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Jeffrey Michael Evatt

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**The Primacy of National Sentiment in the Embajada a Tamorlán and
Andanças é viajes**

Committee:

Madeline Sutherland-Meier, Supervisor

Matthew J. Bailey

Michael P. Harney

Cory A. Reed

Denise A. Spellberg

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Andanças é viajes**

by

Jeffrey Michael Evatt, B.A., M.A.

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For my family and friends

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Andanças é viajes**

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Jeffrey Michael Evatt, Ph.D.

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Supervisor: Madeline Sutherland-Meier

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula was incomplete. The population had suffered cruelly from outbreaks of bubonic plague during the second half of the previous century. Castile and the rest of Christian Europe faced the threat of the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the advance of the Ottoman Turks. Yet less than a century later, the two principal Christian kingdoms of the Peninsula would be united under a single monarchy. Columbus would have completed his voyage to the Americas, and the Catholic Monarchs would have begun the process of expansion that would eventually lead to the establishment of one of history's great empires.

In this study, I consider this development in the context of two fifteenth-century travel narratives. Ruy González de Clavijo set sail from Spain in 1403 as an emissary of King Enrique III to the Mongol Emperor Timur at Samarkand. He recorded his experience in a text that came to be known as the Embajada a Tamorlán. In 1436, Pero

Tafur would begin the first of several journeys to various points to the East, including the Holy Land. Tafur wrote of his voyages in his Andanças é viajes de un hidalgo español.

In this study, I demonstrate how these two texts contribute to and reflect the changes in attitudes toward cultural and religious diversity that took place during the fifteenth century. I trace the evolution of the concept of the author from relative anonymity of earlier works to the clearly defined and authoritative voices of these two writers. I show that both writers demonstrate respect for and interest in aspects of life beyond their own borders in areas ranging from the mundane (such as dietary habits and travel by sea) to the sacred (religion). Crucially, I conclude that both works are informed far more by an incipient feeling of Castilian nationalism than by religious or other considerations. In all of these ways, Clavijo and Tafur reflect the evolving public discourse of their day and seek to influence it, setting the stage for the voyages of Columbus and subsequent travelers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

[E]l Almirante salió a tierra en la barca armada y Martín Alonso Pinçón y Viceinte Anes, su hermano, que era capitán de la Niña. Sacó el Almirante la vanderá real y los capitanes con dos vanderas de la Cruz Verde, que llevaba el Almirante en todos los navíos por seña, con una F y una I, ençima de cada letra su corona, una de un cabo de la + y otra de otro. (Colón 110)

The above passage, taken from the October 12, 1492 entry of Christopher Columbus's Diario del primer viaje, describes one of the seminal moments in human history. Indeed, Tzvetan Todorov, in his study of the Conquest, goes so far as to describe it as “the most astonishing encounter of our history” (4). It divides history into a “before” and an “after” in a way that only very few historical events have done. Traditionally, the arrival of Columbus in the New World has been regarded as one of the most extraordinary achievements of humanity. Certainly Spaniards have regarded the landfall of three caravels flying the standard of the Catholic Monarchs on a Caribbean island that fall day as a supreme national achievement: so much so, in fact, that October 12 is celebrated as Spain's national day. This has continued to be the case even during the twentieth century: in the 1940s, Ramón Menéndez Pidal felt comfortable referring casually to the Admiral as “el gran descubridor” without any need for additional explanation or commentary (Lengua 9).

Different appraisals of the Discovery and Conquest have gained currency in more recent years, however. In some of them, the Spaniards are judged very harshly indeed. The same Todorov who writes of an “astonishing encounter” is nonetheless willing to

describe the century following 1492 as one which “perpetrated the greatest genocide in human history” (5). Nor have such dissenting voices been limited to academic circles. The Chilean poet Pablo Neruda opens the third canto of his Canto general with the simple declaration, referring to the conquistadors, that “[I]os carniceros desolaron las islas” (145).¹

1. Transformation in Fifteenth-Century Castile

A more nuanced attitude toward the events of 1492 is that of María Rosa Menocal, who, in an evocative phrase, writes that this year serves as “a pointed reminder of the ineluctable marriage of life and death” (483). As she explains, the end of Muslim Spain and the expulsion of the Jews from the Peninsula “are a critical aspect of the political and ideological contingencies that made Spain itself possible, that defined what it was and could do, including settling vast new worlds” (483). One need only look at the following years to appreciate the significance of 1492 for Spain, for Europe, and for much of the world. Scarcely more than two decades into the sixteenth century, a unified Spain would have crossed an ocean and established a presence in the Americas. It would also have defeated one of the greatest of the Mesoamerican empires and entered its capital. This feat marked the beginning of European hegemony over large parts of the

¹ The passions surrounding Columbus’s role extend to questions of terminology. Many people who adopt a more critical attitude toward Spain’s actions in the Americas find the terms “New World” and “Discovery” objectionably Eurocentric. I do not object to either term and will on occasion use both. Webster’s Dictionary gives “unfamiliar” as one meaning for the word “new.” From the Spaniards’ perspective, this would be an accurate description, and this dissertation is a study of Spanish literature. I will often prefer geographical terms such as “the Americas,” but these appellations are also problematic, since in most cases they were imposed by Europeans. Likewise, I believe that “Discovery” is a reasonable word to use, again from the European perspective. Also, as the Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes asks rhetorically, “Aren’t all discoveries basically mutual?” (87).

world's land mass. Spaniards and Portuguese would establish their rule over vast swathes of American territory. The English and French would conquer much of North America. In later centuries, England, France, Portugal, and other European nations would rule most of the African continent. It is true that the extent of European dominion over other lands and peoples would ebb and flow over time. Similarly, the relative strength of the various European powers vis-à-vis one another would vary. Still, it is not an exaggeration to assert that the victory of Hernán Cortés over Moctezuma in 1521 marked the beginning of an era of large-scale European imperial expansion that would endure in one form or another until the late twentieth century and which in some respects continues today. All of this, in some sense, was set in motion by the Catholic Monarchs' decision to sponsor Columbus and by his extraordinary voyage.

Yet it was not the only watershed event of the year. A few months earlier, Granada had fallen, bringing to an end the Muslim political presence in Western Europe and to the Andalusí civilization that Mahmoud Makki describes as “one of the most brilliant of Islamic countries” (3). Over the following centuries, European expansion would be mirrored, at least to a degree, by a relative decline in the global political and cultural influence of Arab and Muslim civilization. In subsequent centuries Islam would seldom match the extraordinary expansion achieved during the first centuries after the founding of the religion. Likewise, while there have obviously been many important scientific and cultural achievements in Muslim societies in more recent centuries, it does seem safe to say that the degree of preeminence that had been attained in those areas during the Caliphate of Córdoba has been lost. The year 1492 was a milestone in this

process.² It also marked a key moment in the conflict between the Christian and Muslim world which has been a near-constant feature of the geopolitics of the last millennium and which, as a glance at the headlines of any newspaper will attest, remains a key issue even today.

1.1. The Beginning of the Fifteenth Century: Internal Divisions

The Christian Reconquest of Spain (al-Zawahiri's "tragedy of al Andalus") had been nearly complete for many years before Fernando and Isabel entered Granada in January of 1492. Yet the Christian kingdoms were during most of the fifteenth century rent with internal divisions, beset by economic problems, and suffering frequent conflicts between the Crown and the nobility. Christian Spain's future in 1400 did not look particularly promising. Yet that decade would end with the completion of the Reconquest and Columbus's first voyage to the Americas in 1492.

How this transformation took place in such a limited period of time is one of the seminal issues of Spanish history. In the prologue to his history of imperial Spain, J. H. Elliot surveys the achievements of Spain's Golden Age and asks rhetorically, "[W]hat makes a society suddenly dynamic, releases its energies, and galvanizes it into life?" (14). It seems eminently logical to look for answers in the years preceding 1492. Yet doing so does not provide easy answers: Spain at the beginning of the fifteenth century most

² It is also fair to say that this perspective is shared by at least some political figures in the Muslim world even today. On October 7, 2001, as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was being attacked by air and naval forces of the United States and the United Kingdom in retaliation for the events of the previous month, a video was aired on the pan-Arab television network al-Jazeera. On that video, Osama bin Laden responded to the commencement of military action. His deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, "vowed that 'the tragedy of al Andalus' would not be repeated" (Sachs).

certainly did not look like a nation on the brink of becoming a great imperial power. It consisted of independent states ruled by kings who were not able consistently to exert effective control over their subjects and who were, at least in some respects, more tolerant of religious diversity than many of the Christians under their rule. Even though the Reconquest of the Peninsula was substantially complete, the Kingdom of Granada remained in Muslim hands. Moreover, not only the Spanish kingdoms but Christian Europe as a whole faced serious dangers at this time. Spain in 1400 appeared to be a land fraught with religious and ethnic tension, threatened by external events, and, especially, devastated by epidemic illness.

The first major outbreak of bubonic plague in the Peninsula took place in 1348. In 1350, Castilian troops under Alfonso XI had laid siege to Gibraltar when they began to fall ill and die. Alfonso himself fell victim to the plague soon thereafter, thus demonstrating that this illness knew no boundaries of social class or political power. Joseph F. O'Callaghan describes Gibraltar as the "clavis potissima" of Alfonso's kingdom and speculates that Alfonso might have been able to accomplish much had he survived (414). It is fair to say, then, that the Black Death had immediate, specific political consequences for Castile from its first arrival in the kingdom. These immediate consequences were lasting: O'Callaghan blames Alfonso's death for effectively putting a stop to any further reconquest of territory "until the time of Ferdinand and Isabella" (414).

The social and economic consequences of the Black Death, however, were probably far more important than the direct political costs. The figures cited by Gabriel Jackson are stunning: he suggests that "from one-quarter to one-half of the population of

western Europe, including Spain,” succumbed to the disease (146). Bernard Reilly’s language is even more graphic: he describes the plague as a “fourteenth-century Holocaust” (172). Reilly’s estimate of the total death toll is in line with Jackson’s, although he is more specific: one in three (172). The effects of such a scourge were predictable: Jackson reports that “[r]obbery and hysteria became normal occurrences, fields were left uncultivated, taxes uncollected” (146). Some peasants were able to take advantage of the suddenly higher wages that landowners were forced to pay because of the ensuing labor shortage. For most, however, the years immediately following 1348 were a nightmare. A great many of them reacted by looking for someone—anyone—to blame, thus providing proof if any were needed that some aspects of social behavior do not change over time.

The Christians of the Peninsula chose as target for their hostility the Jewish community, thus contributing in a significant way to the increasing religious tensions in the Peninsula. The tradition of convivencia notwithstanding, anti-Semitism was a longstanding phenomenon, both in Spain and in Western Europe in general. Given this history of animosity, it is not particularly surprising that during the years following 1348, many Christian Spaniards would find the Jewish community to be a convenient scapegoat. The ferocity of the Christians’ anger is striking. Still, given the degree of human suffering and economic upheaval caused by the plague, it is understandable that the anger directed at the perceived culprits would be very intense indeed.

This was in fact what occurred. Outbreaks of the plague continued: Jaime Vicens Vives calls the disease an “azote que ya no abandonará a Europa [. . .] hasta el siglo XVIII” (Aproximación 103). Encouraged in some cases by their clergy, Christian anger

at the Jews would reach in climax in 1391, when a series of deadly pogroms broke out across Castile and beyond. According to Jackson, the violence began in Seville, influenced by a series of particularly vitriolic sermons. The unrest quickly spread to other cities, both in Castile and beyond (Jackson 147). The number of victims is difficult to know: Jackson says only that “some hundreds” were killed outright (147). Perhaps of even greater long-term significance was the coerced conversion of thousands of Jews to Christianity. These conversos, whose sincerity was in many cases doubtful, would form what Vicens Vives calls a “minoría indecisa” (Aproximación 104). Many of them would continue to occupy positions of considerable influence, and they would attract suspicion and hostility from their Old Christian neighbors.

The pogroms of 1391 would still have been a fresh memory in 1400, and while, as I have argued, they are legitimately seen as a symptom of the increased religious fervor among Christians and of the breakdown of convivencia, they are also significant for what they suggest about the stability of civil society at that time. Both in Castile and in Aragon, rulers were unable to prevent the pogroms: as Jackson writes about Castile, “the government, whatever its intentions, could not counter the religious fanaticism of the Castilian ‘man on the street’” (147). Nor was this outbreak of civil disorder a purely religious phenomenon. Rather, it included, again according to Jackson, “elements of general social protest as well as anti-semitism” (148). Jackson further reports that, with some exceptions, the Crowns of Aragon and Castile were unable to punish the pogroms’ instigators.

The pogroms of 1391, then, were probably the most violent manifestation of religious intolerance to affect the Peninsula’s Christian kingdoms during the entire

Middle Ages. Yet even these events were caused by a combination of economic jealousy and hysterical, irrational reaction to a devastating epidemic rather than by raw religious fanaticism. Castile in 1400 was neither literally nor figuratively a healthy society.

1.2. Threats from Abroad

The Trastámara dynasty came to power in 1369 with the death of Pedro I at the hands of his illegitimate half-brother Enrique (Jackson 133). The third monarch of that line, Enrique III (1390-1406) was in 1391 a young king who, as Jackson puts it, had just “survived a turbulent minority” (133). He was not a particularly strong king, and soon came under the influence of Álvaro de Luna. Still, his reign was not entirely unsuccessful. The Reconquest in Spain was in a relatively quiet period during most of Enrique's reign, and Castile's relations with its European neighbors were in the words of O'Callaghan, “peaceful, though strained from time to time” (538). The main foreign policy concern during Enrique's reign was the papal schism, in which European rulers' loyalties were divided between Rome and Avignon.

The Roman Catholic Church at this time was wracked by divisions more serious than any that it had experienced since the Great Schism three and a half centuries previous. In 1309 Pope Clement V, after wandering for several years from city to city, installed himself in Avignon in order to escape the influence of the Roman nobility (Guignebert 160). It may not have been his intention to move the seat of the papacy permanently: Charles Guignebert notes that his place of abode in that city “sólo podía ser provisional” (160). In the event, however, Clement V would die at Avignon, and five of his successors would remain there. Corruption of various forms plagued the Avignon papacy, and finally, in 1378, Gregory XI acceded to the urging of his followers and

returned to Rome. The hope, apparently, was that this change in scenery would set the stage for a renewal of the Church. As Guignebert puts it, “esta decisión, en la que ponían asaz cándidamente la esperanza de una renovación de la Iglesia, fue el punto de partida de una espantosa crisis” (166). Gregory’s successor, Urban VI, angered the rank and file of the Church with his plans for reform, and, again in Guignebert’s words, “lo depusieron y eligieron a Clemente VII” (166). Urban was forced to return to Avignon, igniting the Great Schism, which “sumió a la Iglesia en el más horrible desorden” (166).

In Spain these events were, perhaps, not felt so deeply as in France, England, and Italy. O’Callaghan reports that the Castilian monarchs attempted to remain neutral during the Schism (529). Enrique helped bring this conflict to an end by renewing allegiance to the pope in Rome in 1403. This schism would not be resolved until 1417. The combination of the displacement of the papacy to Avignon and the subsequent schism would have lasting consequences for the Church: Guignebert asserts that they were direct precursors to the Reformation (158).

A second threat to Christian Europe, and one of more immediate interest for this study, had its origins far to the east of the Iberian Peninsula, in Central Asia. By the year 1400 the Ottoman Empire was the dominant power in that region. This state had been formed during the previous century from a mix of Turkic-speaking tribes under the leadership of the Turkish emir Osman, who, according to Steven Runciman, gave the group their name (452). Under a succession of strong leaders, the Ottomans quickly consolidated their control over their territory and soon began to undertake campaigns of conquest in the lands to the west. Runciman notes that by 1359, the Turks had managed to leave Constantinople “isolated from its European possessions” (454). He further

observes that at that point Western European leaders, while watching the situation with concern, did not feel an immediate threat from the Ottomans because of the strength of the Serbian Empire, which lay between themselves and the Turks (454). This attitude, however, would soon change. Their new sultan, Bayazid, was, in the words of John Julius Norwich, a man of “almost superhuman energy” (345). He employed this energy against his enemies, and Norwich reports that by the end of the fourteenth century, the Turks had “effectively annihilated” Serbia and Bulgaria (348). The Byzantine Emperor Manuel made personal entreaties to the kings of France, England, and Aragon, and Europe responded by sending a force that Donald Nicol estimates at 100,000 to attack the Turks during the crusade of Nicopolis (70). This force met defeat at the hands of Bayazid in 1396. At this point, the Byzantine Empire stood alone and isolated on the easternmost frontier of Christian Europe. Manuel’s situation appeared to be desperate if not hopeless.

But then an extraordinary event took place. The Ottoman Turks themselves suffered a humiliating defeat at Ankara from an unexpected source: the semi-nomadic Mongols who inhabited the Central Asian steppe. These men were descendants of those whom Chinggis Khan had united and ruled during the years from 1206-25 (Manz 3). The exploits of these earlier tribes are legend, but by the time of Bayazid, the unity established by Chinggis Khan had in large measure broken down: as Beatrice Forbes Manz writes, by 1368 much of the land once dominated by Chinggis Khan was no longer ruled by his descendants (10). By the time of the Turks’ defeat at Ankara, however, a new ruler had emerged among these tribes. Even before his defeat of Bayazid, the exploits of this new chieftain were extraordinary. Writing early in the twentieth century, Harold Lamb says of him that he “tried to make himself master of the world. In

everything he undertook he was successful” (15). Lamb exaggerates. Nonetheless, his achievements were extraordinary.

The name of this warrior was Timur. He came to be known in English as Tamerlane, and his extraordinary ability to lead and his tremendous capacity for cruelty have been represented dramatically by authors of the stature of Christopher Marlowe. Timur was born near Samarkand in Transoxiana (that is, the region to the east of the Oxus River), in what is now the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan. Some sources give the year of his birth as 1336 (Ibn Arabshah xvi), but Manz, who is Timur’s most recent and most authoritative biographer, declines to be so specific, saying only that he was born "probably in the 1320s or 1330s" (Manz 1). He was the son of a noble family belonging to a Turco-Mongolian tribe. After attaining power in his home region, which he had accomplished by 1370, he developed around him a "personal myth [. . .] which showed him in the traditional mold of nomad conquerors and dynastic founders" (Manz 15). In particular, he claimed to be a descendant of Chinggis Khan.

In the years following, Timur extended his rule. By the end of the fourteenth century he had conquered Iran and taken possession of cities from Baghdad to Delhi. He died in 1405 during preparations for an assault on China (Ibn Arabshah xviii). Some three years before his death he had defeated the Ottoman Turks under Bayazid, who was taken prisoner and, according to legend, locked in an iron cage until his death a few weeks later.

Given this record, it is not surprising that Timur is remembered by many as a bloodthirsty tyrant. Such a view was enthusiastically promoted by writers such as Ibn Arabshah, who wrote of him as an almost diabolical figure. This biographer describes

the divine judgment of Timur as follows: "Then they brought garments of hair from Hell and drew forth his soul like a spit from a soaked fleece and he was carried to the cursing and punishment of God, remaining in torment and God's infernal punishment" (233).

This is not, however, a universally accepted point of view: one historian describes the Syrian Ibn Arabshah's work as "the hatred of a conquered enemy, and those national prejudices which are disgraceful to an historian" (Yezdi iii). Manz, not surprisingly, adopts a more balanced view of the ruler, never denying his tremendous capacity for cruelty, but also making note of his military and political acumen, which allowed him to succeed in "transforming the political world over which he had taken control" (147).

The transformation would not endure, however, at least in the form that Timur might have envisioned. As Peter B. Golden writes, despite his military prowess, Timur was ultimately "unable to rise above the level of a steppe marauder" (588). Moreover, the threat to Europe posed by Timur would recede quickly after his death. In the words of Golden, the Timurid empire, "hastily thrown together to the accompaniment of great slaughter, did not long survive him" (588). Conflicts between Timur's heirs reduced the dynasty to a situation "both economically and politically weak" (Manz 18). This precipitous decline could not, however, have been foreseen by Europe's Christian rulers. They would have heard of the impressive if terrible scope of Timur's conquests. They would also have developed an image of Timur as that of a savage, nomadic conqueror, threatening European civilization with a forced return to barbarism. This image certainly contains an element of truth.

Still, the fact that Timur was at heart more a warrior than a statesman does not completely explain the ultimate fall of Christianity's easternmost outpost. The years

between his death and 1453 provided Christian Europe with a window of opportunity. Concerted action on the part of Europe's Christian rulers during this period could well have changed the outcome. Runciman even speculates that "[h]ad all Europe at once intervened it might have ended the Ottoman Empire" (464). Western Europe, however, was in no position to mount a coordinated, massive defense of Byzantium, rent as it was by competing political and commercial interests.

One Western leader who took a lively interest in the events occurring to the east was King Enrique III of Castile. Enrique had ascended the throne of Castile in 1393 at the age of thirteen. Despite his almost constant ill health, and important economic and social changes underway in Castile at the time, both contemporary and modern historians are nearly unanimous in praise of his reign. He had enjoyed reasonable success in negotiating increased power for the monarchy (Jackson 111) in its ongoing conflicts with the noblemen. He displayed considerable tolerance toward religious minorities: his chronicler Pedro López de Ayala praises his defense of the Jewish population in Segovia (177). When his subjects approached him warning that Islam was a "falsa é mint Rosa" creed, Enrique refused to act against its adherents, even though this attitude brought him into conflict with such religious leaders as the Maestre de Alcatraz (López de Ayala 221).

2. This Study: The Texts

Faced with the threat of the downfall of the Byzantine Empire, with all its implications for the security of Christian Europe, Enrique decided to act, regardless of his general inclination toward religious tolerance. He had been able to hear of the battle between Bayazid and Timur from two men who had witnessed it at first hand. Enrique, for reasons which are not entirely clear (Kehren 58), had fortuitously sent two

ambassadors to the court of Timur. Upon their return to Castile, in the company of an ambassador from Timur to the Spanish monarch, they told Enrique what they had seen. Encouraged by friendly words from Timur's emissary, no doubt impressed by his ambassadors' descriptions of the Mongol leader's military prowess, and perhaps also acting on the assumption that an enemy of one's enemy is, if not necessarily one's friend, at least a potential ally, Enrique promptly decided to send another representative to meet with Timur. To lead this expedition he picked one of his courtiers, Ruy González de Clavijo. This group left Spain on March 22, 1403. This voyage would lead to the composition of the first of the two texts studied here.

2.1. The Embajada a Tamorlán

Upon their return to Spain almost exactly three years later, on March 1, 1406, a detailed record was made of what the ambassadors had seen and experienced during their voyage, probably by Clavijo himself. That record, known as the Embajada a Tamorlán, is a day-by-day narration of the voyage of a group of Castilians to the court of Timur at Samarkand.

Clavijo and his men set sail from El Puerto de Santa María on May 23, 1403. They would travel by sea across the length of the Mediterranean, making stops at Ibiza; the Italian peninsula of Gaeta; Messina, on the northeastern tip of Sicily; Rhodes, and the islands of Kos, Leros, Lesbos, and Tenedos off the southwestern coast of Turkey. In October of that year the party traversed the Strait of Bosphorus. After a period of time spent in Constantinople, they continued under sail, hugging the southern coast of the Black Sea and making occasional calls at ports on the northern coast of what is now Turkey. They finally reached port at Trabzon, in modern-day Turkey, on April 11, 1404.

From Trabzon they continued by land across what is now northern Iran. They crossed the Amu-Darja River in present-day Turkmenistan on December 8, 1404, thus entering the area known as Transoxiana. Finally, on September 8, 1404, they entered Samarkand.

