen is depicted to the right of the king holding the end of a seal tag attached to a donation granted to the master of this military order in 1174<sup>54</sup>. It is significant that being this the earliest pictorial representation of the royal couple that they are both depicted as saints with a halo around their heads. It is also intriguing that none of those who have made historical references to the life and work of Alfonso and Leonor has ever taken much notice of the memorial information offered by this miniature. This cartulary dates to the first half of the thirteenth century

<sup>49</sup> Cerda, « Leonor Plantagenet... », p. 642-645. According to Duby and many authors, twelfth-century queens exercised a great deal of power in the education of future monarchs (G. Duby, « Women and Power », *Cultures and power. Lordship, Status, process in twelfth-century Europe*, dir. T.N. Bisson, Philadelphia, 1995, p. 79-84).

<sup>50</sup> M. Shadis and C.H. Berman, « A Taste of the Feast : Reconsidering Eleanor of Aquitaine's Female Descendants », *Eleanor of Aquitaine : Lord and Lady*, dir. B. Wheeler and J. Carmi Parsons, London, 2002, p. 186. See also Pratt, « The image of the queen in Old French literature... », p. 242.

<sup>51</sup> AVIII, vol. I, p. 205-7; Favier, *Les Plantagenêts...*, p. 638, 660.

<sup>52</sup> D. Seward, *Eleanor of Aquitaine : the Mother Queen*, Newton Abbot, 1978, p. 231. See also J.E. Ruiz-Doméneq, « Aliénor d'Aquitaine et sa famille », *303 Arts, Recherches et Créations*, 81, 2004, p. 38. On Eleanor's embassy, see *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene...*, vol. IV, p. 114; « Chronica Latina Regum Castellæ », *Chronica Hispana Saeculi XII*, éd. L. Charlo Brea, CCCM, LIII, Turnhout, 1997, ch. xviii; J. Martindale, « Eleanor of Aquitaine : the Last Years », *King John : New Interpretations*, dir. S.D. Church, Woodbridge, 1999, p. 139, 141, 145, 159.

<sup>53</sup> « Chronica Latina Regum Castellæ... », ch. xxx, p. 69; Jiménez de Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispaniae* ch. viii, p. 279-80. This fever is transmitted by mosquito and characterised by spasms that occur every four days, hence *quartus* : *quartana*.

<sup>54</sup> *Tumbo Menor de Castilla*, Liber I, f. 15v (Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Códice L.1046B). The text of this diploma is registered in AVIII, n. 195.

so it was probably drafted soon after the monarchs' death in 1214, thus providing a depiction which might be as fresh and contemporary as the chronicles that make reference to their life and work.

The 1160s was a decade of transition to political stability and territorial expansion for England and Castile and the following ten years were perhaps the most successful for both kings. Henry's search for peninsular allies against the Capetians and Alfonso's need for support against neighbouring León and Navarre must have been at the very heart of the marital pact of 1169. In this period, as Anthony Goodman has explained, « convergent Iberian and northern European interests created the first significant and enduring links between the Peninsula and England »<sup>55</sup>. These links remained convenient as long as Castile needed allies to establish Iberian hegemony and while England asserted control over Gascony.

The marriage of Mary Tudor and Phillip of Spain in 1554 may have refreshed and rekindled the memory of an Anglo-Castilian alliance, the first precedent of which was established in the twelfth century with the marriage of Alfonso and Leonor. It was Ana of Austria, a seventeenth-century abbess of Las Huelgas, granddaughter of Philip II and sister of Philip IV, who inspired his brother to formally request the canonisation process for Alfonso VIII in 1621, and some documents were drafted to describe the spiritual merits, the holy fame and even the miracles performed by the intercession of the twelfth-century monarch<sup>56</sup>.

Evidently, the diplomatic bonds between Castile and England were far from stable, suffering a great deal of alteration in the later Middle Ages, and -as Bullón-Fernández has asserted- the relationship between these kingdoms was not solely maintained by royal marriages.<sup>57</sup> In fact, English allegiance was to fluctuate between Castile and her border enemy, Navarre, from the marriage of Richard the Lionheart and Berengaria in 1191 and throughout the thirteenth century<sup>58</sup>. But Leonor's presence in the courts of Toledo and Burgos inaugurated a period of unprecedented Anglo-Castilian relations and exchange that extended well into the thirteenth century, that was still remembered during the reign of Phillip II, and which is also a very interesting example of the matrimonial strategies employed by rulers in the entangled diplomatic concert of medieval Europe.

<sup>55</sup> A. Goodman, « Before the Armada : Iberia and England in the Middle Ages », *England in Europe, 1066-1453*, dir. N. Saul, New York, 1994, p. 108.

<sup>56</sup> « Declaración acerca de la santidad de don Alonso el Bueno », dada por el obispo don Melchor Rodríguez, impresa en Madrid, 1603; « Información de la vida y milagros del bienaventurado rey don Alfonso VIII » (Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Códices, traslado de 1771, proc. De Consejos); B. Porreño, *Historia del santo rey Don Alfonso* (ms. Archivo del Monasterio de las Huelgas, Burgos, leg. 55, n. 3). See also A. Arizaleta and S. Jean-Marie, « En el umbral de santidad : Alfonso VIII de Castilla », *Pratiques hagiographiques dans l'Espagne du Moyen Âge et du Siècle d'Or, vol. II*, dir. A. Arizaleta et al., Toulouse, 2007, p. 573-583; J. de las Heras, *Alfonso el de las Navas, Lo llamaron Noble y Glorioso pero no fue becho Santo*, Madrid, 2012, p. 251-259.

<sup>57</sup> Bullón-Fernández, « Introduction... », p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> M. Raquel García Arancón has published a very thorough analysis of Anglo-Navarrese relationships in the thirteenth century, key to place Castilian diplomacy in context (« Navarra e Inglaterra a mediados del siglo XIII », *Príncipe de Viana*, 50, n. 186, 1989, p. 111-149).