After being lavishly entertained at Timur's court, they returned home to Spain. The return voyage is recorded only briefly in the Embajada, but it does report that on Monday, March 24, 1406, the ambassadors "llegaron al dicho Señor Rey de Castilla, e falláronlo en Alcalá de Henares" (357).³

This was, clearly, an extraordinary journey, made more so by the harsh climatic and topological conditions which faced the ambassadors at almost every point during their trip. The record of this journey proved to be an important source of information for Europeans about the situation in Central Asia, and is regularly cited as the most important Castilian travel narrative of the fifteenth century.

2.2. Pero Tafur and his Andanças é viajes

Some three decades after Clavijo and his party set out for Samarkand, another Castilian left the Peninsula for the East. Pero Tafur, a young man of about 25, set out in 1435 on the first of a series of lengthy trips which would take him through much of central and southern Europe, to the Holy Lands, and to Egypt.⁴ Along the way, according to Malcolm Letts, Tafur endured life-threatening storms that apparently produced "some kind of mystical experience" (4), encounters with friendly Christians, hostile Muslims,

³ A very useful day-to-day chronology of the ambassadors' travels is provided by Lucien Kehren in his French translation of the work (325-33).

⁴ In her recent dissertation on Tafur and his work, Lisa Merschel provides a listing of the cities and towns he visited, the time he spent in each of them, and the number of pages he dedicated to them in Andanças (149-50). While not a detailed chronology, this summary is a useful reference.

and friendly renegades. He witnessed considerable suffering and death, but his personal bravery remained undiminished, and it is one of the more striking features of his story. At one point, for example, Tafur decided to enter a mosque in Jerusalem that had been constructed at the site of the Temple of Solomon and the Dome of the Rock. There he found a “moro renegado” from Portugal and asked for his aid in gaining entry to the mosque. In exchange for two ducats, the Moor lent Tafur his clothes. Tafur entered the mosque without incident. He knew very well, however, that he was taking a grave risk: as he puts it, “si yo allí fuera conosciado por xprino luego fuera muerto” (63).

The similarities with the voyage of Clavijo and his men are obvious, but in some respects the differences are more so. In the first place, Tafur, unlike Clavijo, was not traveling with an obvious political agenda. Indeed, Tafur’s motivations are even now difficult to determine. His stated reason is simply that he wanted to gain knowledge and experience that would be useful to a Castilian nobleman. Specifically, he hoped to

visitar tierras extrañas; porque, de la tal visitaçion, raçonablemente se pueden conseguir provechos cercanos á lo que proeza requiere, así engrandeçiendo los fijosdalgo sus coraçones donde sin ser primero conosciados los intervienen trabajos y priesas. (1)

Tafur, like Clavijo, makes much of his religious faith, and declares the Moors “nuestros naturales enemigos” (2). Even so, he had numerous and frequently genial contacts with countless non-Christians. Also like Clavijo, Tafur was perfectly willing to criticize the practice of other Christians, as for example when he commented on the lamentable state into which Rome has been allowed by the authorities to fall.

As in the case of Clavijo's voyage, Tafur's wanderings produced a detailed narrative of his experiences. Here, too, some differences are apparent. In the first place, Tafur does not make explicit mention of specific dates. Moreover, this narrative was composed some years after his travels were completed. A casual reading suggests that Andanças is in some ways a less sophisticated work than the Embajada, and it has regularly been criticized for the excessive length and number of digressive passages. Still, one could argue that it is a more lively narrative and that it reveals far more about Pero Tafur than the Embajada does about Clavijo.

3. This Study: Objective and Organization

As I have noted, the question of how Castile evolved from its precarious state at the beginning of the fifteenth century into a bicontinental imperial power in little more than a century is for me a fascinating and important one. To attempt a complete answer, of course, would be far beyond the scope of this study, so that is not my present intention. Rather, it is my objective to contribute in some small way to a better understanding of this transformation through an examination of these two narratives. They are, like the writings of Columbus and many of his followers, descriptions of voyages to foreign lands. More important, both works exhibit aspects of Castilian attitudes toward the individual, foreign lands and people, and toward Castile and Spain themselves that would come to fruition in the works of later travelers.

3.1. Objective

I consider many aspects of these texts in this study. Such an examination is of considerable worth in itself, especially given that fact that, at least until recent years, they have received rather less critical and scholarly attention than I believe they deserve.

Indeed, authors have not infrequently adopted a rather disparaging tone toward them. Typical is the comment of Jás Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, who write of the “extreme (if rather pedestrian) realism of the report of Ruy González de Clavijo’s journey” (46). In a similar vein, Jean Richard comments on the “*langue vulgaire*” that to his mind characterizes the texts of both Clavijo and Tafur. In fact, both men were writers of considerable sophistication, who wrote for specific purposes and who structured their narratives to advance those purposes.

It is not, however, my intention to simply point out the interesting features of these texts. Rather, I consider how the two writers reflected and sought to influence the organization of society in fifteenth-century Castile. I organize my study around three of the most basic building blocks of society: the individual human being, religion, and the state.

As I have suggested above, the fifteenth century was a time of transformation in Castile. Consequently, the relationship among these three entities was changing as well. The individual was becoming more prominent, foreshadowing what Jenny Meziems calls the “*thrusty individuals*” of the Renaissance (10). Likewise, the role of religion was evolving, as demonstrated by the decrease in religious tolerance that characterized the period. Finally, the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula were evolving politically in a way that would culminate in the union of Castile and Aragon under Fernando and Isabel. One chapter of this study is dedicated to the treatment of each of these subjects in these works. My conclusion is that these texts demonstrate that the desire to contribute to the development of a Spanish nation was paramount to these two authors, and that other concerns were regularly subordinated to this one.

It is, of course, easy to over-simplify these questions. Scholars such as John Jeffries Martin have pointed out that the idea of the Renaissance man of the sort to which Mazciems makes reference, and which was popularized by Jacob Burkhardt in the nineteenth century, is incomplete at best. Thomas Glick and others have warned in recent years against exaggerating the degree to which different religions coexisted harmoniously in medieval Spain. I consider these and similar questions in the respective chapters of this study.

3.2. Organization

Chapter 1 is this Introduction. Chapter 2 deals with the issue of authorship and individuality. It begins with a description of the role of individuals in society and of authors vis-à-vis their texts. I also explain why travel narratives such as the *Embajada* and *Andanças* are particularly well-suited contexts in which to examine this issue. Following this introductory material is an examination of the circumstances of the works' composition. The question of when the texts were actually composed in relation to the voyages they recount receives special consideration. As a natural corollary to this issue, I consider the issue of the identity of the author of the *Embajada*. (Little doubt exists as to who wrote *Andanças é viajes*.)

Closely related to these issues, obviously, is the question of narrative perspective as reflected in the works themselves. I examine the texts carefully for details about how each narrator portrays himself to those around him and to the reader. Each writer clearly works hard to establish the narrative voice as authoritative, although the techniques vary. The *Embajada*, for example, is written primarily in the third person, while the first person singular appears constantly in *Andanças*. In both works, though, I find consistent

emphasis on the supreme importance of individual experience and expression. Such a faith in the relevance of individual human beings as both actors and as authors is, I argue, fundamental to understanding the words and deeds of the explorers and conquerors of subsequent decades.

Chapter 3 deals directly with Clavijo's and Tafur's attitudes towards what in today's scholarly discourse is regularly termed the "Other." The chapter begins with an overview of inter-religious relations in the Peninsula during the Middle Ages in which I suggest that changes in attitudes toward non-Christians stemmed from economic dislocation or other social changes, as after the outbreaks of the plague, more than from religious fervor itself. In these two texts, the issue of non-Catholic religions, both Christian and non-Christian, has been studied in detail by Karen Daly in a recent dissertation, so while I consider it, I also devote attention to the travelers' reactions to differences they observe in more mundane matters such as food and drink, landscapes, cityscapes, and gender roles. The thesis that I seek to prove in this chapter is that while both Clavijo and Tafur were certainly genuine and devout Catholics, their reaction to differences both religious and secular can often be explained by phenomena extrinsic to religious doctrine itself. Often such explanations can be found in a more-or-less conscious desire of Christians to define and establish a culturally and politically unified state in the Peninsula: their religious tolerance often appears to be inversely proportional to the potential threat to their own homeland and culture represented by those differences.

A similar phenomenon can sometimes be observed in the two men's reactions to non-religious differences. Other times their judgment is simply a matter of individual taste. This fact is significant in itself, since once again it emphasizes the significance of

individual experience. The principal conclusion of this chapter is that the authors' attitudes toward questions of diversity tend to be surprisingly mutable depending on the circumstances and on the degree to which people's expression of divergent views has the potential to work against the travelers' interest in other areas. This is, of course, entirely consistent with the idea expressed above that religious tolerance tended throughout the Middle Ages to wax and wane more according to external circumstances than to variations in the actors' innate level of religious fervor.

Chapter 4 addresses the question of Castilian national identity and the ways in which it is reflected in the Embajada and Andanças é viajes. The chapter begins with an overview of the development of national identity over the centuries from the time of the Muslim conquest in A.D. 711. I then demonstrate that both Clavijo and Tafur exhibit a strong consciousness of themselves as Castilians, as Spaniards, and as servants of their monarch. In some cases this identity manifests itself as explicit statements of loyalty to king and country, as when the author of the Embajada exults in the "poderío del dicho e alto e famoso señor Rey de Castilla e de la su grand señoría e franqueza que sobre los reyes cristianos avía" (79). Such statements as this occur regularly in both texts, and I examine them. Arguably, however, many of them are merely formulaic, and thus of limited significance. More important are the ways in which both authors define themselves in relation (and in opposition) to people, institutions, and customs of other states. I conclude that this is a defining feature of the two men's relationship with the world that surrounds them, to a far greater extent even than religious identity. This trait, too, would be shared by Columbus and later explorers, and along with the well-developed sense of individuality that I discuss in Chapter 2, would be an important part of the

intellectual foundation upon which the later travelers would rest their view of the world and their place in it.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion to this study. In it I briefly recap the main points I have sought to demonstrate in earlier chapters. It also includes an examination of these works as precursors to such later travel-related narratives as Columbus's Diario de la primera navegaci3n. This discussion is relatively brief: a full comparison of these works with subsequent chronicles is beyond the scope of this study. Still, I demonstrate that the main characteristics highlighted in the earlier works—an incipient sense of nationalism combined with an increasing interest in personal social or financial gain, and religious zeal often seen as a means to advance these objectives more than as an end in itself—continued to be common traits among Castilian travelers well after the first voyage of Columbus.

4. The Works' Antecedents: Travel Writing

Clavijo and Tafur were not, of course, the first Europeans to travel or to write about traveling. Travel writing had long been an established form of expression, and, while it is difficult to know with certainty which specific works these two authors had read, it is fair to assume that they were aware that they were working within a broader tradition. In the following pages I offer a brief outline of the development of the genre and of recent scholarly approaches to it. As I have indicated, this is a study of the ways these works reflected the world in which they were written and sought to influence how it would evolve in the future. It is not a study of travel writing as a genre. Therefore, I concentrate on a brief outline of how the tradition of writing about travel developed during the centuries before Clavijo and Tafur. I also consider, without offering a

definitive answer, the question of what sorts of writing constitute “travel literature” and review some of the ways in which scholars have attempted to describe and classify works of this sort.

This tradition extends back to well before the time of ancient Greece: Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs point to “one of the very earliest extant stories, composed in Egypt during the Twelfth Dynasty, a thousand years before the Odyssey,” which “tells of a shipwrecked sailor alone on a marvellous island” (2). The Odyssey itself has been called “the very first major text in the European tradition” and “[a]ntiquity’s most famous book of travels” (Elsner 8). During later periods of Antiquity, as travel became easier, the tradition continued to flourish. Elsner and Rubiés point out that during the second century A.D., “the Roman empire enjoyed a period of immense stability, in which the roads were safe and travel was frequent” (9). This stability gave rise to writers on travel of the status of Lucian, whom Elsner and Rubiés describe as “one of the sharpest and most elegant writers in Greek in all Antiquity” (10). According to these critics, Lucian’s work is characterized by a “culture of localism, in which the traveller’s interest is directed to a deep immersion in a particular area” (10). In this sense, the texts of Lucian can be seen to some degree to stand in opposition to such texts as the Odyssey, in that they foreground the places and people supposedly visited rather than concentrating exclusively on the traveller’s experiences as such.

This can be a useful distinction as one attempts to situate works such as the Embajada and Andanças in the tradition of European travel writing: some works emphasize the traveler, while others emphasize the places visited. The Odyssey is in large part the story of its hero’s attempts to return home, while Lucian concentrates on a

sort of geography. As Elsner and Rubiés acknowledge, this is not to suggest that Lucian seeks only or even primarily to convey what a modern reader would view as geographical knowledge: the “geography explored is not just ethnographic or topographical, but also imaginative” (10).

“Imaginative” is perhaps the most significant word in this observation. Certainly Lucian’s writing is not based on what we today would call facts. Nor is it really “ethnographic” in the modern sense of the word: in fact, that these two scholars choose to employ this latter term at all in reference to the work of Lucian is particularly surprising. Rubiés has written elsewhere of the “ethnographic” aspects of travel writing from much later periods, and appears to use the word in a more conventional sense (“Travel Writing”). Indeed, Mezciems, in a study described by Mary Baine Campbell as an “early and widely cited essay” (266), characterizes Lucian’s voyager as “a fictitious purveyor of outrageous fantasy” (3). Mezciems makes a particularly central point in this regard, however, by suggesting that Lucian, even as he composed fantastical texts, nonetheless sought to highlight the difference between reality and fantasy. As she puts it, the function of Lucian’s mendacious traveler is ultimately “a moral one, of ridiculing the credulity of the common reader, of questioning the authority of the written word, and of showing that deception, at a level of art beyond that of the plain-speaking liar, may nevertheless be used to undeceive” (3). The question of verisimilitude—of reality versus fantasy—in travel writing will be of obvious importance in my analysis of the *Embajada* and *Andanças* as social documents. The fact that Mezciems finds this distinction to be a central concern of such an early writer as Lucian highlights the fact that, contrary to

what is sometimes supposed, even early writers and readers of this genre were not indifferent to the question of whether or not the voyages and places described are “real.”

4.1. Classifications of Medieval Travel Writing

Mezciems goes so far as suggest that this distinction can be a useful way of classifying works of travel writing: “a simple polarizing distinction on which to decide whether a travel narrative is intended to be taken as fiction or fact” (3). She emphasizes that it is not her purpose to assert “any chronological progress from a literature of fiction to one of factual reality” (3). Nor do I propose to establish any such neat progression. Yet it is undeniable that most travel writing of the Middle Ages can reasonably be placed at various points on the continuum between “fact” and “fiction,” even if they were not always so regarded at the time of their composition. The two strains coexisted throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, as I will illustrate below with an examination of two of the most important European works of this type.

Before doing so, though, it is useful to consider some of the other ways in which scholars have sought to classify and categorize those works that have traditionally been considered to be part of the corpus of “travel writing.” The term is regularly applied to a strikingly wide variety of texts. If one adopts a very broad definition, any text that describes a voyage, real or imaginary, could be described as travel literature. This approach, however, would place works as disparate as the Diario de la primera navegaci3n, Don Quijote, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and Travels With Charley together under a single rubric. In fact, some scholars have done precisely that: Christopher K. Brown’s 1990 Encyclopedia of Travel Literature includes Christopher

Columbus, Miguel de Cervantes, Mark Twain, and John Steinbeck in its table of contents (v-vi).

During my initial investigation of the genre, observing that some scholars are willing to group such thoroughly disparate texts under a single rubric led me to question whether the term “travel writing” had become almost meaningless. Considering the issue more carefully, however, I realized that the term is both useful and inescapable—the two primary works studied here have long been classified as “travel writing.” Moreover, other scholars have refined the definition of the term and divided the genre according to various characteristics. In so doing, they have rendered the term more meaningful and, not coincidentally, more limited. Even so, it is worth noting that no scholar has provided a foolproof formula for deciding precisely which works should be included under this classification. This ambiguity continues to trouble me somewhat, but this does not mean that such classification is meaningless, just as the fact that the precise point at which a novella becomes a novel does not prevent critics from using both terms profitably. My experience has been similar to that of Hulme and Youngs as they prepared The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. In the introduction to that anthology, these two scholars observe that “we have strengthened our sense that travel writing is best considered as a broad and ever-shifting genre, with a complex history which has yet to be properly studied” (10).

Much progress has been made in recent years, however. Some scholars have specified characteristics that place limits on what sorts of texts can reasonably be called “travel writing.” Michael Harney, in his survey of late medieval travel writers in Spain, points out correctly that “[t]ravel implies the intention of retuning home” (350). He also

affirms that “it is distinct from the literature of navigation, exploration, and conquest” (349), thus suggesting that works such as those by Columbus and those who followed him to the Americas do not fit neatly within this tradition. Harney stipulates as well that “travel literature may be further differentiated from texts that deal with voyages, wanderings, and sojourns in foreign lands as a secondary rather than a central theme” (349). The Portuguese scholar Fernando Cristóvão makes a similar point, drawing a useful distinction between “travel literature” (“literatura de viagens”) and “travel in literature” (“viagem na literatura”) (11). This division allows works such as Don Quijote to be categorized separately from works, such as those studied here, in which the voyages are both the primary motivation and the the main subject of the texts. For Harney, this question also serves to differentiate travel writing from “texts devoted to religious pilgrimage,” which, he writes, “must be regarded as a related but separate category, although accounts of travel to shrines may be considered an informative predecessor and significant contemporary of travel narratives” (349).

Richard published a book-length study on this subject in 1981. Its title is Les récits de voyages et de pèlerinages. The title is significant in that it implicitly recognizes the same point that Harney makes explicitly: narratives of travel and narratives of pilgrimage are not the same thing, but they are sufficiently closely related to justify studying them in a single work. Interestingly, however, Richard does not insist on this distinction in his text. Rather, in a chapter titled “Définition du genre,” he proposes a division of the genre into seven separate categories based primarily on the purposes for which the different voyages were undertaken. While I find his typification somewhat arbitrary, it is worth considering if only to highlight the degree to which the Embajada

and Andanças share characteristics with works in almost all of Richard's categories. The first two he mentions are pilgrims' guides and pilgrims' stories (récits). While Tafur's work is by no means primarily a pilgrimage narrative, the fact remains that one of his destinations was the Holy Land, and he devotes considerable attention to his time there and the religious sites he visited. Moreover, Tafur regularly offers his reader implicit advice about such practical issues as the procedure for hiring guides.

Richards' third category is "récits de croisades et d'expéditions lointaines." I doubt the logic of including stories of crusaders and other voyages under the same rubric based simply on the fact that all involve travel over great distances. Richard offers as an example an "Histoire de la première découverte et conquête des Canaries" from the beginning of the fifteenth century (25). Still, the fact that both Clavijo and Tafur undertook very long voyages, venturing far beyond the borders of their homeland, is undeniably a salient feature of their texts.

Richards' fourth category comprises works by ambassadors and missionaries. Again, even if one wishes to categorize texts based on the purposes of the travel they describe, the role of an ambassador (to gather information) and that of a missionary (to convert people to one's religion) are very different. Here again, however, one of the texts I study here (the Embajada) fits neatly into this category, and Richard mentions it in his work (29).

The fifth type of travel narrative posited by Richard include those texts written by "[l]es explorateurs et les aventuriers". Here Richard concentrates on the text of Marco Polo, but he also mentions (albeit in passing) the work of Pero Tafur (33). Andanças also shares some characteristics with works in Richards' sixth category, "[l]es guides de

marchands,” given Tafur’s obvious knowledge of and interest in the trading practices of his day.

The last type of travel narrated studied by Richard is that of imaginary voyages. His primary example of a text of this type is the work of John Mandeville, which, he notes correctly, was long regarded as “la narration d’un périple véritable, celui d’un chevalier anglais que, après le pèlerinage de Jérusalem, aurait poursuivi sa route à travers les pays musulmans, l’Inde, la Chine mongole” (Richard 35). I discuss this text below as a touchstone work of its genre.

Harney places two additional significant restrictions what sorts of texts are eligible for classification as travel literature. He asserts that it “departs, at least to a degree, from the medieval tradition of fanciful or speculative geography that characterizes Prester John’s Letter, The Travels of Sir John of Mandeville (circa 1350), or the later-fifteenth-century Libro del Infante don Pedro” (349). In this, Harney agrees with the implicit opinion of a much earlier student of the genre. Hulme and Youngs report that the “English editor of early travellers, Richard Hakluyt, argued for a history of travel which relied on the testimony of travellers themselves: in other words he looked mostly to eyewitness accounts” (3). I agree that this distinction is an important one, but I also believe that, at least in the case of a text such as that of Mandeville, the difference is not so great as to render meaningless comparisons between it and other, more specifically travel-oriented texts from the period. This willingness to stretch generic boundaries is, I believe, almost unavoidable when studying this type of writing. Nor is the practice a new one: again according to Hulme and Youngs, even Hakluyt’s “practice was inconsistent

since in the second edition of his *Principal Navigations* (1598-1600) Mandeville was excluded as false but the Arthurian legends remained” (3).

4.2. Two Touchstone Texts

As Harney observes, the pilgrimage narrative can be considered a precursor to travel writing as such. It was certainly especially prominent during the earlier centuries of the Middle Ages. Even in the fourth century A.D., writers from the Iberian Peninsula were composing narratives of pilgrimage: Elsner and Rubiés point to the case of Egeria, “a noblewoman from Spain, whose account of her pilgrimage to Palestine in the AD 380s is one of the most vivid to survive from any period” (17). Egeria was also typical in that pilgrimages to the Holy Land were among the most likely to be recorded by travelers. Donald R. Howard that the number of narratives describing pilgrimages to such European sites as Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela, and Rome over the Middle Ages is relatively small. He speculates that such destinations may have been “too familiar to deserve written accounts” (16-17). On the other hand, “of the Jerusalem pilgrimage there is a vast literature—between 1100 and 1500 some 526 accounts were written that have survived” (17).

Despite the continued prevalence of pilgrimage narratives during the later Middle Ages, another sort of traveler—one whose writings would more closely approximate Harney’s definition of the genre of travel writing—would emerge during those years. J. E. Ruiz-Domènec specifies the middle of the twelfth century as the time when a new, more secular form of writing began to gain currency in Europe (89). Ruiz-Domènec uses the term “*errancia*” to describe this modality of travel, which he defines as “*salir de casa, buscar fuera lo que no se tiene, confiar en la amistad del resto del grupo, insistir en el*

honor personal, aceptar el destino que el amor impone” (89). This “errancia,” however, need not be undertaken by an actual historical figure: the primary example offered by Ruiz-Domènec is that of Chrétien de Troyes, who based his writings in part on “para ellos antiguos relatos de la cultura céltica” (91). Moreover, the inclusion of this roman in a discussion of travel writing also shows just how broadly some scholars have defined the genre.

Be that as it may, Ruiz-Domènec’s study is undeniably correct in noting the emergence of an increased interest in travelers and records of travel, real or imaginary, that were not motivated only by explicitly religious considerations. During the following two centuries assorted works of this type would circulate in Europe. Two of these, one from the thirteenth century and one from the fourteenth, are undoubtedly the best-known of their type and their age. Therefore, they deserve consideration here. The first of these, Marco Polo’s Milione is, arguably, the archetypical medieval European travel narrative. The second, The Travels of Sir John of Mandeville, while far less known to non-specialists than Marco Polo’s work, nonetheless circulated widely in fourteenth-century Europe, and was both widely read and widely translated. These texts, while obviously different in many ways, are frequently mentioned together by scholars. In the words of Hulme and Youngs, they “mark the beginnings of a new impulse in the late Middle Ages which would transform the traditional paradigms of pilgrimage and crusade into new forms attentive to observed experience and curiosity towards other lifeways” (3). They are fundamental to an understanding the social and literary context of the Embajada and Andanças. Consequently, I describe them briefly and point out some of their most salient characteristics for the purposes of this study in the following pages.

Marco Polo was born in Venice in approximately 1254, to what has traditionally been described as a family of merchants, although Leonardo Olschki questions the characterization of the Polos as “merchants” (97-101). Even so, Ronald Latham, in the Introduction to his translation of the Milione, writes that Marco’s father and uncle, Niccolò and Maffeo Polo, “set sail from Constantinople for the Crimean port of Sudak” in what Latham describes as a “normal commercial undertaking” (Polo 12). While the two brothers were transacting business in Central Asia, they found the land route home obstructed by conquests by Michael Palaeologus, whom John Larner calls “the most powerful enemy of the Venetians,” and by other conflicts (33-34). They ultimately remained in Central Asia for some three years, meeting the Great Khan Khubilai (Larner 34). When they finally managed to return to Venice, as related in the Milione, “Messer Niccolò learnt that his wife was dead, and there was left to him a son of fifteen, whose name was Marco. This was the Marco of whom this book speaks. So Messer Niccolò and Messer Maffeo stayed at Venice about two years” (37-38).

At this point the two brothers decided to return to the court of the Great Khan. This time they were accompanied by the seventeen-year-old Marco. They eventually met him at Kemenfu. The voyage was not easy: as the Milione reports, “they were hard put to complete the journey in three and a half years” (39). Marco was apparently a curious and bright traveler: the text reports that he soon “acquired a remarkable knowledge of the customs of the Tartars and of their languages and letters” (40). Marco soon won the trust of the Great Khan, and was entrusted with a variety of diplomatic missions ranging as far as India (Larner 41) and according to Latham, “perhaps as far as Burma” (Polo 15). He was a careful observer, and had a reason for paying close attention to what he saw: as the

Milione indicates, “he paid close attention to all the novelties and curiosities that came his way, so that he might retail [sic] them to the Great Khan” (41).

Some seventeen years after their arrival at the court of the Great Khan, the Polos received his reluctant permission to return home. As the Milione indicates, “they set out on their journey and rode by daily stages till they reached Trebizond. From Trebizond they sailed to Constantinople, thence to Negropont, and from Negropont to Venice. This was in the year of the Incarnation of Christ 1295” (45).

The story of how the Milione was composed is of particular interest here. Marco Polo himself, despite his impressive linguistic abilities, lacked the necessary education to compose the work himself. As J. K. Hyde observes, Polo “had, after all, left Venice in 1269 at sixteen, when Venetian was far from an established literary language, and while in the East he must have conversed with such Westerners as he met in a mixture of romance dialects” (“Journeys” 129). Fortunately (for his future readers if not for him), he was captured during a battle between Venice and Genoa. As Margaret Wade Labarge puts it, “[w]hile in prison in 1298 he dictated to a fellow prisoner with some reputation as a poet the tales which had beguiled their captivity” (4). This fellow prisoner was an author of stories named Rustichello. Little is known about him. He was of course literate, but Larner notes that “no trace of legal or academic culture appears in his work” (47). Yet he was far more than a mere scribe or secretary. Many of the more fantastical passages in the Milione are attributed to Rustichello. His contributions have not always been appreciated: Hyde writes that Polo’s own observations “stand out through the fog of Rustichello’s verbiage” (“Journeys” 129). This same scholar, however, adds that “Rustichello not only wrote the book, but did so in such a form as to ensure that it was

widely read and copied” (“Journeys” 129). Larner describes him as Polo’s “co-author” (46). Thus the Milione was composed jointly by the traveler and by someone who had not accompanied him. In this, Polo’s and Rustichello’s work differs markedly from both the Embajada and Andanças. I return briefly to this issue in my chapter on authorship and individuality.

For now I would like to make note of two other features of the Milione that are of particular relevance when the work is compared with the Embajada and Andanças. The first is that many of Polo’s journeys were to places that had rarely if ever been visited by Europeans. Perhaps as a consequence of this fact, descriptions of the places and people that Polo visited receive far more attention than the personal details of his travels. Olschki speaks of the work’s “abundance of ethnographic details and a variety of correct, concrete information” (133). Larner goes so far as to say that, while “[n]ever before or since has one man given such an immense body of new geographical knowledge to the West” (97), “this is not a book of ‘travels’ in the conventional sense” (96). I do, of course, consider the Milione to be a work of travel writing, but in this respect, it could nonetheless be said more closely to resemble a narrative of discovery than the two travel narratives that form the basis of this study.

Finally, Polo’s attitudes toward his homeland and toward religion are both profoundly different from those manifested in the works of Clavijo and Tafur. Although Olschki highlights his “intention of conferring upon his journey the character of a religious mission” (178), Larner argues (correctly, in my view) that “the idea of Marco as missionary seems impossible to sustain” (74). As Hyde observes, by the end of his journey, “Marco’s outlook had become remarkably secular” (“Journeys” 130). He does

devote considerable attention to the issue of religious difference, but his intentions, as with other aspects of the work, seem almost ethnographic. As Olschki puts it, Polo seeks to provide “a denominational topography of the Orient” (178). Lerner notes that while “he defines people by their religion, this is in a purely sectarian spirit,” and that he never quotes from the Christian scriptures” (74). As I demonstrate in a later chapter of this study, the same cannot be said of Clavijo or Tafur. Although I will argue that a relatively high degree of religious tolerance is an important characteristic of these texts, differences of faith and doctrine—and comparisons with the authors’ own faiths—are matters of constant interest to the Castilians.

Labarge makes note of the popularity of both the Milione and of Mandeville’s Travels, “one mainly true, one mainly fabulous” (3). This difference, while important, need not be viewed as an obstacle to a discussion of the two works: as she acknowledges, “to make the distinction between the ‘truth’ of Marco Polo and the ‘fiction’ of Mandeville is easier done with the benefit of several centuries’ hindsight” (5). Certainly the two works were read by many of the same people for many of the same reasons. Hulme and Youngs, among others, refer to the two writers together in their comment that Columbus was “deeply influenced by both Mandeville and Marco Polo” (3). Indeed, despite the very different origins of these two texts, their authors shared a surprising number of objectives.

Elsner and Rubiés date Mandeville’s Travels to approximately 1356, and reflect the generally-held opinion today that Mandeville was a “purely fictional traveller, and invention devised to render a compilation of pre-existing travel accounts more coherent and convincing” (37). Therefore, the specific information related in the Travels is

perhaps of less interest here than the way in which the author chooses to portray himself and to organize that information. As Howard states, the author “chose to maintain the stance, largely and perhaps wholly a fiction, of an eyewitness who reports from memory” (59). The identity of the eyewitness is set forth at the beginning of the work: “I, John Mandeville, knight, although I am unworthy, who was born in England in the town of St Albans and passed the sea the year of Our Lord Jesu Christ 1332, on Michaelmas Day, and since have been a long time overseas, and have seen and gone through many kingdoms, lands, provinces and isles” (44). The author then proceeds to list the places he claims to have visited, including, among others, Turkey, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Chaldea, Ethiopia, Amazonia, and India (44). He states that he writes especially “for those who desire and intend to visit the holy city of Jerusalem and the holy places that are thereabout” (45).

This text is only vaguely organized around any specific voyage, whether real or imaginary. When the narrator himself appears, it is typically not to describe the details of his own voyage. On occasion he seeks to assert his authority by emphasizing that he himself has visited a given place, as when he enters a mosque: “I went in, and in other places where I would” (80). When he speaks of travel per se, however, he regularly refers to the practices of “men” in general: “From this island of Rhodes men pass across to the isle of Cyprus” (55). This approach is logical, given that the author’s real objective was not so much to tell the tale of a traveler as to provide what Howard describes as “a summa of travel lore which combined the authority of learned books and guidebooks with the eyewitness manner of pilgrim and travel writers” (58). At times even the book’s geography is made subservient to this larger objective: as C. W. R. D. Moseley describes

it, the text's geography provides "a basic structuring for the material against a landscape" (Mandeville 14). Obviously, the approach of Clavijo and of Tafur is very different, and considerably more in line with that of Marco Polo.

One other aspect of Mandeville's Travels, however, is reflected in the later, Castilian works. Its author sought not just to entertain but to inform. Further, even beyond the geographical and ethnographic information that he compiles and organizes for the benefit of his reader, his writing, as Elsner and Rubiés note, is "geared towards moral self-reflection and cosmographical re-centering" (39). This notion that the act of reading could serve just not to entertain or to inform but to help the reader better understand himself and his relationship to the external world would not have been the in the least alien to Clavijo and Tafur. Tafur, especially, believed this, and his text reflects his belief. I return to this idea in the following chapter, in which I consider the ways in which Clavijo and Tafur establish the authority as individuals and authors that both men would employ to comment on and influence the institutions of their society.

Chapter 2: The Evolving Role of the Author

Writing (and reading) are among the more complex forms of human communication. Individuals compose texts for an infinite number of reasons, and the ways in which they conceive of their texts are similarly varied. Generally, though, writers practice their craft with the implicit or explicit intent of having their texts read by others, and of influencing their readers in some way. This influence need not be directed toward any specific end: some writers seek to change the political or social attitudes of their audience in specific ways, while others may seek merely to inform or to amuse. Regardless of the specific objectives, the notion that writers expect their readers to be changed in some way, however modest, through the experience of reading is impossible to deny.

Further, writers can typically expect that their texts will be read by more than one person and in some cases by many people, some of whom may be remote in space or in time. Writing, therefore, can be a powerful tool for an individual who seeks to influence society. Indeed, if a writer's work is read, and if readers contemplate it, he or she will influence society in some way, whether intentionally or not. Such influence, it should be noted, need not necessarily be political in nature. Even so, given that the central thesis of my study is that the writers of the Embajada a Tamorlán and Andanças é viajes consciously seek to advance the cause of Castilian national identity, the question of the nature of the writers' influence, how they themselves perceived that influence, and how it has changed over time is clearly relevant here. The purpose of this chapter is to address that issue.

1. Individuals, Writers, and Readers in the Fifteenth Century

If, as I believe, these two texts demonstrate a particularly acute awareness of the ability of an individual human being to affect the dominant thinking of an age through the representation of individual experience, it is logical to begin with a brief examination of the idea of individuality as it was understood during the years leading up to the Renaissance. As a corollary, I note briefly the ways in which Castilian authors increasingly expressed what might be called intellectual ownership of their own texts through the centuries between the first literary texts in Spanish and the fifteenth century. Having established that the idea of a stronger, more confident individual identity vis-à-vis society at large did in fact gain currency as Europe approached the Renaissance, and that writers could and often did show an increasing awareness of the value of their own works, I then consider how the evolution of attitudes toward writing and reading, and travel writing specifically, provided a sphere of action for such individuals. I then dedicate the bulk of this chapter to the ways in which these broader currents make themselves manifest in the two texts studied here. As part of this effort, I describe the motivations for the voyages that inspired the composition of these works. I also examine the specific circumstances under which they were written and, in the case of the Embajada, review previous studies relating to authorship.

1.1. Was the Renaissance Individual a Myth?

The idea that the European Renaissance was characterized in part by a marked change in the status of individuals with respect to their social environments has long been a commonplace in historical and literary scholarship on the period. What was for many decades the most widely-shared understanding of the nature of this change was set forth

in 1860 by the Swiss scholar Jacob Burckhardt in his text, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: An Essay, which, Martin writes, “has become and remains one of the genuinely seminal works of history written in modern times” (4). In this work, which has been reprinted regularly during the many years since its initial publication, Burckhardt places special emphasis on the revival of interest in Classical Antiquity during the years leading up to the Renaissance and on the ways in which the individual came to occupy a more prominent place in society during that period. While Burckhardt’s ideas have been convincingly challenged in recent years, the extent of his influence has been such that a brief summary of his argument is relevant here.

Burckhardt writes that during the Middle Ages, human consciousness “lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues” (80). Burckhardt’s language seems jarring today: most medievalists would no doubt argue that the European Middle Ages produced many fully-realized individuals who created works of art, literature, and architecture that deserve to be counted as among the most impressive of European civilization. Also, Burckhardt’s conception of the Renaissance is, as Martin observes, considerably influenced by Romanticism: the Romantics “connected the dissolution of their own society with the breakup of the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance emerged as a natural candidate for the site of the emergence of individualism” (10). Certainly Burckhardt’s choice of imagery in the above quotation is Romantic, and revealing: the typical Romantic painter would certainly find a world whose brilliant colors were reduced to “hues” seen through a veil far less appealing than one full of brilliant undiluted colors.

Yet if Burckhardt's view of the limitations of the Middle Ages is difficult to sustain today, I believe that his characterization of the relation of the individual to society, while no doubt exaggerated, contains a substantial measure of truth. He writes that "[m]an was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation—only through some general category" (80; also qtd. in Martin 4-5). I would not argue that individuals during the fifteenth century and beyond were necessarily less defined by their associations into larger social groups than were people of earlier times. I do, however, believe that the nature of those associations changed considerably during the later Middle Ages, and that the texts of Clavijo and Tafur reflect this fact. One can, after all, submit (willingly or unwillingly) to the temporal authority of a monarch or to the spiritual authority of a church while retaining a greater or lesser degree of confidence in one's own ability to negotiate the terms of the relationship and even to influence the future direction of the institution.

One could under certain circumstances accomplish this in a very direct way. The most striking example is that of Columbus as he negotiated with the Catholic Monarchs about his proposed voyages to the Americas. As his writings demonstrate consistently, this Genoese of relatively modest birth had sufficient confidence in his own ability to act autonomously that he consistently addressed the Monarchs not, perhaps as an equal, but certainly as an individual with his own social and economic agenda to further. He desired, among other things, worldly recognition and financial gain. To achieve the first, he pressed Fernando and Isabel to grant him titles. In pursuit of the second, he emphasized (and repeated, as if to confirm) the financial rights that he was to be awarded if the voyages were successful. In this admittedly extreme case, an individual, while not

denying the authority of the state, nonetheless demonstrated a clear awareness that he had his own interests and objectives that would be advanced by influencing the behavior of the Monarchs.

Columbus, of course, was not a typical individual, of his own time or any other. Perhaps a less exceptional example is that of Paolo Veronese, a Venetian painter from the following century. As Martin relates his story, Paolo painted a version of the Last Supper, which he titled as such and which included various non-biblical figures. In 1573, he was called before the Inquisition and, as Martin explains, “was asked to explain why he has depicted figures in the painting who were not mentioned in the Bible,” in contravention of a recent Church decree (1). The painter defended himself, but was subsequently ordered to change the painting. Instead, he simply changed the name of the work to The Feast in the House of Levi (Martin 3). Martin, upon reading the defense for the first time, “saw Paolo as a strong, willful individual, prepared to defend his own point of view, his craft, and his discretion before the Inquisition” (3).

Upon considering the matter further, however, Martin concludes that the case of Paolo Veronese is not that of a Renaissance individual of the sort described by Burckhardt. Paolo was, rather, a victim of “largely impersonal forces much greater than himself: the wealth and tastes of his patrons; the cultural climate of Venice in a particular decade; the authority and expectations of the Church” (3). Martin takes the story of Paolo as illustrative of the situation of a Renaissance individual who, rather than being more free to act according to his own desires than someone from previous centuries, is sharply constrained by the authority of the collective. I believe that this event can also be interpreted in a slightly different way. Martin seems, at least in this passage, to define

“Renaissance individualism” as active defiance of the will of a larger group such as the Church. One thinks, for example, of such a figure as Galileo. From my perspective, however, the emergence of a more assertive individual need not be in actual opposition to the collective, but may consist simply of a redefinition of the relationship in a way that allows the individual a more independent voice and a greater measure of freedom of action. In this sense, Paolo Veronese was actually successful, at least to a considerable extent. It is safe to assume that the most important issue to a painter is what appears on his or her canvas. By allowing the title of his painting to be changed, Paolo reached an accommodation with the authorities that allowed the substance of his work of art to remain as he had originally conceived it. His painting was not itself censored: Paolo’s artistic voice was not silenced. This fact, far from showing that the idea of Renaissance individualism is a myth, can easily be interpreted as an example of such individualism in practice. To my mind, it implies an adjustment of the relationship of human beings with their world, not necessarily a state of rebellion against authority. This distinction is important for my study, especially in the case of the Embajada. After all, Clavijo and his men travelled as agents of their king, and the resulting text was at least in part a diplomatic document. Nonetheless, as I demonstrate below, it shows its author to be a strong, confident, independent individual who attaches as much importance to his own experiences as to affairs of state.

1.2. The Emergence of the Author

Just as a painter such as Paolo Veronese communicates through the images he creates, authors of literary texts do so by means of the words they set down on the page. If, as I argue, writers such as Clavijo and Tafur reflect a redefinition of the relationship

between the individual and society, it is necessary to consider the ways in which medieval authors sought to represent themselves and express their individualism through the act of writing. In a way the question is a more complicated one for writers than for visual artists such as Paolo Veronese. While paintings could of course be copied and modified by artists other than original creators, and they could most certainly be subject to very different interpretations, authors of medieval literature had to deal with the fact their works could much more easily be modified and even appropriated by other writers. This is certainly true of popular genres such as the Romancero, but even in the case of such works as the Poema de mío Cid, the author's identity remain mysterious. For writers such as Clavijo and Tafur, whose subject was in large measure their own experiences and even emotions, assuring that their verbal self-portraits were not modified beyond recognition would necessarily have been a particular concern. In fact, attitudes toward literary creation and originality—in particular, the authority of authors over their own texts—had become well-established during the previous century. As I demonstrate in the following pages, several canonical texts from the fourteenth century make it clear that authors could and did identify themselves in their texts and assert some degree of what might be termed “ownership” of their creations.

As it happens, this same issue was one of the central preoccupations of literary scholarship during the latter part of the twentieth century. While making such comparisons across such a long period of time can be problematic, the parallels are both striking and useful. The idea that texts, once committed to paper, exist independently from their authors—that authors essentially relinquish any sort of “ownership” of their texts at the moment that someone begins to read them—would have been profoundly

troubling to a Renaissance author who sought to portray himself in a certain way. Yet this very notion gained wide acceptance during the twentieth century. For proponents of the American New Criticism, this notion was part of the effort to view the text as largely independent of its historical and social context. As early as 1946, W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley argued that a poem, once written, “is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it” (335). To assume otherwise, and in particular to look to authors’ intentions as a guide to textual interpretation, is to commit “the intentional fallacy.” The influence of the New Critics would wane over time, but this particular aspect of their thought would continue to be influential. By the 1960s, the French post-structuralist Roland Barthes would speak in an influential essay, evocatively titled “The Death of the Author,” of “the Author diminishing like a figurine at the far end of the literary stage” (169). More recently, the advent of the word processor and the Internet have made texts infinitely more mutable in the most literal sense of the term: people who possess a copy of a text in electronic form are able, at least if they are willing to ignore legal and ethical issues, to appropriate, modify, and adapt an author’s work for their own purposes.

In medieval Spain, the situation was in some respects the opposite. Both the identity of the author or authors of many of the earliest extant texts and the circumstances of their composition are in many cases a mystery to us. In some cases, of course, this can be explained by the passage of time and by the paucity of documentary evidence. In the cases of many other texts, however, the reasons for this mystery are far more complex. A considerable part of medieval Spanish literature is anonymous by its very nature. The Romancero is an obvious example. Even in those early vernacular texts in which an

author does identify himself, the mention is often fleeting. Gonzalo de Berceo, for example, mentions his name only briefly: “Yo maestro Gonzalo de Verceo nomnado” (69). By the fourteenth century, however, authors would regularly be identifying themselves in much more detail. They would also often emphasize the degree to which they wished to maintain control over their own texts.

This fact is evident, for example, in the Libro de los enxiemplos del Conde Lucanor e de Patronio and in Juan Manuel’s famous prologue, whose first words clarify any potential issues relating to authorship: “Este libro fizo don Johan, fijo del muy noble infante don Manuel [. . .]” (69). Later in the prologue, still conscious of his role as author, he exhorts readers to withhold any adverse judgment of his work until they have confirmed that what they are reading is in fact what Juan Manuel wrote. When this author places original copies of his works for public examination at the “monesterio de los fraires predicadores que él fizo en Peñafiel” (70), he is taking a precaution which has surprising parallels to the registration of a copyright today. Clearly the author or authors of the Poema de mio Cid had no such concerns. In addition, the author of Conde Lucanor actually makes explicit reference to himself and to his role in compiling the work at the end of each episode. A typical case is the following: “entendiendo don Johan que éste era muy buen enxiemplo, fízolo poner en este libro [. . .]” (235). Juan Manuel not only wants his name to be known; he wants readers to be aware of exactly what his role was in the development of the text.

The Libro de buen amor, nearly contemporaneous with Conde Lucanor, appears at first glance to contradict this tendency toward authorial self-identification: as the Mexican scholar Amancio Bolaño e Isla reminds us, we know nothing of Juan Ruiz,

Arcipreste de Hita, other than “unos cuantos nombres, fechas y topónimos” to which the Arcipreste makes glancing reference in his work (Ruiz ix). Moreover, the ambiguous nature of this purportedly autobiographical work is legendary. Scholars have debated endlessly the degree to which the adventures recounted in the Libro de buen amor may be depictions of actual events in the author’s life as well as his intentions in composing this enigmatic work.

A more thoughtful consideration of this work, however, leads to the conclusion that, far from reverting to a lack of concern for establishing the identity and authority of the author, Juan Ruiz has in fact carried the treatment of this issue to a new level of sophistication, recognizing that the reader will naturally seek to learn about the author through his work. He takes advantage of this fact and carries it to an extreme: the famously ambiguous nature of the Libro de buen amor and its status as more-or-less fictionalized autobiography can hardly be considered accidental, and this attempt at manipulating the reader’s vision of the author’s identity could only be successful in a cultural environment in which discovering this identity is an activity of fundamental interest to readers. This ludic approach to the issue of authorship and verisimilitude does not suggest a lack of awareness of or interest in the question; rather, it serves to emphasize the degree to which such issues were seen as relevant. Such a conscious attempt to frustrate the reader’s attempts at getting at the author through his work can be successful only to the degree that such attempts actually take place.

This apparent contradiction between the Arcipreste’s acute consciousness of his role as author and his apparent expectation that the reader will consider his identity to be a matter worthy of consideration on the one hand and his willingness to use this fact to

make his text more ambiguous (and, presumably, more interesting) on the other is also apparent at the end of the work. Readers, according to Juan Ruiz, need not compare the text they are reading with an authorized original. Rather, they are free not just to interpret the text freely but also to change it:

Qualquier ome, que l' oya, sy bien trobar sopiere,
Puede mas añedir e enmendar si quisiere.
Ande de mano en mano: qualquier que lo pediere.
Come pella las dueñas, tómelo quien podiere. (354)

The contrast between this attitude and that of Juan Manuel is obvious. Yet in some respects both men are responding to the idea that an author's works belong to that author, and that an author has some right to decide what sorts of uses may be made of his texts. Juan Manuel is more possessive; Juan Ruiz gives the reader permission to add and amend. Both, however, believe that their status gives them the right to make that decision, and both consider the issue to be important enough to merit explicit consideration in their texts. During the later Middle Ages authors of works as diverse as Conde Lucanor and the Libro de buen amor were sufficiently conscious of themselves as literary creators to identify themselves as such and intentionally to manipulate the reader's perception of their role.

The Libro de buen amor was composed during the fourth decade of the fourteenth century: Bolaño e Isla gives the date as 1330 (Ruiz xvi). Some 30 years later, another Castilian would be born who would compose a single text that is of particular interest for any discussion of "the emerging author." Leonor López de Córdoba was born, according to Alan Deyermond, "in December 1362 or January 1363" ("Women"

31). Her life, as recorded in her Memorias, was in many respects not a particularly happy one: Deyermond calls her “a helpless and bewildered victim of high politics in a violent and treacherous age” (“Women” 31)¹. Her work is of particular interest here for two reasons. In the first place, she identifies herself strongly and clearly as author from the beginning of her text: “Sepan quantos esta Esscriptura vieren, como yo Doña Leonor Lopez de Cordoba, fija de mi Señor el Maestre Don Martin Lopez de Cordoba, é Doña Sancha Carrillo” (Ayerbe-Chaux 16). There is little room for doubt as to the author of this text, or as to her desire that her readers know her identity. This is especially striking given that she is one of the very few women writers of medieval Spain whose name is known to us. Perhaps because she was a woman, and thus much less free to act and write independently than her male contemporaries, her desire to establish her authorial identity and authority was especially intense. Moreover, a substantial part of her text is devoted to the description of her lineage and her relationship with assorted political and literary figures, including Juan Manuel (Ayerbe-Chaux 17).

In the second place, her Memorias are a fascinating combination of the very personal and the frankly political. The personal aspect is obvious: so much so, in fact, that even as she is at pains to identify herself, she also devotes considerable attention to political events such as the siege of Carmona, which, as Deyermond explains, occurred in 1371 as a consequence of the murder of Pedro I of Castile in 1369 (“Women” 31) and in which her own father participated.

¹ Deyermond’s language here may seem a bit sexist. In fairness to him, it should be pointed out that he was the one of the first modern Hispanists to draw attention to her work and to that of other early women writers: in an article published in 1977, Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux notes that in the case of her Memorias, “ha sido Alan Deyermond quien en los últimos años les ha hecho justicia” (11).

Like Juan Manuel and Juan Ruiz, López de Córdoba is very much aware of the fact that a literary text can be composed in such a way that the identity, personality, and experiences of an author form an integral part of it. In different ways, all three of these authors seek to assert their own individuality through their writings. While I do not claim that this ambition was a new phenomenon in the fourteenth century, I do believe that, as this brief examination of three representative texts of the period demonstrates, writers during the later Middle Ages emphasized this fact in ways that earlier writers often did not. This trend would be even more apparent in the Embajada and Andanças. López de Córdoba wrote under vastly different circumstances and about very different subjects from those covered by Clavijo and Tafur. Yet she wrote at about the same time as Clavijo, and her works show that she, too, is much concerned about establishing her own identity and about describing events that she experienced personally but that at the same time were of broader political significance. This fact suggests that these issues were not limited to the circumstances of particular individuals, but rather were more generally shared concerns of the time in which she lived and wrote.

1.3. Travel Reading

In the preceding pages I have argued that the importance of the individual in society did in fact increase with the approach of the Renaissance, even if it did not necessarily manifest itself as open opposition to established institutions. I have also demonstrated that by the fourteenth century, authors were increasingly conscious of the potential of the written word to fashion and project their own identities as individuals. This latter point, however, would be of limited significance had there not existed a substantial potential readership to whom these ideas could be communicated. In addition,

such a public would need to be receptive to the texts and comfortable with the concept of reading as a way to rethink one's own place in the world.

These circumstances did in fact exist by the time of Clavijo and Tafur. As Deyermond observes, the number of literary prose works to have survived from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is far greater than from previous centuries (Edad Media 238). While acknowledging that this fact may be due in part to the possibility that a greater percentage of earlier works may have been lost, he suggests that the primary reason for this increase is that more works were in fact produced. Deyermond also notes that increased literacy must have sparked a demand for new texts, and cites the greater emphasis on education on the part of the Church (Edad Media 239). The propagation of texts was also facilitated by the wide use of paper by the end of the thirteenth century, and by reading glasses, which “ya eran de uso común a mediados del siglo XIV” (Deyermond Edad Media 239). J. N. Hillgarth make note of the impressive libraries accumulated by some nobles in the Peninsula during the early and middle years of the fifteenth century (49-50), a development perhaps not unrelated to increased literacy and easier methods of production. It is also worth noting that literacy in the vernacular had become common among a broader segment of the population: as Hyde indicates, many merchants joined the ranks of the literate during the thirteenth century, as an increasing amount of business was conducted in writing (Literacy 116).

Thus by the beginning of the fifteenth century, a variety of circumstances were in place that would facilitate the production, dissemination, and reading of secular Castilian prose such as the Embajada and Andanças. The remaining question relates to the attitudes with which potential readers would approach such texts. To understand those

attitudes, it is necessary to consider the role that reading would have played in the intellectual and spiritual life of an educated European during the later Middle Ages.

One of the most prominent scholars to address this issue in recent years has been Brian Stock. In 1996, Stock published a study of the work of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 A.D. – 430 A.D.) which he titled Augustine the Reader. In this work, Stock examines the ideas and practices of Augustine with regard to reading. In the *Confessions*, Stock argues, Augustine provides an example of how reading can be a path to self-improvement in light of the fact that “men and women are ceaselessly engaged in mimetic interplay with the persons that they want to be. People make the lives and the worlds that they wish to live in, using as their means of construction the only tools at their disposal, words and images” (Augustine 35). Not surprisingly, reading and contemplating what has been read play a central role in this process. For Stock, Augustine’s objective in reading is not explicitly didactic, but rather “a better understanding of the self and its relationship to God” (Augustine 243). One can define the self in relation to God through reading the scriptures, but one can also learn from non-divine texts such as Augustine’s own, in which, as Stock puts it, a reader can “learn from his errors” (Augustine 35).

In 2001, Stock extended his analysis to include the following centuries. After Augustine is a brief but dense study of how attitudes toward reading evolved through the Middle Ages. Here Stock considers the ways in which writing came increasingly to be seen as a means of self-representation. Moreover, the very concept of what Stock calls “an independent self” underwent a change: “emphasis is placed on the organization of behavior in relation to the subject’s thoughts, feelings, or actions, rather than to those of

others” (After Augustine 50). For Stock, this phenomenon developed fully during the twelfth century, in part because of “the spread of a literate mentality among large numbers of clergy and laypersons” (After Augustine 59). Toward the end of the Middle Ages, Stock argues, “a revival of contemplative reading techniques took place” along with an increase in silent, individual reading (After Augustine 22) (22).

One such technique that is of particular interest to Stock is that of lectio spiritualis. The notion is complex: Stock admits that his own summary of it is “rather schematic” (After Augustine 108). In the most basic terms, however, it consists of reading (probably silently) as part of an exercise in “self-exploration on the part of the subject as an aspect of his or her spiritual progress” (106). Stock quotes a late description of the practice that is of special interest here: “the activity in which we open and read mystical books or spiritual treatises. In this activity we seek not only information concerning spiritual matters but preferably in addition their flavor and emotional content” (After Augustine 107).

It is important not to exaggerate the degree to which Stock’s analysis of medieval reading practices can be neatly applied to the Embajada and to Andanças. Stock concentrates on the reading of sacred or at least spiritual texts, and the works of Clavijo and of Tafur are, for their time, notably secular in content. Yet it is striking—and significant—that Stock describes the increasing importance of writing as a form of self-description, of reading as a way more fully to know oneself, and of the “emotional content” of texts. Each of these phenomena is present in abundance in the two texts studied here, as I demonstrate in the following sections.

2. On His Majesty's Service: Clavijo and the Embajada a Tamorlán

The texts studied here, despite obvious similarities in form and structure, differ from one another in many ways. At the most fundamental level, however, they have at least one thing in common: both of the texts as they exist today form a detailed record of a specific voyage that began and ended hundreds of years ago in Castile. Each of the voyages was an actual historical event (certainly in the case of Clavijo, and very probably in the case of Tafur). Both texts were written, at least in their original forms, by one or more of the individuals who participated in the voyage described. Both of the authors state explicitly their reasons for producing a written record of their experiences. Also, unfortunately but not surprisingly given the number of centuries that have passed since their composition, the two texts both have a long and convoluted manuscript history, which Daly summarizes in her study (26-27). The works were, however, composed for very different reasons under very different historical and individual circumstances. It is my objective in the remainder of this chapter to focus on the reasons for the texts' composition, the circumstances and manner in which they were written, and the authors' conception of their role both as creators and as actors in their own texts.

In the case of the Embajada a Tamorlán, this examination focuses on three issues. The first of these is the historical and political circumstances which led King Enrique III to send a group of ambassadors on a long and perilous journey and to receive from them a detailed account of the voyage. This voyage—and the work describing it—were motivated by specific circumstances. The author or authors were acting not in their own right but as agents of the Crown. Even so, the Embajada contains intensely personal passages, some of which describe in vivid detail the experiences and emotions of the

voyagers even as the text conveys the information that the travelers were sent to gather. Moreover, these two facets of the text are woven together surprisingly closely. The second issue is the question of how and when the Embajada was composed and by whom, and, in particular, what conclusions can be drawn from a careful examination of the text itself. The following section considers the implications of the author or authors' portrayal of themselves. I argue that the fact that the embassy was motivated essentially by external circumstances is reflected in the relatively impersonal, detached way in which the possible authors portray themselves in the work while still conveying to the reader an impression of how it felt to be a member of the embassy.

2.1. A Direct Response to a Specific Threat

I have described the political situation faced by Enrique III of Castile at the time of the Embajada in the introduction to this study. If the papal schism was the most troubling foreign policy concern for European rulers of Enrique's day, events in the East, and in particular what O'Callaghan calls the "threat of the Ottoman Turks to eastern Europe" ran a close second (540). It had, in fact, already had a measurable impact on the foreign policy of the states of Europe: as Carlos Montojo Jiménez notes in his 2004 study, Ottoman successes in eastern Europe had already effectively put a stop to the Crusades (115). Enrique III, along with his fellow European monarchs, had ample cause for concern.

Enrique was able to hear a description of the battle between Bayazid and Timur from two men who had witnessed it at first hand. As Lucien Kehren points out in the introduction to his French translation of the work, for reasons which are not entirely clear (58), Enrique had fortuitously sent two ambassadors to the court of Timur. Upon their

return to Castile, in the company of an ambassador from Timur to the Spanish monarch, they told Enrique what they had seen. Encouraged by friendly words from Timur's emissary, and no doubt impressed by his ambassadors' descriptions of the Mongol leader's military prowess, the Castilian king promptly decided to send another mission to the Mongol court.

The leader of this expedition was Ruy González de Clavijo, and the record of his voyage is the first of the principal texts studied here. As the above paragraphs demonstrate, it is a text whose origins are eminently political in nature. It is above all a report on the political and social situation in an area about which Castilians had good reason to be concerned. It is not, primarily, a record of one man's experiences or his reactions to them. It was written, rather, to fulfill a need to "poner en escrito todos los lugares e tierras por do los dichos embaxadores fueren e cosas que les ende acaescieren, por que no cayan en olvido e mejor e más verdaderamente se puedan contar e saber" (79). This subordination of the individual to what in modern political parlance might be called "intelligence gathering" is a characteristic of the text throughout and is reflected in the work's composition. The role of the author or authors has been to record and to compile more than to create.

Yet despite the fact that there is never any doubt that what matters is more what was seen than the people who saw it, a wide range of very human emotion is reflected in certain passages of the text. In this chapter I concentrate on the author's identity and on the rhetorical techniques he employs to convey a strong, confident, authoritative voice while communicating information about the places and people visited. In this, the author of the Embajada demonstrates one way in which this text anticipates the Renaissance.

As Rubiés observes in his article on travel writing and ethnography, “it may be possible to generalize that the desire for information, for mainly practical purposes, lies beyond the growth of the European genre of non-fictional travel writing throughout the Renaissance” (243). Certainly passages containing information predominate in this work. Nonetheless, the presence of several passages of obviously “emotional content” deserve to be noted. Not surprisingly, given the nature of the ambassadors’ voyage, many of them describe the perils of travel by sea. One example is this portrayal of a galley nearly lost during a storm:

E en la galeota yazía mucha agua, tanto que por escotar que fazían, estaban ya en punto de se anegar. E en esto duraron fasta el alva, e el viento se cambió e fue bueno para ir faza la Turquía. E volvieron el antena e, al volver, avía muy pocos que ayudasen, que los más d’ellos estaban más cerca de la muerte que de la vida; e que si la muerte veniera, que la sentieran muy poco” (153).

The immediacy of this passage is striking. In addition to the vivid image of sailors so mistreated by the elements that death would almost be a relief, the use of nautical terminology (galeota, escotar, antena) emphasizes implicitly that the voyage described is not an imaginary one. The information about the weather and the time of day (a change in the prevailing wind that took place at dawn) has a similar effect, as does the mention of their location. Yet this immediacy, far from distracting from the author’s broader objectives, actually makes him more credible in the eyes of the reader. He and his companions are real, vulnerable human beings. I believe that such passages as this

one, although not typical of the Embajada, actually serve to reinforce the author's authority.

2.2. Clavjio and his Men: The Possibility of Collective Authorship

As is often the case with literary works from the Middle Ages, the question of who wrote the Embajada is a vexing one. Ruy González de Clavijo's name has appeared as author on every printed edition of the work, but in recent years this assumption has increasingly been called into question, most notably by Francisco López Estrada, who argues convincingly that the work must have been the product of some sort of collaboration. The question of the authorship of the Embajada thus remains an open one, and I make no claim to have resolved it. I can, however, offer a review of the debate, some informed speculation about the process by which the text was composed, and a discussion of the implications of this process for the larger questions addressed in this study.

Given the lack of documentary evidence, perhaps the most reasonable way to consider the question of the work's authorship is to imagine a continuum of possible scenarios for the work's composition. At one extreme of such a continuum would be the idea that the text, in roughly the form that it now exists, was written by one individual (presumably Clavijo) concurrently with the events described therein. At the other extreme one could imagine that the work as we have it was composed at some considerable distance in time and place from the events described by one or more individuals who may not even have been a member of the expedition. (In theory, of course, one could go even further and posit that the Embajada is a work of fiction, the story of people who never existed and events which never took place. However, the

extra-textual evidence of Clavijo and his men having lived and of the voyage having taken place, while less detailed than one might hope, is more than sufficient to allow this possibility to be dismissed out of hand.) Given such a continuum, the best one can do is to attempt to narrow the range of possibilities.

The first possibility mentioned above—that the Embajada was written during the voyage—would not immediately be seen as implausible by a reader who casually picked up a copy of a modern edition today. If such a reader opened the book to a random page—and this example was chosen in exactly that way—he or she might learn that

Domingo, que fueron veinte nueve días de julio, a ora de tercia fueron en par de una isla despoblada que es llamada Cequilo; e son unas altas sierras do crían falcones. E la dicha carraca quiso pasar entre esta dicha isla e una roca alta que estava a par d'ella; e en aquel derecho avía gran corriente que los echava a tierra; e cuando quisieron doblar, no pudieron tomar la vuelta tan aína que la dicha carraca no pasó tan cerca de la tierra que unos falcones pequeños que criavan en una peña, sonavan. (95)

In this short passage the reader is informed of the date (July 29, 1403, which according to the Julian calendar in use at the time, was indeed a Sunday), the time of day (the third hour after sunrise, or about 9:00 a.m.), and the precise geographical location of the travelers (off the coast of Cerigo, also known as Kíthera, off the southern coast of Greece).² The reader is also informed of the type of boat (a carrack), geographical features (high mountains and rocks), and maritime conditions (strong currents). Finally,

² It may or may not be of interest that, according to the web page of the Greek Ministry of Tourism, “the name of the island become [sic] a movie too by the title ‘Travelling to Kythera’ and a beautiful song ‘We never reach Kythera’” (“Kythera”).

and perhaps most strikingly, the text includes not just visual images but auditory ones as well (the cries of small falcons).

This level of detail, along with the fact that the geographical data supplied throughout the work is consistently accurate and verifiable, proves conclusively that, the Embajada was not the product of an author or authors working solely from memory after the ambassadors' return to Spain. Clearly, one or more of the participants in the voyage kept a detailed, written, contemporaneous record of what the ambassadors saw and experienced. Indeed, the author says as much in his introduction: “comencé a escribir desde el día que los embaxadores llegaron al puerto de Santa María, cerca de Cáliz” (80).

If, however, one reads the entire text, it becomes equally clear that while such a day-to-day log of the journey must certainly have at some point existed, the text of the Embajada as we have it today is most certainly not itself that record. As Patricia E. Mason correctly points out, there are a number of indications that the account was organized and edited, presumably after the ambassadors' return to Spain in May 1406. Mason bases this comment on “references to events that occurred [sic] after the dates when certain entries were made, and the use of anticipatory formulae (segund adelante oyredes, segund adelante vos será contado, etc.)” (79).

I completely agree with this conclusion; however, it means that the question of authorship becomes even more complicated. Indeed, instead of one question, now there are three: Which of the ambassadors kept the daily log upon which the current text clearly appears to be based? Who transformed that log into the current text? Was it the same person? And finally, how extensive were the redactions made by that person?

It is, of course, possible to say with certainty that the person (or persons) who wrote the original document were participants in the voyage. Therefore, in the following paragraphs I offer a brief description of those men and what is known about each of them. At the beginning of the Embajada, the author writes that King Enrique III chose as his ambassadors “frey Alfonso Páez de Santa María, maestro en Tehología, fraire de la orden de los predicadores, e a Ruy Gonçal’s de Clavijo, cu criado, e a Gómez de Salazar, su guarda” (79). These three men were the leaders of the group, and it seems logical to assume that one or more of them were the main writers of the day-to-day record of the voyage. In addition, Mohamad Alcagi, the emissary whom Timur had sent to the Castilian king, "el dicho enbaxador mahomad" made the voyage with the group (80). These principals were accompanied by a number of others: in a footnote to his most recent edition of the work, López Estrada concludes that the expedition in its entirety numbers some fourteen men, not including Alcagi ("Introducción y notas" 217). Based on information from the text and on López Estrada’s comments, one can enumerate the following list of the initial members of the expedition:

1. González de Clavijo and his two squires
2. Páez de Santa María and one squire
3. Gómez de Salazar and one squire
4. Alcagi
5. Seven unnamed men who would remain in Teheran because of illness rather than continuing to Samarkand.

Approximately fifteen men, therefore, set sail from Puerto de Santa María. Of these, only about ten would return alive. Two of the seven men who stayed behind at

Teheran would die before the ambassadors passed through that city on their return voyage. Alcagi, naturally, remained at Timur's court in Samarkand. Gómez de Salazar died on Saturday, July 26, 1404, in Neyshabur ("Nixaor" in the text), in the region of Khurasan in what is now northeastern Iran. His decline is mentioned—rather movingly—at several points in the preceding pages. "[M]uy doliente" (226), he is at first left behind in a nearby village, but is later found "tan flaco, que non se podía tener" (227). The men carry him to the city, where "quiso Dios e ovo de finar aquí el dicho Gomes" (227). Likewise, "un omne de fray Alfonso Paes, que iva doliente," would die near Darbant in late August (245). It is not entirely clear whether this is the squire mentioned previously.

It is conceivable that Gómez de Salazar could have been involved in the composition of the early parts of the work. An examination of the text, however, argues strongly against this scenario. His death thus took place slightly before the midpoint (in terms of time) of the journey, and it is related slightly after the midpoint of the text. There is no obvious change in tone, style or substance of the narration after the death of Gómez de Salazar. Therefore, it seems safe to assume that he was not the person who maintained the day-to-day record of the voyage, and he obviously had no role in preparation of the completed text of the Embajada.

Similarly, it is reasonable to assume that the person or persons who bore primary responsibility for recording the day-to-day experiences of the ambassadors were not among the seven men who remained in Teheran and never visited Samarkand. Again, the style of the final text is consistent, and arguably some of the most detailed and striking passages of the work are those describing Timur's capital and the activities at his court, as for example the moment when the ambassadors first meet Timur, "estava asentado en

unos como almadragues pequeños de paños de seda broslados; e estava asentado de codo sobre unas almoadas redondas, e tenía vestidos una ropa de un paño de seda raso, sin labores; e en la cabeça tenía un sombrero blanco, alto, con un balax encima, e con aljófar e piedras” (259). There can be little doubt that the person who wrote a passage such as that must have been present at the scene.

If this is the case, we are left with Clavijo, Páez, Alcagi, and the squires as possible diarists. It is not possible categorically to exclude the squires from involvement in writing this initial document, but such participation seems very unlikely, largely because of their position. In addition, none of the squires is ever mentioned by name, and their very presence is only alluded to occasionally.

The case of Mohamad Alcagi is more interesting. López Estrada devotes considerable attention to the possible contributions of this “cavallero chatrax” (“Introducción y notas” 79) who accompanied the group during the outbound portion of their journey. He was a member of Timur’s court, and therefore no doubt part of the ruling class of the Ulus Chagatay, the confederation of tribes which Timur led. His native language would thus have been a dialect of Turkic, since as Forbes Manz writes, this had been the language of the elite since the change from Mongolian during the twelfth century (x). He had obviously learned Spanish as well, perhaps as a consequence of his dealings with the previous Spanish ambassadors to Timur, Payo Gómez de Sotomayor and Hernán Sánchez de Palazuelos, since he was able to communicate with the other travelers without difficulty. He would have been a Muslim. In fact, it is likely that he was an observant Muslim with substantial knowledge of the tenets of his faith, since López Estrada quotes an Arabic-speaking scholar who suggests that the name

Alcagi could well be the designation for an individual who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca which Muslims are called on to perform once if circumstances permit. Moreover, López Estrada lists several linguistic and cultural items from the Embajada that he quite logically assumes came from Alcagi.

Mohamed Alcagi, then, would have been in a position to explain or clarify any number of issues for the Europeans, especially questions of religion, the political situation at Samarkand, and language. While of course he did not return to Castile with the ambassadors and thus could not have been involved in the preparation of the final document, there is nothing to exclude the possibility that he might have made substantial contributions to the daily record of the journey. In this regard it is interesting to note that the text of the Embajada is almost entirely concerned with the outbound journey: in López Estrada's most recent edition, more than 240 pages as opposed to 32. In theory this disparity could be due in part to the absence of Alcagi's contributions to the daily record of the return journey. It is difficult to imagine, however, that his involvement could have been so extensive. Furthermore, however helpful his knowledge may have been to the ambassadors, I feel sure that he was not involved in maintaining the written record of the voyage. There are two obvious reasons for this. The first is that even though he clearly spoke Spanish, it is simply not plausible to assume that he would have been able to write in that language with sufficient ease to play a significant role in making a written record of the voyage.

The second reason for discounting Alcagi's possible role as diarist is even more elementary: simply stated, it would simply not have made sense for a group of Castilian ambassadors to have entrusted the task of keeping a record of their experiences to a

member of the court to which the embassy was directed. Rather, I believe that Alcagi's role was that of a primary source of information. In this he was not qualitatively different from any number of other individuals with whom the ambassadors had contact. Not surprisingly, there were many such people. They included ships' masters, such as "micer Julián Cinturio, patrón de la carraca" in which the ambassadors departed Cádiz (81) and "un genués que avía nombre micer Lunardo Gentil," who would take them from Rhodes to the small island of Chios (101). An enormous portion of the text is dedicated to a summary of the actual process of travel, and much of the nautical and geographical information included must almost certainly have come from these men and from others who played similar roles. Similarly, the ambassadors were in regular contact with other commercial and diplomatic travelers. Again, many if not all of these figures may have contributed information that would eventually appear in the Embajada. Like Alcagi, however, they were clearly not the authors of the daily record nor of the final text.

It is safe to assume, then, that either Páez or Clavijo bore primary responsibility for recording the day-to-day activities of the ambassadors. This fact does not, of course, exclude the possibility that others may have (and almost certainly did) contribute information to the original narrative. Similarly, it is very likely that the task of assembling these notes into the text that we have today fell to one of these two men. It is not possible to exclude the possibility that the preparation of the final document may have been undertaken by an unknown third party—perhaps even someone who was not a participant in the voyage. This scenario, however, seems unlikely, since the level of detail included in the text and the manner in which navigational, political, and cultural information are combined in the Embajada suggest a level of familiarity with the travel

and the experiences described that would be difficult for a third party to achieve no matter how detailed and extensive the original record of the embassy. Further, no other names have been associated with the work, and at this temporal distance it would be irresponsible to suggest other authors in the absence of some sort of documentary evidence. Therefore, I limit my analysis of the authorship issue to Páez and Clavijo. What little is known about the two men is summarized in the following paragraphs.

In the case of Fray Alfonso Páez de Santa María, such a summary is of necessity very brief: almost nothing is known about him beyond the information contained in the text of the Embajada. As noted above, he was a Master of Theology and member of the “orden de los predicadores” (79). One can reasonably suppose, as does López Estrada, that he was the most highly educated member of the group (“Procedimientos” 140). In addition to being versed in the history, language, and theology of his own faith, he would have had some knowledge of other branches of Christianity. López Estrada also suggests that of all the ambassadors he would be the one most likely to speak languages other than Spanish and to be knowledgeable about classical and contemporary literature (“Procedimientos” 139). All these statements are certainly plausible, but they are for the most part difficult if not impossible to prove. Clearly, this is not much information upon which to base a study of his possible participation in the composition of the work. This is particularly unfortunate, because López Estrada argues forcefully that Páez de Santa María played a pivotal role in the composition of the Embajada.

Marginally more information is available about the expedition’s leader than about its other members. Clavijo, described at the beginning of the text as a “criado” of Enrique III (“Introducción y notas” 79), is mentioned briefly in a variety of

documentation relating to the members of Enrique III's court. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478-1557), who toward the end of his life wrote a wide-ranging, digressive memoir known as the Quinquagenas, mentions Clavijo and his embassy (314). However, Fernández de Oviedo, just as many generations of scholars after him, seems to rely almost exclusively on the text of the Embajada for his information and thus offers little additional data.

Almost nothing is known about Clavijo's life before the embassy. Neither López Estrada nor anyone else indicates when he was born, although Fernández de Oviedo, as López Estrada notes, does affirm that he was a native of Madrid (Estudio lxvii). He does appear in 1389, some fifteen years before the beginning of the embassy, involved in diplomatic duties in the court (López Estrada Estudio lxvi), but apart from these brief glimpses, our record of Clavijo's life seems to begin with the embassy. As López Estrada observes, it is as if "la notoriedad que le dio su gran viaje hubiera puesto en la sombra las otras circunstancias de su vida" (López Estrada Estudio lxv).

It is known that Clavijo was married. There exists a poem, written in the style of a cantiga de amigo and published by Alfred Morel-Fatio during the nineteenth century. The poem, in the voice of Clavijo's wife, Mayor Arias, laments his absence during the voyage and expresses her fears for his safety, as in this passage:

El mi amor querido
en el mi corazón,
de mí bien servido
con grand devoçión,
de aquí es partido

non sé para dó;
non sé tu traición
si ronpió la tela. (Pérez Prego 43-44)

This poem is obviously appealing, and it has received attention in its own right, notably from Whetnall and from Dorothy Sherman Severin, both of whom have published studies of it. In addition, it is followed by a shorter poem, judged by Severin to have been written in “a much more conventional style,” in which Clavijo praises his wife and asks his friends to care for her in his absence: “Meus amigos, toda ora, / quantos me queredes ben, / confortad a mi señora” (Pérez Prego 48).

These poems are of historical and aesthetic interest, but unfortunately, they contribute little toward the goals of this study. Their authorship is uncertain: as Miguel Ángel Pérez Prego notes of the first poem, “es imposible saber si fue ella quien lo escribió o si, como indica la rúbrica, es un ‘dezir’ compuesto por el propio mensajero [Clavijo]” (49). Severin thinks not, suggesting that the works were in fact written by Mayor Arias (558-59). Whether he wrote either or both of these poems, their existence does serve to emphasize that Clavijo was familiar with the world of letters. In this sense these poems would tend to make the possibility that he could have been the primary author of the Embajada more rather than less plausible.

After his return from Central Asia, Clavijo spent his remaining years at court and died on April 2, 1412. Curiously, more seems to be known about the disposition of his body after his death than about his activities while living. After his death Clavijo's remains were interred in the Cathedral of San Fernando el Grande in what is now central Madrid. However, as Argote de Molina reports having observed personally in his

introduction to the first printed edition of the work, the remains were moved twice, once in 1573 and again in 1580, to other locations within the cathedral. According to Argote, Clavijo's final resting-place was "arrimado a la pared, junto al Púlpito" (López Estrada Estudio 261). Unfortunately, at some point during the periodic renovations of the cathedral, the location of Clavijo's tomb was lost, and today there is no sign of it there.

Which of these two men—Páez or Clavijo—wrote the Embajada a Tamorlán? Tradition argues for Ruy González de Clavijo: his name appears as author on every printed edition and translation of the work that I have examined, beginning with that of Argote de Molina in 1582. I view this as the most likely scenario, if only because I believe that, in the absence of clear documentary evidence to the contrary, it is dangerous to disregard the opinions of scholars and publishers whose lives were far less remote from Clavijo's time than we are.

López Estrada, however, makes a forceful argument in his most recent edition of the work for the participation of Páez. In addition to the reasons listed above (knowledge of Christian and non-Christian religious practices, language skills, knowledge of classical mythology, and general cultural background), López Estrada points out that "en el prólogo de la misma obra el primer nombrado de entre los embajadores es fray Alfonso Páez de Santa María" (37). In addition, he approvingly quotes Sebastián Cirac Estupiñán, "quien hizo notar la limpieza y sobriedad que se ponen de manifiesto en la obra, propias de un fraile" (38).

Although this last assertion strikes me as rather doubtful (Juan Ruiz and his Libro de buen amor are a striking counterexample), I am in general agreement with López Estrada's conclusions as he expresses them in the introduction to this edition of the work.

As he states, “Fray Alfonso Páez de Santa María puede ser, pues, otro candidato para la autoría de la obra o, al menos, para que esta sea algo más que un estricto documento cancilleresco” (38). The narrative sophistication of the Embajada goes well beyond what is typical of political documents and chronicles of the time, and it seems entirely likely that Páez was heavily involved in the gathering and recording of the information upon which the work is based.

Interestingly, however, López Estrada appears in these comments to retreat somewhat from his assertion in an earlier study that Páez’s involvement must necessarily have extended to being a co-author of the work. In that earlier analysis, López Estrada makes essentially the same argument for Páez’s involvement, but then argues that the Embajada must have been a product of collective authorship. He concludes that “es difícil de entender que el autor de la obra fuera uno solo de los viajeros” (López Estrada “Procedimientos” 145). I do not accept this assertion. Certainly, as described above, many people, from Clavijo and Páez to López to anonymous sailors and merchants, contributed information that eventually became part of the Embajada. Páez’s contributions were quite likely among the most substantial. Given the stylistic uniformity of the text, however, I am convinced that the work as it exists today came from the pen of one person.

This fact raises the question of whether it is meaningful to speak of that individual as the “author” of a work which so obviously draws heavily from myriad sources. For two reasons, I believe that it is. First, as described earlier in this chapter, the notion of authorship and individuality were very different in medieval Spain from those prevalent today. As Diego Catalán observes, “[e]l autor medieval, incluso en los libros donde se

exhibe más orgulloso de su arte, se siente eslabón en la cadena de transmisión de conocimientos y se considera a sí mismo, ante todo, como un portador de cultura” (247). While Catalán is referring primarily to more canonical works as the Libro de buen amor and more broadly to the Peninsula’s oral literary tradition, it would be difficult to find a better description than this of the role of the individual who turned a travel diary into the work that we know as the Embajada a Tamorlán. Writers such as Juan Ruiz or Juan Manuel who obviously relied heavily on other sources are universally acknowledged as “authors” of their respective texts. Therefore, it seems only fair to me to recognize the person who produced the text of the Embajada as its author.

In the second place, that person’s contribution was substantial, going far beyond editing and re-ordering the original journal of the voyage. In the same study in which he argues for the possibility of collective authorship, López Estrada discerns in the work three narrative planes (roughly, the itinerary, descriptions of places, and political information about Timur’s rule). While it is certainly reasonable to believe that the original log of the journey contained information of all three types, it is hard to imagine that they could have been so seamlessly integrated by a diarist writing under difficult conditions after long days of travel. Consider a passage such as the following, which recounts the ambassadors’ arrival in “Solugat Xuraza,” a desert locale between Trebezond and Samarkand:

Sávado sigiente, que fueron nueve días de agosto, fueron comer en un grand lugar que ha nombre Solugat Xuraza; e este lugar era de un grand caxiz, que dizen ellos commo prelado. E estava en un valle acerca de un

río, e por el lugar pasavan muchas acequias de agua, e estava bien poblado, e el valle, lleno de huertos e de viñas bien hermosas.

E este caxix, señor d'este lugar, era ya finado, e dexara tres fijos pequeños. E el Tamurbeque pasara por aquel lugar podía aver diez días, e dizen que tomara aquellos fijos de aquel caxix, y que los fiziera levar consigo para les fazer criar, por quanto su padre era omne de buen linaje.
(236)

If a few words, the author manages to include specific information about the voyage (the date) and a description of the place (in a valley near a river). He also gives information about the political situation (a prelate who had recently died) as well as information about that prelate's relationship with Timur. In other words, this short passage contains elements of all three of the narrative planes identified by López Estrada, sometimes integrated within the same sentence. The contributions of the person who produced such a text based on a travel journal were substantial.

The question, then, is whether that person is Clavijo or Páez. It is impossible to say, but if pressed, I would tentatively argue that Clavijo was the author both of the travel journal and of the final version of the Embajada. It seems logical to me that the person in charge of keeping the journal would have been the one to compose the definitive record of the embassy, if only because the person who was best qualified for one task would presumably have been best qualified for the other. That person may have been Páez, but the evidence is insufficient to disregard the traditional attribution of the work to Clavijo. The argument that the text reflects the knowledge of a religious scholar is inadequate. Even if Páez had been the source of much of the information, Clavijo, as leader of the

expedition, would have wanted to be informed in the greatest possible detail of the cultural and political background as the voyage progressed. Having been so informed, he could easily have included that information in his journal. Having kept such a journal throughout the voyage, Clavijo could easily have concluded that he was the most logical person to convert that text into the definitive record of the embassy. The idea that Páez, simply because of his status as a cleric, would necessarily have been more capable than Clavijo of producing such a sophisticated text is unconvincing. Clavijo, after all, was a member of a family that included individuals of considerable literary accomplishment. All of this could change, of course, with the discovery of additional evidence. An autograph manuscript would be ideal, but even other texts written by Clavijo or Páez could provide an enormously useful basis for comparison. Until such documents are produced, however, it will be my belief that Ruy González de Clavijo is the author of the Embajada a Tamorlán. More important, I will remain firmly convinced that the text is the work of a single author.

2.3. Self-Reference and Individuality

The preceding discussion of the authorship of the Embajada a Tamorlán ignores one potentially important stylistic feature of the work: the near-absence of the first person. I have not addressed this issue earlier because, as explained below, I do not believe that it offers reliable evidence about the nature of the work's composition. The lack of first person verbs and pronouns is, however, of considerable significance with regard to the broader question of the natures of authorial authority as it is wielded in this work.

The question of self-reference and authorship with regard to the Embajada is not a new one: in the first of his several editions of the work, López Estrada approvingly quotes Marcos Jiménez de la Espada, who, writing in the late nineteenth century, affirmed that

Ruy González, lejos de referir por su cuenta o por la de él y sus compañeros de embajada las cosas que ve o en que interviene—lo que no comprendo por qué no había de hacerlo cuanto tanto le honraba mostrarse a las claras cronista de su propia empresa—deja que otro las cuente, y habla unas veces de todos los embajadores, y varias de él en particular, en tercera persona [. . .] (Estudio ccxlv)

As López Estrada observes, “la lectura del texto provoca algún confusionismo” (López Estrada Estudio ccxlv). He acknowledges, however, that the evidence is insufficient to conclude that this narrative technique is anything more than “una costumbre de época” (López Estrada Estudio ccxlv).

I am inclined to agree, at least with regard to the question of authorship. The infrequency of first-person references does suggest, of course, the possibility that the final version of the text might have been redacted by someone who was not a participant in the voyage. As discussed in a previous section, however, I am convinced that the degree of geographic, temporal, and historical detail makes this exceedingly unlikely if not impossible. In the case of the most likely candidate other than Clavijo—Páez—this narrative style would be neither more nor less odd than in the case of Clavijo himself, since both men are regularly referred to in the third person.

It is also worth remembering that for an author to write about himself in the third person is far from an unusual practice and occurs across many genres. As Mason points out, Julius Caesar, “Xenophon, Thucydides, and Villehardouin all wrote accounts of their travels/military campaigns in the third person” (81). Many centuries later and in another genre, Juan Ruiz would do the same, referring constantly to “el Arcipreste” in the Libro de buen amor. Nor has the practice disappeared today. Mason mentions Charles de Gaulle, who wrote regularly of himself in the third person (81). Of course, counter-examples abound as well: de Gaulle’s wartime colleague and occasional nemesis Winston S. Churchill constantly employed the first person in his historical writings.

Mason concludes that while evidence of this type cannot definitively establish Clavijo as the author of the work, “the use of both first and third person forms of self-reference in the Embajada cannot be used to rule out this possibility” (81). In other words, the third-person style of the Embajada has no obvious bearing on the question of authorship. Nonetheless, the fact that the author chose this approach among the different ones available to him seems to me to be too significant to have been a matter of chance.

I believe that there are two likely explanations, one intrinsic to the text and the other related to the author’s perception of his relationship to the events described and to potential readers. In his study of narrative procedure in the work, López Estrada emphasizes the first: that the general avoidance of the first person in the text allows it to be used to establish a clear narrative voice distinct from the other voices in the text (López Estrada “Procedimientos”). As Mason points out, in the relatively few cases where the first-person singular appears in the work, it occurs as the subject of a small number of verbs which can be grouped into two subsets on the basis of their meaning”

(82). The first such group of verbs consists, for Mason, of those “that relate to the process of narration and composition (escribir, contar, fazer relación, dezir)” (82). The second group is made up of words “of thinking/believing: (‘tener que’ [used in the sense of “believe”], ‘creer’ and ‘cuidar’)” (82). Thus the “yo” of the Embajada, on those rare occasions when it appears, refers to a narrator who, as López Estrada puts it, “se encarga de escribir” (“Procedimientos” 138). This technique, although applied sparingly, is undeniably useful in uniting the disparate elements of the text into a coherent whole. It also allows the narrator to justify, in a voice separate from that of the other participants, aspects of the work that otherwise might seem inconsistent or even careless to the reader. One obvious example would be the extreme brevity of the record of the return journey from Samarkand to Alcalá de Henares. The casual reader might be tempted to suppose that this apparent unbalance is simply a result of lack of information or even of fatigue on the part of the record-keeper. The narrator, however, is able to explain: “[N]o vos escribo largamente de las cosas d’este camino, salvo de ciudat en ciudat, porque a la ida fize relación de todo largamente” (325-26). In this and other instances, it would have been awkward for Clavijo the voyager to abandon abruptly his ambassadorial role and to address the reader directly in the second person to explain his editing decisions. The establishment of a separate “narrator’s” voice fulfills a necessary role and thus justifies the distinction between narrator and protagonist without implying that the two voices actually belong to two different individuals.

The second possible explanation for the avoidance of the first person in the Embajada relates to the question of authorship and authority, and as such, is of special interest in this study. Both words (as well as their Spanish equivalents “autor” and

“autoría”) come from the Latin “auctor,” which one Latin dictionary defines both as “originator, causer, doer” and as “source of or warrant for a piece of information.” An author who lacked authority, then, would be a sort of etymological contradiction in terms, especially in the case of a narrative such as the Embajada. Merely having been the composer of a text, however, is not in itself a sufficient basis upon which to claim knowledge or authority. Convincing the reader that one is in fact qualified to speak knowledgeably about a subject is an inevitable concern for a writer. Writing in the third person may be one way to achieve that goal. While, as Mason observes, use of the third person in, for example, a religious autobiography might well be interpreted by the reader as a (genuine) “sign of the author’s modesty,” it is more likely to be used in a work such as this as a means to impute to the text a sense of “objectivity and detachment” (82). This argument, of course, is bolstered by the above list of authors who have employed this technique: neither Caesar nor De Gaulle was known for undue modesty.

Yet this explanation seems incomplete. To assume that the author of the Embajada chose to avoid the first person as a way subtly to establish his individual identity and emphasize his own importance would fit badly with the overall tenor of the work. Furthermore, if such was in fact the case, the author failed badly in his task: it is at least in part because of that very decision that his identity is now in doubt: he could have saved many generations of literary scholars countless pages of speculation by inserting the phrase “yo, Ruy González de Clavijo” into the text occasionally. Rather, the author chose to write in the third person because doing so enabled him to realize two of his primary objectives. Mason quotes Jean Starobinski, for whom “the objective presentation of the protagonist in the third person . . . works to the benefit of the event,

and only secondarily reflects back upon the personality of the protagonist the glitter of actions in which he has been involved” (81). These words describe the Embajada very well. Its author did in fact seek “objectivity and detachment,” not for the purpose of self-aggrandizement but to emphasize both the veracity of the information he conveyed and the importance of the journey as a political event. What ultimately mattered to the author was not the fact that he had realized an extraordinary voyage but rather the simple fact that such a trek, “ardua e a lueñas tierras,” had been undertaken successfully at all. Indeed, this narrative technique helps not only to emphasize the primordial importance of the events themselves but also to ensure that any reflected glory falls not upon the participants but upon the man to whom the ambassadors reported immediately upon their return to Alcalá de Henares and who is the last person mentioned in the text of the Embajada: “[el] dicho Señor Rey de Castilla” (357). Both the subject matter and the narrative structure of this work, then, emphasize the events and their sponsor. When Tafur set sail from Spain some 33 years later, his priorities would be very different, and his attitudes toward authorship and authority would change correspondingly. Castile was changing, as well. The remainder of this chapter is a description of that evolution.

3. The Independent Traveler: Primacy of the “Yo”

Timur, as noted above, died in 1405, while Clavijo and his party were still in Asia. His long and extraordinary reign would have lasting consequences: Runciman asserts that his attack on the Ottoman Turks “had prevented an immediate attack on Constantinople by the Sultan, and it preserved Byzantium for another half-century” (464). He did not, however, succeed in establishing a dynasty, and his empire would fragment quickly in the years after his death. In addition, the Mongol threat against the

Ottomans only delayed the fall of Byzantium, which occurred in 1453. Runciman attributes this result largely to Timur's relative lack of political skills, comparing him unfavorably in this regard to Chinggis Khan (464).

The Castilian kings were in no position to take advantage of this disorder: by midcentury, the political and social situation in Spain was itself notably unstable. The idea that Spain would soon develop into a unified nation and major imperial power might well have seemed less farfetched in Clavijo's day than a few decades later. O'Callaghan writes that "[d]iscord and confusion in the government came to an end" when Enrique III assumed personal power in 1393 (536). Jackson notes that this monarch had some success in asserting royal power over the nobility (133-34). And, of course, Castile under Enrique III was a sufficiently important presence internationally for the king to send personal emissaries as far afield as Samarkand and for them to be received there as representatives of an important European state. The rule of Enrique's successor, Juan II, had the virtue of length. In terms of political and economic success, however, Juan II's performance was at best uneven. Jackson calls him "an intelligent, but not a vigorous man" (134). This lack of vigor, and perhaps also a lack of appetite for power, led Juan to rely heavily on Álvaro de Luna. The influence of this figure over the monarch appears to have been near-total: O'Callaghan writes of his "complete ascendancy over the king's mind and will" (553). There were conflicts with neighboring kingdoms: according to Vicens Vives, "nunca fue el nombre de Aragón tan odiado por los nobles castellanos como en época de Juan II de Castilla" (Aproximación 108). There were economic problems as well: as Hillgarth succinctly puts it, "Juan II's finances were shaky, his armed forces inadequate" (306). Álvaro de Luna eventually fell out of favor and was

executed in 1453. Juan II himself died the following year. Despite the problems mentioned above, historians have been divided—and certainly not uniformly negative—in assessing his reign. Still, it is hard to imagine those years as a logical stepping stone along the path to national unity and imperial power. His son, who as Enrique IV would reign from 1454 until 1474, was even less successful. A weaker, less active figure even than his father, he received the nickname “el Impotente.” He was also the victim of numerous harsh, *ad hominem* attacks. He was rumored in some circles to be homosexual (Jackson 134), and anonymous poets ridiculed him in such works as the Coplas del Provincial and the Coplas de Mingo Revulgo.

This troubled, disunited society was the milieu in which Pero Tafur would live, travel, and write. Like Clavijo, Tafur was a proud Spaniard and a loyal subject of his monarch. Given the circumstances of the time, though, such loyalty inevitably made itself manifest in a very different way than was the case with Clavijo. More broadly, there was an undeniable evolution in the attitudes of the Peninsula’s residents toward their own role as subjects of the monarch and as individual members of society. As I have demonstrated, in the case of the Embajada a Tamorlán, the ambassadors willingly undertook a difficult political mission. In the document describing their voyage, there is an evident attempt to minimize the importance of individual participants and to focus almost exclusively on events and information. This apparent subordination of the individual is illustrated in particular by the avoidance of the first person.

The case of Pero Tafur is in many respects the polar opposite. The author of the Embajada a Tamorlán consciously avoided revealing his identity. In the case of the Andanças é viajes, however, there has never been any debate about the fact that the

author was an Andalusian named Pero Tafur. Indeed, the only extant manuscript of the work begins with a note that the prologue was “compuesto por Pero Tafur sobre el tratado que escribió de sus andanças é viajes, por diversas partes del mundo avidos” (1). The contrast is also apparent—and striking—in the first sentence of Tafur’s narrative:

Fezimos vela é salimos del puerto de Barrameda; é yo yva en una nao de Gallicia, por quanto yo estava ya aparejado para mi partida é non tenía cavallos nin las cosas neçesarias para acompañarlo por la tierra. (1)

The first word is a verb in the first person plural; one of five first-person verbs in one sentence. The pronoun “yo” appears twice, and “mi,” once. This sentence is by no means atypical. If the Embajada a Tamorlán is ultimately the record of a specific voyage and of what was observed and learned during that voyage, the Andanças é viajes is at heart the story of Pero Tafur. Indeed, as the title indicates, the work is not even the record of a single voyage. Rather, as José Vives Gatell notes, the text actually describes four separate expeditions over the period from the fall of 1436 until the spring of 1439 (27).

Furthermore, Pero Tafur did not travel in the service of Juan II. As the prologue, which Labarge describes as “rather pompous” (193), indicates, Pero Tafur was traveling in the unabashed service of Pero Tafur. His primary justification is that by traveling, “raçonablement se pueden conseguir provechos cercanos á lo que proeza requiere, así engrandeciendo los fijosdalgo sus corazones . . .” (1). Even Tafur’s stated reason for setting down his experiences is very different: among other things, he declares that “non dubdará, segunt lo que de vuestra verdadera nobleza conosco, avréys algunas vezes deporte . . .” (2).

I expand on these contrasts in the following pages, beginning with an examination of Tafur's life, his travels, and the circumstances of the work's composition. This is followed by an analysis of the work's narrative voice in which I consider further the use of the first person and, more generally, the way in which the voice of the author / narrator serves as a unifying element in the work. Finally, I return to the author's stated intention that his words will provide his reader with a measure of "deporte," which Letts renders in his translation as "diversion" (20) and which the eighteenth-century Diccionario de autoridades defines as "diversión, holgúra, passatiempo."

Throughout these pages, I offer a comparison, sometimes explicit, sometimes implied, with the Embajada a Tamorlán. The role of the author and the question of authorial / narrative authority are very different in the two works. It is not my intention, however, to suggest a sudden, general evolution in attitudes toward those issues during the few decades that separate the works' composition. Rather, I hope to demonstrate that the two texts are examples of differing but not incompatible conceptions of the role of the author and of the individual in society more generally. One author travels on behalf of king and country and composes a text in which his own personal role is minimized. The other travels primarily for his own benefit and emphasizes his own role as the protagonist of his text (and, not coincidentally, foreshadows the greater emphasis on individual life and experience that would characterize the Renaissance). The two conceptions of the role of the author are, of course, equally valid. More importantly, they may be seen as two competing views that would eventually synthesize and culminate in the voyages of exploration and conquest, the first of which was only a few decades in the future at the time Tafur wrote his memoir.

3.1. Curiosity and Self-Improvement as Justification

Our knowledge of Pero Tafur's life is limited, and scholars have often reached contradictory conclusions. Opinions vary even with regard to how to characterize the extent of our knowledge about him: Vives Gatell, whose introduction to the work remains the most useful overall study, laments that “[p]oca cosa sabemos con certeza de la vida de Tafur” (5). Joaquín Rubio Tovar, on the other hand, happily affirms that “[c]onservamos bastantes datos de la vida de Pero Tafur, sobre todo si se comparan con los de los otros viajeros” (84). These judgments are of course entirely subjective, but I believe that Vives Gatell's description of the situation is the more accurate one.

One of the few undisputable facts, obvious both from the text itself and from other documentary evidence, is that Pero Tafur was, in Rubio Tovar's words, “[u]n hidalgo andaluz” (84). His exact place of birth, however, remains in dispute. In a study published in 1902 and referred to by both Vives Gatell and by Letts, Rafael Ramírez de Arellano declared that Tafur was born in Córdoba rather than in Seville, as had been assumed by many (274). Letts accepts Ramírez de Arellano's assertion without question (2). Vives Gatell, however, rebuts it rather tartly, suggesting that Ramírez de Arellano's judgment may have been clouded by that fact that the earlier writer was “encariñado sin duda con las cosas de Córdoba” (9). In truth, Tafur's birthplace remains an open question. Seville, however, seems to me to be the more likely candidate, if only because, as Letts points out, Tafur himself writes that when he introduced himself to the Sultan of Babylonia, the Sultan “ovo de saber de mí como yo era castellano natural de Sevilla” (Tafur 78). Tafur further reports that upon hearing this, the Sultan “ovo mucho plaçer conmigo, porque así mesmo él era de Sevilla” (Tafur 78). While Tafur is certainly

capable of employing deception in order to achieve his objectives (witness the subterfuge by which he gained entrance to the Mosque of Umar), in the text he typically points out his ruses with a certain degree of pride. In this passage, however, no such acknowledgement is offered. Nor is it clear to me that Tafur could have expected particularly different treatment from the Sultan based on the city in which he was born.

In other words, absent compelling documentary evidence to the contrary, I am inclined to take Tafur at his word in the matter of the city of his of birth. Apart from this issue, the broad outlines of his life are not in dispute. Letts provides a useful summary:

He seems to have been born about 1410, so that he would be 25 years old, more or less, when he set out on his travels. Returning to Spain in 1439, Tafur settled down, and some time before 1452 he married Doña Juana de Horozco, but the exact date of the marriage is not known. There was issue of the marriage, a son, who appears to have predeceased his father, and three daughters. Doña Juana's will, executed in 1490, is printed in the article [by Ramírez de Arellano], and from that document it seems clear that Tafur died about 1484. (2)

One aspect of Tafur's life before his travels that deserves special mention is his relationship with the "muy noble é muy virtuoso señor D. Fernando de Guzman, Comendador Mayor de la Orden de Calatrava," to whom the work is dedicated (1). Vives Gatell quotes Jiménez de la Espada: "por los términos en que se expresa (Tafur) respecto del Maestre de Calatrava D. Luís de Guzmán, parece que fué criado en la casa de este magnate" (7). Vives Gatell also notes the relative frequency with which Guzmán is mentioned throughout the work and contrasts this prominence with the small number

of references to Juan II (7). For Vives Gatell, this fact is of interest because the text makes clear that Tafur traveled “provisto de valiosas recomendaciones de su monarca” (8). One likely explanation for this apparent contradiction is of particular relevance to this study. I believe that Tafur’s apparent personal affinity with Guzmán was of more personal significance to him than his political loyalty to his monarch. This is not to suggest that Tafur was less than a loyal subject: Vives Gatell describes him correctly as “el prototipo ideal del caballero cristiano, del noble hidalgo de Castilla en lucha contra el Mahometismo” (11). There need be no contradiction between personal fealty to a friend and patron and political loyalty to a state. Tafur, however, made his voyages for the most personal of reasons: “por el placer de viajar,” as Rubio Tovar succinctly states (84). Similarly, as I demonstrate below, Tafur conceived his text not so much as a record of places and people visited as a record of the experiences of one man. In stark contrast to the attitude expressed in the Embajada a Tamorlán, for Tafur the personal is always the most important thing. It stands to reason, then, that he would attach more significance to a close personal relationship than to a more abstract political one.

Tafur’s work differs from the Embajada in another important respect. While the Embajada seems to have been written at some time relatively soon after the ambassadors’ return to Spain, Tafur waited a number of years before setting his experiences down in writing. The exact date of the composition of the Andanças é viajes has been a matter of some debate over the years. Vives Gatell notes that Jiménez de la Espada fixed the date, based on passages from the text, at some point between the death of Juan II on July 21, 1454 and that of Hungarian King Ladislaus the Posthumous in 1457 (20). Letts also affirms that “there are several indications in the document itself that [Tafur] was busy

with it between 1453 and 1457” (2). Vives Gatell, however, points out a serious error committed by Jiménez de la Espada: none of the mentions of Juan II in the text suggest that he was dead at the time of the writing. According to Vives Gatell, Jiménez, apparently quoting from memory, mentions the phrase “que santa gloria aya” in reference to the monarch. In fact, however, the phrase in question appears probably to refer to a different person entirely (20). Vives Gatell also points out several references to historical events, including the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which are described in the text as only recently having taken place. Therefore, Vives Gatell concludes that “siempre será seguro que el libro ya se escribía en 1454” (22). In fact, he suspects that the work was already completed by the time of Juan II’s death. Rubio Tovar agrees, giving 1454 as the date of the work’s composition (88).

Whether the work was completed that year or merely in progress, the date of composition gives rise to an obvious question. As Rubio Tovar puts it, “¿Por qué mediaron tantos años entre la experiencia y la escritura?” (88). He then answers his own question by suggesting that the work’s composition might well have been motivated by the fall of Constantinople. He asserts that “Tafur y sus contemporáneos tuvieron que apreciar . . . la trascendencia del hecho. Don Pero estaba consciente de ser uno de los últimos viajeros que habían visitado la ciudad con cierto detenimiento” (88).

This explanation seems entirely logical to me. However, I would like to suggest an additional explanation. The Andanças é viajes is, to a far greater degree than the Embajada a Tamorlán, the story not so much of a series of related events as of the experiences of one man. Had Tafur’s primary purpose been to disseminate information about the places he visited, it might have seemed more urgent to complete the task soon

after the voyage was over. But Tafur seems to have been far more interested in setting down a record of his activities during an especially eventful period of his life. Tafur, one suspects, would have agreed with Aristotle's assertion that history is what Alcibiades did and suffered (Manchester 39).³ Certainly the document he produced is the story of what Tafur did and suffered.

Secondarily, Tafur was almost certainly writing in order to demonstrate that he had fulfilled the duty of a nobleman as he describes it in his introduction: "é tanto tiempo puede alguno ser dicho noble, quanto siguiere las costumbres de otros sus antecesores [. . .]" (1). The clear implication is that he hoped that his own feats would serve as an example for aspiring noblemen of future generations.

The issue of nobility is a constant concern for Tafur, and the issue may be more personal for him than one might imagine. Merschel devoted her 2003 dissertation to demonstrating that Tafur's work is a "plea for recognition and acceptance into the ranks of nobility" (1). I have doubts about her thesis: as described above, Tafur was probably about 25 years old when he began his travels. When he completed his written record of them he would have been roughly 45. If the voyage and the text were both part of a conscious plan to bolster his own social standing, it seems odd that he would have waited until he was already well-established in life before beginning to set his experiences to

³ The popular historian William Manchester makes reference to Aristotle's words in his biography of Churchill, asserting that Churchill never doubted their accuracy. In a similar vein, it is worth noting that in his six-volume History of the Second World War, Churchill notes that "[t]he closing scenes of the war against Japan took place after I left office, and I record them only briefly" (VI, 645). Clavijo would never have given short shrift to a momentous event relevant to his story simply because he himself had not played a primary role. Tafur would have done so happily. In this sense, Tafur's work, like Churchill's but in contrast to Clavijo's, is the story of one man's experiences.

paper. It is important to note, though, if Merschel is in fact correct, this fact would in no way diminish my argument that Tafur's work is distinguished for being both intensely personal and motivated by essentially internal reasons.

While the lapse of time between voyage and writing presents problems for Merchel's argument, it seems safe to say that the twin desires to show that one has fulfilled the obligations of one's station in life and to offer one's experiences as an example for posterity are far more typical of a middle-aged man than of a young one. Therefore, given that Tafur was not in the main writing to convey geographical data or time-sensitive political information, it seems perfectly reasonable that he would have waited until a more reflective time of his life to compose his narration. I develop this idea—the notion that the Andanças é viajes is ultimately a personal rather than a political work whose structural unity is supplied essentially by its protagonist—in the following section.

3.2. The Author as Unifying Element of the Text

In his study of world historiography in medieval Spain, Juan Carlos Conde quotes a paragraph from Paul Ricoeur in which Ricoeur makes two observations that are especially relevant to a work such as Tafur's. The first is essentially that the Spanish word "historia" conveys the sense of both the English terms "history" and "story." Ricoeur's second comment, closely related to the first, is that the word means "tanto historiam rerum gestarum como las res gestas mismas, tanto la narración histórica como los hechos y acontecimientos" (174). Conde takes this argument a step further, recalling that "Hegel afirma que la historia no existe si no es relatada" (174). Conde also points out the degree to which classical historians tended to emphasize concrete, verifiable facts,

and above all facts that were verified by having been observed at first hand by the historians themselves. In his words, writers such as Herodotus saw as their duty “en primer lugar, y como punto de partida inexcusable, los hechos de los que los historiadores son testigos . . .; en segundo lugar, pero a otro nivel, ‘relaciones y referencias de otros’, y como resultado final, ‘una obra de la representación’” (178). Conde draws a sharp contrast between this approach and the one favored by Spanish medieval historiographers, for whom the history “es vista desde una perspectiva global, totalizadora, ecuménica” (179-80).

It is perhaps dangerous to apply these words too strictly to the case of the Andanças é viajes. After all, Conde is writing in the context of such canonical works of medieval historiography as those of Alfonso X. Clavijo and Tafur, despite their differing approaches, are writing of personal experiences with no pretense of omniscience. Still, the parallels are obvious and, I believe, instructive. Clavijo, while careful to specify which events he experienced at first hand and to report on the sources of his information, nonetheless seeks to write from a more universal perspective, so that even in such an intensely personal story as a travel narrative the protagonist seems almost invisible. In technique, at least, he resembles those medieval historians to whom Conde makes reference. Tafur, on the other hand, not only centers his narrative squarely around his own experiences, but also happily makes this fact obvious on every page—if not every line—of his text.

As noted above, this foregrounding of the main character and narrator extends even to the structure of the work. While the Embajada a Tamorlán begins with the ambassadors’ departure from El Puerto de Santa María and ends with their encounter

with the King in Alcalá de Henares, the Andanças é viajes follows Tafur from Sanlúcar de Barrameda to Italy. From Italy, he travels to the Orient. He returns to Italy and some time later makes a second long voyage through central and northern Europe. Tafur's itinerary seems to have been determined by his own whim. In addition, it appears not to have been planned particularly carefully or far in advance, as the following passage, taken from early in the narrative when he is relaxing in Venice and contemplating a trip to the Holy Land, makes clear:

É aquí me informé bien del pasaje de Ierusalem, é supe como non lo podía fazer dende á tres meses, por que acostumbran los navíos, que fazen el pelegrinaje, non partir fasta el día de la Açencion, que es en el mes de Mayo. É yo quisiera, en aquel tiempo que non podía pasar allende, yr á visitar la tierra de los xpianos, ansí como la corte del Emperador é del rey de França; é ove consejo con aquellos mercaderes mis amigos, é dixéronme que lo devía dejar fasta la buelta de Ierusalem, é que, en tanto, fuese á ver á Italia, que era singular cosa de ver [. . .] (20-21)

I quote this passage at some length because it effectively illustrates so many aspects of the voyage, of the text, and of the role of the author/narrator/protagonist. First, it is worth pointing out once again the striking frequency of the first person singular. Tafur sees no reason to make himself less prominent in the story. Second, Tafur waits until the voyage is well under way before bothering to inform himself of when passage to the Orient might be available. When he learns that he has two months to spare, he initially decides to travel to France to call upon the King. One might, of course, imagine a more direct route from Spain to France than one that includes a stopover in Venice. Tafur, however,

appears not to have been struck with the desire to see France until he was already in Italy. Also, when mapping out this exceedingly flexible itinerary, he turns for advice not to a record of some previous traveler or some other written authority but to some merchant friends of his who just happened to be present at the time. Finally, his decision to sightsee in Italy rather than in France is based simply on his friends' assurances that "era singular cosa de ver."⁴

These characteristics permeate Tafur's work to a degree that it can be difficult to choose individual passages to illustrate them, but Tafur's visit to the Mosque of Umar is one of the work's best-known episodes, and the scene lends itself to this discussion. According to Letts, this mosque, located in Jerusalem, "marks the site of the Temple of Solomon." Letts adds that since "[c]hristians were rigorously excluded" from entering this edifice "Tafur's account is therefore all the more valuable" (239). The following is Tafur's description of his experience:

É aquella noche yo rogué á un moro renegado, que fué natural de Portugal, que le daría dos ducados é me metiese aquella noche á ver el templo de Salomon, é fizolo así; é á una ora de la noche yo entré con él vestido de su ropa é ví todo el templo Çiertamente dizen que este fué, quando Salomon lo fizo, la mejor obra que uvo en el mundo, despues fué destruydo é rehedificado, pero çiertamente oy es una de las buenas que ay

⁴ It is certainly not my intention to make light either of Tafur's impressive voyages or of the extraordinary record of them that he would later compose. Even so, when reading passages such as this one it is impossible not to imagine an American college student with a Eurail pass "planning" a trip across Europe in a similar way. Again, it is worth remembering that Tafur was about 25 years old when he left Spain.

en el mundo; si yo allí fuera conocido por xpiano luego fuera muerto.

(63)

There are obvious differences between this passage and the previous one. For one thing, here Tafur certainly does not appear to be a mere tourist on a poorly-planned jaunt through Europe and the Middle East. Rather, he describes an impressive act of bravery, and one which he performed out of a desire to visit one of the holiest sites of his religion.

Even in this passage, though, the overarching importance attached to the thoughts, experiences, and opinions of Tafur is readily apparent, beginning with the ever-present first person singular. More significantly, while Tafur is willing to report the opinions of others (“dizen que”), he makes a point of passing judgment on the information reported (“[ç]iertamente”). In addition, this statement is immediately followed by Tafur’s own, personal appraisal of what he had seen (“çiertamente oy es una de las buenas que ay en el mundo”). Finally, it is not difficult to perceive a certain measure of pride on Tafur’s part in his own cleverness in bribing a Portuguese renegade in order to accomplish his objectives and in his own bravery. This passage begins with a detailed description of Tafur’s own actions, including even the amount of the bribe. It ends with his own opinion and with an allusion to his own bravery. A measure of historical information and others’ opinions is present, but it is sandwiched in the middle, between what Tafur clearly considered to be the more significant information.

It is easy to see in this primacy of the individual something of the increased value of individual experience that has traditionally been said to characterize the Renaissance, and to draw a further contrast with Clavijo’s work from a half-century before. As John Crow wrote in the mid-twentieth century, “[d]uring the Renaissance man became the

center of the universe, not man in the aggregate, but individual man” (155). There are, of course, problems with this characterization of the Renaissance in contrast with the Middle Ages. Many modern social historians would probably describe Crow’s statement as an oversimplification at best and as something of a canard at worst. One could also argue that, especially in the case of Spain, the medieval domination of society by ecclesiastical authorities was supplanted by the development of a strong, authoritarian central government rather than by increased individual autonomy. Still, in a broader sense, I believe that a parallel does exist. Tafur travels “a su antojo” and for essentially personal reasons in a way that Clavijo, like earlier travelers and pilgrims both real and fictional, generally did not. And, of course, a century and a half later, the most famous traveler in all of Spanish literature would take the notion of travel for reasons that are strictly internal to the traveler to extremes at once comic and tragic.

In summary, then, these passages show different facets of the utter primacy of the individual in the Andanças é viajes. It is Tafur himself who decides when and where to travel. The process by which he makes such decisions is of sufficient importance to be described in the text. The roles of author, narrator, and protagonist are openly fused into one. None of these things can be said to be generally true of the Embajada a Tamorlán. These two different conceptions of the role of the individual traveler and of the author—the idea of a voyage undertaken and a text written for practical and political reasons rather than for purely personal ones, but in which the thoughts and actions are accorded much attention—will in some sense merge in the *Chronicles of the Indies*. I touch on that process and its significance in the conclusion to this study. Before concluding this discussion of Andanças é viajes, however, I examine yet another way in which Tafur’s

text seems to point toward the Renaissance: its stated objective of providing the reader with pleasure.

3.3. The Text as Entertainment

The notion that a literary text should, ideally, both inform readers and bring them pleasure—enseñar deleitando, in the Spanish phrase—is, of course, a common one in medieval literature. One thinks of Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. Despite being enormously diverting, the work’s stated purpose is didactic: “For Seint Paul seith that al that writen is / To our doctryne it is y-write, ywis” (412). In Spanish, Juan Manuel emphasizes in the prologue to El conde Lucanor his hope that his readers find “plazer de las cosas provechosas que y fallaren” (73). Even Juan Ruiz acknowledges that his Libro de buen amor may be used for instructional purposes, even if the information imparted is not necessarily, to borrow Juan Manuel’s term, provechosa: “si algunos (cosa que no les aconsejo) quisieren usar del loco amor, aquí hallarán algunas maneras de hacerlo” (9).

Tafur, as I have indicated, states at the beginning of his work that he hopes to contribute to the development young people’s desire and ability to serve their nation at the same time he provides the reader with amusement. In this, as the previous examples show, his work fits neatly in the medieval tradition.

I find it difficult, though, to read the Andanças é viajes as exclusively or even primarily a didactic work. Notwithstanding Tafur’s stated purpose of instructing young noblemen and preparing them for a life of service to their king, I am convinced that Tafur’s main purpose in composing this text was to provide the reader with a pleasurable experience. It is difficult to cite specific examples, since this impression comes more from the overall tone of the work than from any particular passage. But if in Clavijo’s

case personal commentary and humor are rare (and, consequently, all the more striking when they do appear), Tafur offers jocular remarks on a fairly regular basis. Two examples suffice to give an idea of his attitude. Both involve Tafur's observations about women whom he comes in contact during his travels. Daly devotes a chapter of her 2003 dissertation to the issue of gender in the works of Clavijo and Tafur, arguing convincingly that, especially in the case of Tafur, the portrayal of women is generally not very positive and that Tafur's attitudes toward non-Castilian women are another manifestation of his broader interest in the non-European "Other." Daly refers to Tafur's "fascination with the sexual mores of the women he encounters outside Castile," and she suggests that Tafur's implied (and sometimes expressed) criticism of those mores is another way for him to demonstrate the moral superiority of his own civilization over that of the non-Europeans whom he observes (21). I accept Daly's argument without reservations.

Yet some of Tafur's statements about women seem rather less sophisticated than that. Shortly after leaving Cairo, Tafur is engaged in negotiations to acquire a crocodile skin. The one he is offered, however, is unappealing: "avían muerto una é estava fresca é olíe muy mal, tanto que mejor fuera aver traydo una fija del Adelantado muy fermosa quéll allí teníe, quel cuero de la cocatriz" (Tafur 119). The comparison is, of course, offensive to us, but in any case it is difficult to see any purpose to it other than to provide amusement to a (presumably male) reader and, perhaps, to gently mock his own less-than-intellectual interest in what he observes. Daly observes something similar about a scene later in the work, in which Tafur, in Germany, observes some women bathing: "se puede creer qué es lo que tenían alto, quando la cabeça tenían baxa" (235). This rather

sophomoric comment would most certainly have been worthy of Juan Ruiz. In an appealing and accurate phrase, Daly describes this scene as a “wink of complicity with the (male) addressee” (Daly 212). In addition, these women, like Tafur, were European, so he would presumably have had little reason to highlight their “scandalous” behavior in an effort to promote the superiority of his own culture. A serious study of gender issues would be beyond the scope of this study, and in fact has already been carried out by Daly. These examples serve here merely to demonstrate that Tafur, unlike Clavijo, regularly includes observations of little obvious didactic or ideological value, but which are clearly intended to amuse the reader. The *Andanças é viajes* is, as Rubio Tovar describes it, “un libro de andar y ver” (92). What Tafur sees is worthy of recording—and assumed to be of interest to the reader—if he himself finds it interesting. This is true of scenes of profound significance such as the interior of a mosque or the ruins of Rome. It is also true, in Tafur’s mind, of women bathing.

In sum, then, Clavijo travelled and wrote for principally external reasons. Tafur travelled and wrote essentially for himself. In this sense the two works can be placed near opposite ends of the spectrum of extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation. Yet they share many features, including a concern for establishing authorial authority and a belief in the importance of individual experience. Both authors also express a constant desire that they be read as stories of real events and places as experienced by individual human beings. In all of this, the travels and texts of Clavijo and Tafur presage the voyages and narratives of discovery that would shortly mark Spain’s ascent as a world power.

Chapter 3: Dealing with Difference

There is no country in Europe in the affairs of which foreigners can interfere with so little advantage as Spain. There is no country in which foreigners are so much disliked, and even despised, and whose manners and habits are so little congenial with those of other nations in Europe.

-Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (qtd. in Churchill 520)

The Duke of Wellington made the above observation in 1820, some five years after having defeated Napoleon at Waterloo and, obviously, long after the events considered in this study. Despite the centuries that had passed since Clavijo and Tafur had composed their works, and despite the Duke's vaguely xenophobic tone and imperialistic hubris, his words address one of the most fundamental issues of Spanish history, and one that is of considerable relevance to the lives and works of Clavijo and Tafur. To perhaps a greater degree than most nations, Spain has always defined itself largely through its relationship with the world beyond its borders.

It is not difficult to see why this is the case. Spain is situated geographically on the periphery of Europe. Parts of the Peninsula were ruled by non-Europeans for nearly 800 years, and, as the above quotation demonstrates, the inhabitants of the Peninsula have often met with disdain and even hostility from their more centrally-located European neighbors. Even today, it is occasionally suggested that "L'Afrique commence aux

Pyrénées.”¹ At best, Spain has traditionally been viewed by other Europeans as a rather exotic land of strange customs and uncongenial weather.

But just as Spain has often been considered as vaguely “different” from outside its borders, Spaniards themselves have often seen themselves as unlike other Europeans. It is, of course, problematic to base a serious interpretation of Spanish history on isolated quotations such as these. But even so, the above words of the Duke of Wellington serve to illustrate an undeniable fact: for many centuries the Spanish found it necessary to differentiate themselves from their neighbors and, often, to look inward in an attempt to exclude foreigners spiritually and physically from their society. “Santiago, y cierra España,” was, after all, the battle cry of medieval Spaniards long before it was taken up by Don Quixote.

All of this can be restated in modern scholarly terms in this way: Spain has been perceived by outsiders (and often, in some sense, by Spaniards themselves) as the Other.²

¹ I expended considerable effort in an attempt to find the original source of this saying. It has at various times been attributed to Napoleon, Théophile Gautier, and Francisco Franco, among others. Its true origins may have been earlier. A brief note in the French journal L'Intermédiaire des Chercheurs et Curieux mentions that Stendhal wrote to his sister in 1808 that “ja vais aller en Espagne, c’est-à-dire en Afrique.” As the author of the notes observes, this would seem to suggest that the expression was already well known at that time (“Origine”). In any case, the very obscurity of the saying’s origin serves to emphasize how longstanding and widespread the sentiment has been.

² I employ the word with some hesitation, because it seems to me that it has suffered from overuse in recent decades. In addition, it is worth noting that some scholars use the notion of “alterity” as a weapon in a more-or-less explicit ideological battle against colonialism in particular and the values and culture of the metropolis in general. Further, if one believes that the role of a critic is to “deconstruct” texts for the purpose of revealing the underlying (and presumably faulty) preconceptions of their authors, then the value of works such as the Embajada and Andanças é viajes, whose value lies principally in the information they contain, is much diminished. Edward Said, for example, speaks rather dismissively of the “personal, sometimes garbled testimony of intrepid voyagers and residents” (166). Daly expresses similar concerns in her dissertation. While relying

Therein lies much of the interest of the Embajada and of Andanças: both works are relatively early examples of Castilians (more used to being seen as the Other themselves) attempting to synthesize an extended period of contact with foreign cultures and to convey something of those cultures to readers.

By any standard, Clavijo and Tafur were exceptional observers of people and places, and during their travels they certainly had the opportunity to see things that would have seemed extraordinary to a fifteenth-century Castilian. Inevitably, those observations and judgments were filtered through their own values and perspectives. Said might well have considered this to be a shortcoming in their works. I believe, however, that much of the enduring value of these texts lies precisely in what they tell the reader about their authors. In the following pages I examine the observations of Clavijo and Tafur in order to develop a clearer picture of the ideologies and values that these fifteenth-century Europeans brought to bear in their attempts to come to terms with very different people and places. I have no desire to discredit their observations or achievements. Rather, my purpose is to understand the thinking and the motivations of these representatives of a society that was rapidly transforming itself from a fragmented, relatively weak collection of states into a united nation that would, by the end of the century, stand on the cusp of empire.

It is also worth noting that travel narratives such as these are, by their nature, especially useful for the purpose of understanding on an individual level how people of a

on scholars such as Said, François Hartog, and Mary Louise Pratt, she also recognizes that “caution must be exercised when attempting to apply postmodern, postcolonial theories to the analysis of medieval travel narrative” (23). Despite these reservations, I certainly consider this to be a valuable area of inquiry, and so will share the terminology (if not always the objectives) of these scholars.

particular time and place react to people and places very different from themselves. The traveler, whether in medieval times or in our own, is of necessity cut off, at least to a degree, from his or her cultural and linguistic milieu. Even Clavijo, who traveled as part of a sizeable group of his countrymen and who was an official emissary of the King of Castile, could scarcely have failed to notice that he was venturing far from home, and that however much he may have observed and commented on a variety of strange—from his perspective—ways of life, those ways of life rather than his own were the norm in the places he was visiting. More than once, he and his men were dependent on the religious and cultural “Others” that they were observing for their continued progress and, at times, even their well-being. The fact that he was able to function effectively in such an environment and to describe it in detail in a relatively non-jingoistic way is compelling testimony to his own self-confidence. More important, it reflects an individual who is confident in his own society and institutions to a greater degree than one might expect, given the litany of political and social problems that affected the Castile of his day.

Pero Tafur, whether because of the independent nature of his travels, his own personality, the time that passed between his voyages and the composition of his narrative, or some combination of these factors, was perhaps a less consistently careful observer than Clavijo. Even so, Tafur, through his text, demonstrates several of the same characteristics that mark the work of Clavijo. He is supremely self-confident. He is proud of his own identity and yet open to admiring aspects of other cultural and religious groups. Finally, as I demonstrate in this chapter, Tafur is in some ways even more individualistic than Clavijo. He traveled on his own account, at least in part to improve himself. By assuming that his memories and opinions are worthy of being

written down and read by others despite that fact that, unlike Clavijo, he had no need to report on his experiences to a specific person, he demonstrates a striking degree of self-confidence. Both men consistently show themselves to be what Burckhardt calls “many-sided men,” and in their travels, they demonstrate the degree to which they share the belief of the thirteenth-century Italian humanist Ghiberti as quoted by Burckhardt: “[o]nly he who has learned everything . . . is nowhere a stranger; robbed of his fortune and without friends, he is yet the citizen of every country, and can fearlessly despise the changes of fortune” (84).

Moreover, while I generally seek to avoid offering these two texts as mere examples of specific cultural trends, there can be little doubt that Clavijo and Tafur both reflect trends that scholars have perceived in similar works of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Elsner and Rubiés observe that “the late Middle Ages are characterized by the growth of ethnography within the related genres of geographical literature, ambassadorial reports, mission and even pilgrimage itself” (31). These two scholars emphasize, however, that this new interest, which is obvious in the cases of Clavijo and Tafur, is not so much an early manifestation of Renaissance humanism as the result of “the pursuit of practical knowledge, often the desire for entertainment, occasionally the ideological exploration of human cultural diversity within a traditional religious framework” (31). A better summary of the objectives of Clavijo and Tafur would be difficult to formulate.

In this chapter I examine the treatment of various sorts of “Others” in the Embajada and in Andanças. The specific topics considered here vary from one text to another. In some cases, they have been selected based on common themes. Both

authors, for example, offer extensive descriptions of the cities that they visited. Other topics are considered because of their obvious interest to one of the authors, such as Clavijo's detailed description of the dietary practices of the people whom he encountered. (He appears to have had a near-obsession with Central Asian melons.) The most important subject considered here, however, is religion.³ These authors, both of them devout Catholics, had extensive contact with people of other faiths, both non-Catholic Christians and Muslims.

An examination of the way each author treats subjects such as these is revealing and often surprising. Of course, I make no claim that they were impartial observers of their environments in any absolute sense. They made no such claims for themselves. Nor did they see their role as mere conveyors of factual information. These were strong men with strong opinions, which they were not in the least hesitant to express. Even so, their opinions are based not so much on a system of values established a priori as on personal experience and opinion: Elsnér and Rubiés write of the "empirical bent" of travel writers of this period (31). Clavijo, to cite a particularly striking example, occasionally provides virtual recipes for the unknown foods he encounters, as for example his description of the traditional beverage known he calls ax: "este manjar fazen ellos d'esta manera: e toman un grand calderón con agua, e desque es caliente, toman unos pedaços de leche azeda que son como queso, e échanlo en una escudilla, e desfázenlo con el agua caliente, e échanlo en el calderón" (234-35). As is typical in the

³ Daly devotes a chapter of her dissertation to a comprehensive study of the general issue of religion in these two texts. I draw heavily on her analysis, and focus my own comments on the specific thesis that I wish to prove: to wit, that many of Clavijo's and Tafur's comments about people of other faiths are motivated by factors other than simple religious intolerance.

Embajada, nowhere in this description is there any hint of judgment of the culinary practices he describes. Clavijo tends to observe rather than to judge.

More generally, many of the obvious prejudices—especially those related to religious orthodoxy—that one might expect to find reflected in these texts are either absent or far less prominent than one might expect. The relation between Christians and Muslims has traditionally been considered to be among the most salient facts in any attempt to understand the political and social evolution of the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula during those years. It is not surprising, then, that both Clavijo and Tafur devote considerable attention to describing (and sometimes passing judgment on) the non-Catholics with whom they came in contact during their travels. Daly, who studies this aspect of the works in detail, refers frequently to the travelers' contacts with "religious Others" (93).

1. The Question of Religion

Given the centrality of this issue, it seems logical to address the broader issue of religious tolerance in medieval Spain before moving on to a discussion of the issue in the works of Clavijo and Tafur. In the following section I offer what might be considered snapshots of the state of inter-religious relations during the later Middle Ages. I aim to illustrate the well-known fact that medieval Spain was in many ways a relatively tolerant society, but I also argue that this tradition of tolerance was at least occasionally still in evidence even near the end of this period, and that where cases of religious intolerance do present themselves, they were frequently caused at least in part by external, non-religious reasons.

1.1. Convivencia or Coexistence?

When I began to study the issue of religion in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages, I was strongly influenced by the ideas of Américo Castro, who throughout his long career insisted on the degree to which the three religious groups—Christians, Muslims, and Jews—lived together harmoniously through most of the centuries of this period. Castro, whose influence on a generation of historians and literary scholars was enormous, based his characterization of medieval Spanish society largely on evidence from literary works. In addition, and in opposition to his compatriot Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, Castro always sustained that it was precisely the centuries of interaction between Christians, Muslims, and Jews that made possible the development of the Spanish national identity as it would exist in subsequent centuries. He particularly emphasizes the tolerance displayed in the works of Alfonso the Wise: “[d]urante los años de convivencia cristiano-islámico-judía, la comunicación espiritual entre las tres creencias hizo posible que Alfonso el Sabio fundara en el Alcorán su doctrina de la tolerancia” (205). Castro laments, however, the breakdown of convivencia during the later centuries of the period. In his words, “a medida que iba avanzando el tiempo, la gente se hacía cada vez más intolerante, porque habían desaparecido los motivos que antes crearon los intereses y respetos recíprocos” (205).

That Christians, Muslims, and Jews were able to coexist in the Peninsula during the Middle Ages is undeniable. Nor is there any doubt that the three groups were capable of forming alliances when convenient. It is also true that members of one religion could and did regularly express respect for and tolerances of the faith of others. In addition, something had in fact changed by the time of the Catholic Monarchs: the expulsion of

Jews and Muslims from the Peninsula is an undeniable historical fact. That it took place when it did, and neither earlier nor later, cannot reasonably be ascribed to chance.

Castro's interpretation of Spanish history cannot therefore be taken lightly. Even so, historians in recent years have found aspects of it unsatisfactory. In particular, historians have increasingly called into question the notion that relations between the three religious groups were consistently cordial or even peaceful, even during the early Middle Ages. While this fact does not take away from my point here—that Clavijo and Tafur are rather less motivated by religious considerations than what one might expect from authors in fifteenth-century Spain—it is nonetheless a significant shift in perspective, and should be noted. One might begin with a question of terminology.

Castro wrote of convivencia. The term was widely adopted, even by scholars writing in English, to denote the peaceful coexistence of the three faith groups in the Peninsula. Recent writers, however, have pointed out that the term has come to suggest a degree of harmony far exceeding that which actually characterized the Middle Ages. Glick, in particular, points out that “historians have had a great deal of difficulty dealing with Castro's labored idealist notions. He conveys no sense of the social dynamics of contact and conflict among the three groups” (“Convivencia” 2). For this reason, as Glick also notes, “recent historians of ethnic relations in medieval Spain have preferred the term ‘coexistence,’ rather than convivencia” (“Convivencia” 2). I accept Glick's analysis in general, although I would argue that Castro did in fact recognize, at least to a degree, that relations between the three groups were often tense. Castro, for example, acknowledges that even such figures as Alfonso the Wise and Juan Manuel viewed the Moor as “un rival político que había que vencer” (202). It may well be that Glick is

objecting—consciously or unconsciously—more to the extension and abuse of the term convivencia by some of Castro’s followers more than to Castro’s own use of the term, as for example Menocal’s book on medieval Spain, which she titled The Ornament of the World. In any case, Glick’s contention that inter-religious relations during this period were at best uneasy is a valid one, and it deserves to be born in mind.

One other fundamental fact that often fails to receive the attention it deserves is the different nature of the relationship between Christians and Muslims (which is, of course, of primary interest for this study) as compared to that between Christians and Jews. It is well known, of course, that Muslims acknowledged both Christians and Jews as dhimmis, a term Glick defines as people “with a revealed scripture recognized by Muslims as divinely inspired—that is, Christians and Jews” (Middle Ages 168). As the Christians began to conquer Muslim lands in the Peninsula, according to Glick, they initially adopted a similar attitude, using the “ready-made example afforded by Muslim treatment of dhimmis” (Middle Ages 169). Glick recognizes, however, that “the actual situation of Jewish and Muslim minorities differed widely from place to place” (Middle Ages 169). More generally, the attitude of Christians toward Jews was considerably different from their attitude toward Muslims. Christian antipathy toward Jews was based in large measure upon the blood libel—the belief that they were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, and this situation was well established long before the year 711: Dwayne E. Carpenter writes of “early rivalries between the two religions, which were already bitter at the time of the Council of Elvira (ca. 300)” (62). Peninsular Christians’ attitudes toward Muslims, on the other hand, were shaped in large measure by the invasion and conquest of formerly Christian territories. As a result, according to

Carpenter, Christian writers of the period “generally depicted Jews as their inveterate theological enemies, while they often cast Muslims as a military menace” (62). This distinction is important because it implies that Christians might logically form alliances—even military ones—with Muslims if a given Muslim group did not appear to present an immediate threat and if such an alliance was considered to be beneficial. Certainly this was the case with Clavijo’s embassy to Timur. The Embajada was not, however, the first Castilian text to tell the story of such alliances. As related in the Poema de mio Cid, even Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, who would eventually become the national hero of Christian Spain, did so willingly and frequently. I consider the case of the Cid in the following section. It is not my purpose to offer a general comparison of the Poema with the Embajada: the works are separated by some three centuries, by form, and by genre. I seek simply to show that military relationships and even friendships were reflected in Castilian literature from the earliest works until the end of the Middle Ages. As depicted in the poem, the Cid was perfectly happy to make alliances across religious boundaries and to take up arms against people of his own religion. Likewise, whether consciously or unconsciously, he was also capable of wrapping his actions in the banner of religious piety when it served his interests to do so.

1.2. Alliances of Convenience: the Poema de mio Cid

Díaz de Vivar was born toward the middle of the eleventh century (Colin Smith suggests a date of around 1040), and he would play a central role in the political and military life of the Peninsula until his death, which is generally accepted to have occurred in 1099 (32). He is most remembered as a vassal of King Alfonso VI, but according to Smith, his first experience of battle probably took place under Alfonso’s brother Sancho

at the Battle of Graus (32). This would have occurred some two years before Alfonso ascended the throne of León in 1065 (Jackson 203). That battle may in some respects be regarded as a paradigm for the Cid's subsequent military career: in it, "Sancho y sus castellanos, ayudados por los moros, vencieron a los aragoneses" (Smith 32). Thus medieval Christian Spain's greatest hero's first experience of combat was not a struggle against the infidel but rather a squabble between two Christian leaders who, in case there was any doubt about the mutability of political loyalties among the Christians, happened to be brothers.

The Cid played a prominent role at Sancho's court; however, circumstances changed abruptly in 1072, when Sancho was killed at Zamora. As Deyermond puts it, he "encontró inevitablemente menos fortuna bajo el nuevo monarca Alfonso VI (Edad Media 84). Alfonso VI was interested in making peace with the Cid, but at least according to the popular story, the Cid was unwilling to enter into his service until the new king swore that he had not been involved in Sancho's death. Subsequently Alfonso offered to the Cid the hand of his cousin Jimena, and by 1079 the reconciliation appeared complete: again according to Smith, Alfonso sent him to collect tribute from the Moorish king of Seville (33). Rumors started to fly that the Cid had not turned over to Alfonso the full amount of the tribute, and relations between them further deteriorated when the Cid attacked Toledo in 1081, since that Moorish Kingdom was "entonces en tregua con Alfonso" (Smith 33). The king had little alternative but to order the Cid into exile. He complied, and shortly made his way to Zaragoza, where he entered the service of the Moorish leader there. As so often in the history of the Reconquest, religious affiliation seems to have played only a secondary role in the determination of political and military

loyalties. Tellingly, Smith emphasizes this fact: “No había nada de vergonzoso o extraño en que un caballero cristiano ofreciese sus servicios a un príncipe infiel, en una época de bruscos cambios de lealtad y alianzas formadas por interés” (34).

The Per Abbat manuscript of the Poema de mío Cid begins with the Cid just having been ordered into exile. It seems unnecessary to summarize here the events narrated in the poem. Two points, however, are worth noting in the present context. In the first place, the Poema is not in its essence a tale of religious struggle against the infidels. Rather, as Deyermond writes, “[e]l tema principal del poema está centrado en el honor del Cid y la estructura de la obra se define en la alternativa de la pérdida y la restauración del mismo” (Edad Media 88). A part of this honor, moreover, seems to be a sort of fundamental decency. However enthusiastic and even sanguinary a warrior the Cid may be, he is generally not interested in the spilling of blood—even that of the infidels—for its own sake. After taking Alcocer, for example, he considers what to do with the captive Moors:

[‘]Oid a mi, Albar Fañez	e todos los cavalleros!
En este castiello	grand aver avemos preso;
los moros yazen muertos,	de bivos pocos veo.
Los moros e las moras	vender non los podrremos,
que los descabeçemos	nada non ganaremos;
cojamos los de dentro,	ca el señorío tenemos,
posaremos en sus casas	e dellos nos serviremos.’ (616-622)

Killing Moors, then, is a perfectly legitimate activity when necessary to fulfill one’s objectives: in María Eugenia Lacarra’s words, the Cid kills Moors “siempre que la

campaña militar lo exige” (192). If, on the other hand, pardoning one’s Moorish enemies is beneficial, the Cid follows that path, “por razones tácticas y no por bondad altruista” (Lacarra 192). The same attitude, or something similar, is evident in the Cid’s dealings with Christian enemies. When he is wronged by Count Ramón Beringuer of Barcelona, for example, the Cid does not hesitate to attack ferociously. Nor does the author of the Poema hesitate to describe the battle scene with enthusiasm:

Vieron la cuesta yuso	la fuerça de los francos;
al fondon de la cuesta,	çerca es de[l] lano,
mando los ferir mio Çid	el que en buena ora nasco;
esto fazen los sos	de voluntad e de grado,
los pendones e las lanças	tan bien las van enpleando
a los unos firiendo	e a los otros derrocando[.] (1002-1007)

Violence on the battlefield, then, is as legitimate a tool when employed against one’s Christian enemies as against the Moors, and as legitimate a subject for celebration in verse. The acquisition of the properties of the defeated is similarly acceptable, symbolized in this case by the Cid’s taking of the sword Colada, “que mas vale de mill marcos de plata” from the defeated count (1010). Alliances are flexible, and regularly cross religious lines. More generally, as Henry Kamen writes, “No clearer example [than the Poema] exists of the intertwining of the two civilizations, and their mutual understanding even in the face of war” (25). This intertwining is also evident on the most personal level in the Cid’s relationship with the Moor Abengalvón. The two men form strategic alliances, to be sure, but as Lacarra observes, “el papel que Abengalvón desempeña en el poema es el de un amigo personal e íntimo” (197). Harney goes even

further, suggesting that when Avengalbón refers to the Cid as “mio amigo natural,” he may well be suggesting that the term “is very possibly tantamount, in the context of friendship, to the expression “by blood” (Kinship 69).

Thus religious fervor narrowly defined is unable to explain the actions of the principal players in medieval Hispania, even in the case of one who would become in later centuries the national hero of a famously pious nation. This is true on a military and strategic level, but is equally true on the level of personal relationships. Crow, whose historical judgments I sometimes find wanting, nonetheless is entirely correct in affirming that “nowhere in the poem does it appear that religion is the main motive for these campaigns and these victories” (90-91). Crow also refers, appropriately, to the matter-of-fact manner in which the poet reports that before a battle, both Moors and Christians refer to their own religion (91): “Los moros laman ‘¡Mafomat!’ e los christianos ‘¡Santi Yagu[e]!’ (731). Similar attitudes would persist at least into the fifteenth century, as demonstrated by the works of Clavijo and of Tafur.

1.3. Alfonso X: Emperor of the Three Religions

The life and works of Castilian King Alfonso X the Wise show the degree to which this seemingly inconsistent attitude toward Muslims would continue to be a feature of medieval Christian society. Alfonso ruled Castile from 1252 until 1284, during a period that Carpenter describes as one “when intellectual exchanges between the two cultures were at their apex” (72). Alfonso worked closely with and often esteemed members of other religious faiths. He may have inherited that attitude in part from his father, Fernando III: Fuentes notes that Fernando’s tomb bears inscriptions in “all four languages of the cultural continuity of Spain: Latin, Spanish, Arabic, and Hebrew”

(73). Fernando's son could be similarly open to religious minorities: he is famous for having considered himself the "Emperor of the Three Religions," and he happily employed Jews and Muslims in his court (Fuentes 73).

It is generally acknowledged that while his literary and historiographic accomplishments were extraordinary, Alfonso was not particularly successful as a political leader. In particular, the end of his reign was ignominious. His downfall, like that of many other political figures before and since, was largely due to what O'Callaghan calls "his incessant demands for tax levies" (380). Even his son Sancho abandoned him. Of special interest here, however, is the fact that in 1282, in the face of dissipating public support and filial opposition, Alfonso acted in the best tradition of his predecessors. He turned his gaze to the south and sought support from his erstwhile enemies the Moors. Indeed, as Jackson puts it, Alfonso "spent the last months of his life negotiating for Muslim aid from the Maranids" (132). Alfonso the king was deposed in 1282, and within two years Alfonso the man was no more. Thus the monarch who had perhaps done more than any other to foster a sense of linguistic and cultural unity among the Christian inhabitants of the Peninsula ultimately found himself better able to seek support from Muslim sources than from Christian ones. Once again, religious identity was shown not to be the determining factor in the political history of medieval Spain.

Yet Alfonso's attitude toward Muslims as reflected in his literary and historical works is at best ambiguous. Even as he employed Muslim and Jewish scholars, he regularly portrayed them in a harsh light. As Carpenter notes, he "frequently depicts [Muslims] as dark-skinned unbelievers, ever ready to annihilate Christians and profane the symbols of their religion" (73). On the other hand, Carpenter also points out that

Alfonso “claims that Muhammad professed the Virgin birth (Cantigas, song 329), and, to show her gratitude, Mary goes so far as to help Muslim emigrants fend off an attack by Catalan corsairs (song 379)” (73).

Alfonso is similarly ambiguous in his historical works, although he certainly did not regard all religions as being equally valid. Even so, as O’Callaghan notes, his Siete partidas emphasizes conversion to Christianity by reason rather than by force. Conversion was, nonetheless, an objective. Nor did Alfonso’s relatively tolerant outlook prevent harsh institutional discrimination (463). Also according to O’Callaghan, the first of a long series of laws restricting the dress of Muslims living in Christian lands was approved in Castile in 1252 (463). Thus it is misleading to regard the period between Alfonso X’s death and the accession of the Catholic Monarchs as a descent from enlightened multiculturalism to intolerant religious fanaticism.

1.4. Religious Tolerance During the Fourteenth Century

Just as examples of discriminatory legislation from the time of Alfonso X are not difficult to find, so are there cases of religious tolerance well into the following century. Hillgarth notes that Sancho IV of Castile spent no less a Christian holiday than Christmas “as the guest of a rich Jewish financier” (Hillgarth 169). Don Juan Manuel (1282-1348) was generally tolerant of religious difference, both in his life and in his works. Jackson, for example, writes that Juan Manuel “referred to his Jewish physician as his one truly intimate, reliable friend” (142). The importance of Arabic sources in his work has also been extensively noted, by María Rosa Lida, among others. As Alfonso I. Sotelo indicates, it was only natural that “una cultura más avanzada, como era la islámica, se constituyese en polo de atracción para don Juan Manuel” (Juan Manuel 54). Juan

Manuel was certainly an enthusiastic participant in conflict with the Moors, but even here he makes a telling distinction. War against Muslims is justified and inevitable “until Christians recover the lands Moors took from them; there would be no war because of the law or sect [Moors] hold to, for Christ never commanded that anyone should be slain or forced to receive his law” (qtd. in Hillgarth 164). This passage deserves special emphasis, for it shows that even such a prominent political and literary figure, writing in the middle of the fourteenth century, conceived the conflict with the Moors as a political and territorial dispute rather than as a religious conflict *per se*.

Even when Juan Manuel considers doing battle with the Moors to be a legitimate way to serve God, as is the case in the Enxiempo entitled “Del salto que fizo el rey Richalte de Inglaterra en la mar contra los moros,” Juan Manuel suggests caution. When the English king entrusts himself to God and plunges into the sea on his way to attack the Moors, God saves him from drowning. As a consequence, many of the Moors flee. Others are killed: “desque los cristianos llegaron al puerto, mataron muchos de los que pudieron alcançar e fueron muy bien andantes, e fizieron dese camino mucho servicio a Dios” (94). Yet this is not the principal lesson of this story. Rather, Patronio wants his master to guard against using the territorial conflict with the Moors as an excuse to engage in selfish, un-Christian behavior. Patronio advises Conde Lucanor that he “queredes seer cavallero de Dios e dexades de ser cavallero del diablo e de la ufana del mundo” (95). Thus even when war against the Moors is justified, it must not be undertaken for selfish, worldly reasons, although, as Carpenter observes, Juan Manuel is conscious of the fact that one positive side effect of war against Muslims is the production of martyrs (75). In any case, religion should not be used as an excuse for

dishonorable behavior. In this way, Juan Manuel acknowledges that many of his countrymen tend to see religion as a means to an end rather than as an end to itself. In the next chapter, I consider one specific case in which religion played that role: the development of a national identity.

The second aspect of the evolving attitude toward religious minorities during the fourteenth century regards the motivation for intolerance and the specific form that this intolerance would take. Notwithstanding the above examples of halting, partial acceptance of religious diversity on the part of elite members of society such as Juan Manuel, the fact is that something did change during this period, even if the change was not, as has occasionally been suggested, a descent from the time of the “ornament of the world” into blind religious fanaticism. As Hillgarth observes about the situation of Jews in the Peninsula, “in 1315 no one could foresee the wholesale pogroms of 1391” (173). I believe the change can in large measure be explained by a simple, universal human phenomenon: Christian residents of the Peninsula felt threatened. They must have felt financial pressures as changes in the economic structures of the principal peninsular kingdoms forced changes in social relationships. Jews, for whatever reason, were prominent in the fields of tax collection, money lending, and medicine. They were also perceived to have disproportionate influence at court. Consequently, hostility toward them increased, not so much at the level of rulers as among commoners. Furthermore, the Church, long frustrated by the tendency of Spanish kings to ignore the restrictions it sought to impose on religious minorities, encouraged this hostility.

Such was the state of inter-religious relations in the middle of the fourteenth century. As discussed in the Introduction to this study, the first outbreak of bubonic

plague in the Peninsula occurred in 1348. Given the circumstances—the horrible personal economic costs that I described in the Introduction and the pre-existing climate of economic envy, the pogroms of 1391 do not seem entirely surprising. Despite their brutality, however, they do not disprove my thesis. Here, as in the case of the actions of the Cid and in the policies of Alfonso X, attitudes toward religious Others are determined in large measure by issues extraneous to religion. This fact is sometimes not fully appreciated: Daly reflects the commonly-held, but in my view misleading, view that medieval Iberians “perceived themselves largely in religious rather than in nationalistic terms” (90). As I demonstrate in the following sections, religion as such plays only a secondary role in the judgments set forth in the works of Clavijo and Tafur.

2. Clavijo as Interested Observer

Clavijo’s own deeply held religious beliefs are on constant display in the Embajada. He commends himself at the very beginning to “Dios, en cuyo poder son las cosas, e de la Virgen Santa María, su madre” (80). When he and his men are in danger, they are urged to “cantar la ledanía e que todos pidiesen merçed a Dios” (91). Later in the voyage, between Pera and Trebizond, their ship is caught in a storm so powerful that they are temporarily unable to make landfall: “E la tormenta creció tanto que era espanto; e todos se encomendavan a Dios, ca pensavan que nunca avían de escapar” (152). Also, in one of the text’s most moving passages, the ambassadors accept the death of their comrade Gómez de Salazar as God’s will: “E quiso Dios e ovo de final aquí el dicho Gomes” (227). Finally, the manuscript concludes with the words “Laus Deo” (357).

It is possible, of course, to read too much into such statements of faith as these. They could be regarded as simply pro forma, or they could conceivably have been included for ulterior motives. On the whole, however, I doubt that this is the case. By their number and sincerity, these statements convince me that Clavijo's religious beliefs were sincere and deeply held. This idea is also lent credence by his reactions to those who do not share his beliefs.

2.1. Religion and Difference: Western and Eastern Christianity

Clavijo was a devout Christian and a devout Roman Catholic. Even in his day, the terms were not synonymous. Although the Protestant Reformation would not take place for more than a century, Christendom had long been separated into western (Roman) and eastern (Byzantine) branches. This division was already a longstanding one in Clavijo's time, dating as it did to the middle of the eleventh century, when the pope at the time (Leo XI) and the patriarch of Constantinople (Michael Cerularius) excommunicated each other. Given the geographic location of their country, Spaniards were in general not directly affected by this Great Schism and would have little contact with the Byzantine Church or its followers. In fact, a typical Castilian courtier at the beginning of the fifteenth century almost certainly would have been more familiar with Islam and the religious and cultural practices of its adherents than with Byzantine Christianity. Clavijo's voyage, however, would take him from the western part of Roman Catholic Europe through the heart of Byzantium. One of the highlights of his narrative, moreover, is his detailed description of Constantinople. Extensive firsthand contact with this Christian "Other" would have been an extraordinary experience for a Spaniard of Clavijo's time.

Such contact would have been—and in fact was—of considerable interest to Clavijo. It would also have been rather troubling. As I have pointed out, by 1400 the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula was substantially complete: only a small part of what had been al Andalus remained under Muslim rule. While Juan II was undeniably worried about the threat to Christianity posed by the Ottoman Turks from the east (as demonstrated by the initial decision to send emissaries to Timur), he and those around him would have had relatively little reason for immediate fear from Muslim expansionism at home. Someone knowledgeable about Church politics, however, would at that time have had ample cause for concern about dangers to the unity of the western Church from within. Clavijo and his men, particularly Páez, would have been well informed in this regard. The specter of a Church tearing itself apart could not have been comforting to a Castilian courtier in 1406. If such an individual were to travel east and see the results of the previous schism in the form of people who professed to be Christians and yet practiced unfamiliar rites, he might draw troubling conclusions about the likely consequences of the internecine religious conflicts of his own day. Clavijo does not say so explicitly in his text, but I suggest that this situation explains in large part his interest in and surprisingly strong criticisms of non-Roman Christians. Some of those passages are examined in the following paragraphs.

First, for the purposes of comparison, it is worthwhile to examine Clavijo's description of some of the Roman Catholic churches he encounters. Of Gaeta, Italy, for example, he writes that "E en esta ciudat ha una iglesia muy devota, en que han las gentes muy grand devoçión; e es llamada santa María el Anunciada. E delante está otra iglesia devota que es llamada sant Antón. E encima d'esta iglesia de santa María, está un

fermoso monesterio de sant Francisco [. . .]” (87). Here, as is consistently the case with his descriptions of Roman churches and worship, Clavijo uses only positive terms to describe both the physical beauty of the buildings (“fermoso”) and the piety of their parishoners (“devota”, “devoçión”). Clavijo is clearly making positive value judgments based at least in part on his own religious faith. In doing so, he displays a degree of subjectivity that is clearly at odds with his writings about other topics.

This same subjectivity is even more apparent in his descriptions of Greek Christian religious themes. Occasionally he limits himself to simple observation, as when describing the inhabitants of Rhodes: “[. . .] la generacón [sic] de la gente d’ esta ciudat e d’ esta isla son griegos e a la fee griesga todos los más” (99). Often he seems impressed by the devotion of the non-Catholic Christians he encounters, as is evident, for example, in his description of a Greek monastery, which, he reports, belongs to “monjes griegos que fazen buena vida, e que no consienten estar allí mugeres ni gatos ni perros ni otra cosa alguna que faga hijos” (110-11).

More typical, however, and of more interest for the purposes of this study, is the lengthy and detailed summary of Armenian and Greek religious practice that Clavijo includes at the end of his description of the ambassadors’ time at Trabizond. He begins with the similarities between Roman and Eastern worship: “estos armenios tienen las iglesias como los católicos, e consagran el cuerpo de Dios con hostia así como los católicos [. . .].” He soon finds numerous problems, however: “el preste, cuando se reviste, no se pone el estola cruzada por los pechos; cuando dize el Evangelio, vuelve las espaldas al altar e la cara al pueblo contra ellos [. . .].” More seriously, Eastern Catholics fail in their obligation to fast: “de Pascua Mayor fasta Pascua de Pentecosté, comen carne

todos los días, así el viernes como toda la semana; e dizen qu'el día que Iesu Christo murió, fue bautizado.” In summary, Clavijo concludes that “otras algunas menguas tienen en la fee, pero son muy devotos e oyen la misa devotamente” (165). He recognizes the devotion of these Christian Others even as he points out the “menguas” in their religious practices.

This description of the Armenians and their faith is immediately followed by an even more extensive examination of that of the Greeks. The tone is virtually identical:

Los griegos otrosí son gente muy devota, salvo que ha en ellos muchos yerros en la fee. Lo primero, consagran con pan que ha levadura [. . .]. E el clérigo que dize la misa, no lo ven las gentes [. . .]. Cuando oficia la misa, no tiene libro ni tañen campanas en las iglesias, salvo en Santa Sofía de Costantinopla, que con unas tablas tañen a misa. E los clérigos son casados e no casan más de una vez e con muger virgen; e desque aquella muere, no casan más [. . .]. E otrosí yerran en el bautismo e en otras ciertas cosas. E dizen que cuando algund omne fina e usó mal d'este mundo, entienden que es pecador mucho, desque es finado, vístenlo de paños de Orden e múdanle el nombre por qu'el diablo no le conozca. E estas opiniones e otras tienen, pero son gente muy devota e de gran oración.” (166-67)

These passages, when taken together with the earlier observations I have cited, offer a representative sample of Clavijo's attitude toward non-Catholic Christians. He clearly acknowledges that they are in fact Christian and regularly praises their devotion. Even so, he seems to be genuinely troubled by the fact that these groups, who from

Clavijo's perspective share his own faith, commit such a large number of "errors" in both doctrine and in practice. It is true that some of the differences he points out, such as the position of the priest in relation to the altar and to his flock during Mass, may appear to be of limited importance. Others, however, are clearly issues of substance. The idea that a dead body could be disguised in order that it escape Satan's notice, although in truth it has a certain appeal, is clearly at odds with the teachings of Roman Catholicism as well as those of other Christian denominations. Other issues, such as that of whether priests should be allowed to marry, continue to cause dissension both between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and within the Roman Catholic Church even today: the question of priestly celibacy was one of the most contentious issues to face the Church during the long papacy of John Paul II.

Clavijo's detailed commentaries on the religious practice of other Christians are particularly striking when compared with his observations about those of non-Christians. Daly asserts that "Greeks and Armenians are considered an inferior type of Christian, yet they are Christians, and they therefore occupy a position closer to Clavijo and his men than that of the Muslim others they encounter traveling through Timur's territory" (98). Strictly speaking this is certainly true. Yet as I have suggested, he seems to be more concerned with the "yerros en la fee" of other Christians than of the much greater "errors" of Muslims. In one sense this is not surprising: it is perhaps human nature to be most critical of precisely those people and ideas which are closest to us. This would logically be the case if, as in Clavijo's time, Christian unity was in some ways threatened from within as much as by external forces. More broadly, however, this rather critical view of other Christians, when combined with a generally uncritical attitude toward

Islamic religious practices is surprising in a Castilian of Clavijo's time. It was not, however, unique: even a figure such as Columbus would often find less to fear from people whose religious beliefs were utterly different from his own than from other Christians. In order to analyze Clavijo's contrasting treatment of Christianity and Islam, I examine some representative passages in which he discusses the latter religion and its adherents in the following section.

2.2. Religion and Difference: Christianity and Islam

As I have indicated above, the Catholic orthodoxy and sincere faith of Clavijo and his men is not in question. He writes "en'l nombre de Dios [. . .] e de la Virgen Santa María" (80). They constantly ask God for his assistance, and they regularly give thanks to him after escaping from dangerous situations. However, their faith does not appear to be accompanied by the visceral fear and hatred of Islam that one might expect to observe in the writings of a man who ventured deep into the Muslim world less than a century before the Catholic Monarchs would force the conversion or exile of all Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. This tolerance is apparent throughout the pages of the Embajada in personal, political, and even explicitly religious terms.

That Clavijo bears no particular ill will toward individual Muslims with whom he comes in contact is perhaps most apparent in the passages referring to the "cavallero chaatrax que avía nombre Mahomad Alcagi" (79). The ambassadors depend on Alcagi's linguistic talents, of course, but they also clearly regard him as a valued member of the expedition and, at times, even as a friend and companion. This is particularly obvious in the passage in which Clavijo recounts an incident at Timur's court shortly before they were presented to the man himself. The group enters Timur's palace in Samarkand and

the men are told to advance. They do so, and Alcagi, “el embaxador del Tamurbeque que enviara al señor Rey de Castilla,” is among them. He is, however, not dressed in the manner of his countrymen. Rather, he steps forward “vestido a la usança del Rey de Castilla.” This fact might, of course, be interpreted as a suggestion that Alcagi’s loyalties had shifted. One might also expect some sort of negative reaction from Timur’s courtiers. In the event, however, “reían los que lo veían porque iba vestido de aquella manera” (258).

These words do not in themselves convey any explicit message to the reader about Clavijo’s attitude toward Alcagi or his religion: if anything, they suggest a measure of tolerance on the part of Timur’s men. In context, however, this passage is significant. By this point in the voyage, the ambassadors had been traveling together for well over a year. Together they had crossed the Mediterranean and a good portion of Central Asia. They had endured much, including the threat of death at sea and of illness. They had lost one of the principal members of the expedition. In sum, they had shared an extraordinary and difficult experience, and it seems difficult to imagine that they would not have become close friends. The above words about Alcagi’s dress, moreover, which Clavijo relates simply as an amusing anecdote, suggest clearly that religious differences do not, at least on the level of individuals, necessarily prevent people from laughing together and forming bonds of friendship. Also, as I point out in the discussion of the Andanças e viajes, such a scene as this one, involving an individual dressed in a way that does not correspond to his religion or his nationality, could easily have been interpreted in a different and much more threatening way had such bonds not already been established.

Clavijo's tolerance extends beyond the personal. While he certainly considers Islam to be a theologically unacceptable alternative to Christianity, he is perfectly capable of appreciating the achievements of Islamic civilization. This is especially noticeable in his descriptions of Islamic places of worship. As I have indicated above in my discussion of his descriptions of unfamiliar subjects ranging from cities to foods, Clavijo consistently demonstrates a strong tendency to base his judgments on what he observes. The fact that a mosque is the supreme architectural manifestation of a religion that is not his own does not prevent him from remarking on its beauty. The city of Tabriz, for example, interests Clavijo because of its "muy grandes edificios de casas e mezquitas, fechas de maravillosa obra de azulejos e de losas e de azul e de oro e de obra de gesería, e vidrieras muy hermosas e muchas" (200). Despite the long periods of relative harmony in the Peninsula, the fact remains that these mosques were centers of worship for believers in a different and frequently hostile religion. For Clavijo, this fact in no way diminishes their artistic value: he finds it unnecessary even to mention religion in his description.

The beauty of these mosques, it should be emphasized, is of far more than passing interest to Clavijo. He returns to the subject at the end of his description of Tabriz: "E otrosí en esta ciudat avía muchas mezquitas e muy ricas e muy hermosas; e otrosí avía muchos baños, los más solepnes que creo que en el mundo pueden ser" (202). This is high praise indeed, both for the mosques and for the baths, and it is made even more emphatic by Clavijo's atypical use of the first person, which serves to emphasize the personal nature of his observation. The mention of these baths, moreover, is significant in itself: love of water had long been considered a stereotypically Moorish trait by the

Christians of the Iberian Peninsula. This was so much the case, in fact, that in the years of the Inquisition, a fondness for bathing could by itself be sufficient to call into question the sincerity of a New Christian's religious beliefs. Finally, it is worth noting that these mosques (and baths) were not unthreatening relics to be admired as remnants of a vanquished civilization as Christians would admire the Great Mosque of Córdoba in future centuries. Rather, they were concrete symbols of a flourishing, contemporary, and potentially threatening Muslim society.

Nor was the threat to Christians from Timur and his coreligionists merely theoretical. Timur's regime was undeniably brutal. In an appealing phrase, René Grousset describes him as "a Philip II descended from Attila" (415), although it should be noted that Timur seems to have lacked Felipe's piety. Clavijo was well aware of this fact, and the text of the Embajada includes various stories of brutal acts committed by Muslims. Clavijo certainly does not gloss over Timur's acts of cruelty, be they directed against other Muslims or against Christians.

One particularly clear example of the latter is the treatment that Timur metes out to the Christian community of Arzinga. The Muslims of that city were unhappy that the Tratan, the Muslim ruler of the city, sometimes seemed to treat the Christians with more tolerance than he showed toward his Muslim subjects: "les catava más onra que no a ellos, e que eran más revelados, e que avían iglesias que eran mejores que las sus mesquitas" (180). After discussing the situation with Tratan, Timur calls a leader of the Christian community before him and demands that he renounce his faith. Not surprisingly, the Christian leader refuses to do so. Timur is not pleased: "porque no lo quiso fazer, [Timur] mandava matar todos los cristianos de la ciudat" (300). Tratan

intercedes on behalf of his Christian subjects, and apparently succeeds in saving their lives after reaching an agreement in which cash changed hands. Even so, the episode concludes with the destruction of “todas las iglesias de los cristianos” on the orders of Timur (300).

This passage is illustrative of Clavijo’s attitude toward Timur and toward Christian-Muslim relations in general. By no means does Clavijo seek to minimize the harshness of Timur’s rule: the casual order for the destruction of all the Christians’ houses of worship clearly demonstrates the lack of regard of Timur for their religion. Also, despite the lack of explicit commentary to this effect, the observation that the churches of Arzinga were somehow better than the city’s mosques can be read as a concrete case of Christian superiority, from Clavijo’s perspective, over their Muslim neighbors. Clavijo is not an apologist, whether for Timur or for Islam in general.

Yet a careful reading of this passage shows that the situation is more complex than it first appears. In the first place, Timur does, for whatever reason, retract his initial order that all the Christians be put to death. Second, Clavijo’s description of the reasons for the Muslims’ initial unhappiness, even with its suggestion of Christian architectural superiority, leaves open the possibility that the Muslims might have been justified in their claim of unfair treatment. Also, the passage shows at least one Muslim—Tratan—in a relatively positive light: it is his relatively generous treatment of the Christians under his rule that causes the initial problem, and he intercedes with words and treasure to prevent their deaths. The word “Muslim” is by no means a synonym in Clavijo’s mind for the term “cruel.”

It is also noteworthy that Clavijo describes this series of events with little explicit commentary of his own. As I have noted previously, this approach is typical of Clavijo's text, but he is certainly capable of expressing opinions when he wishes to do so. In this case, apparently, he does not.

Finally, this passage is a sort of microcosm for Clavijo's view of Timur in general. The Mongol leader is harsh, certainly. He is also a Muslim, although, as Daly points out, not a particularly devout one (116). The fact that Tratan is able to assuage his anger over the supposed mistreatment of other Muslims with money shows that Timur, in Clavijo's view, is not motivated primarily by religious fervor. Clavijo highlights this fact even more clearly in the paragraphs following the description of subsequent events in Arzinga:

E el Tamurbeque tomó un castillo d'esta ciudat que ha nombre Amag, e diole a un su chacatí, que lo toviese por él. Esto él fezo por quanto el dicho castillo es muy fuerte e lugar que riende mucho, e es guarda de toda esta tierra, e por él pasan muchas mercadurías a muchas partes, así como a la Suria e a la Turquía. (180-81)

Timur's primary interest in Arzinga is for strategic reasons (it includes a well-defended and strategically located castle) and for economic ones (the city is located on important trade routes). Finally, the fact that he installs as his lieutenant "un su chacatí," that is, a member of his own clan or ullus, suggests that ties of clan are more important, and by implication, more likely to inspire continued loyalty, than shared religion alone. It is also important to remember that Clavijo had been sent to Timur's court precisely because his monarch was interested in the Mongol conqueror as a possible counterweight to the

advancing Ottoman Turks. Daly also makes this point: “it was perhaps easier for the Castilians to recognize Timur as a potential ally [. . .] than to acknowledge his religious difference” (133). Clavijo, in sum, is far more interested in Timur’s political, military, and economic policies, and, as will be seen below, in his personal behavior, than in his religion.

2.3. Cities and Their Inhabitants

To a greater degree than Tafur, Clavijo includes background information about the places and people he observes. At times the information is about contemporary political events such as the internecine conflicts of the imperial family of Constantinople. Often the information is historical or even mythological, as when their party sees some ruins on the island of Cetril. Clavijo describes what he sees: “paresció un gran pedaço de muro y torres derrocado.” He then adds information to convey to the reader the significance of the object described: “[. . .] e dixeron que allí fuera el templo que derrocara Paris cuando rovara a Elena e quebrantara el ídolo, al tiempo qu’el rey Príamo, su padre, lo enviara fazer guerra en Grecia” (94). In this passage, the explanation is actually longer than the description of the ruins, but it is worth noting that Clavijo, typically, draws a clear distinction between what he and his men saw (“paresció”) and information that he is merely reporting (“e dixeron”). Clavijo recognizes the importance to the reader of this difference, which is especially helpful for the purposes of this study, which concentrates on what he saw and his reactions. A logical starting place for such a study is a topic which receives frequent attention in the Embajada. Clavijo and his men see many cities on their voyage. Some they only observe from a distance; others, such as

Constantinople and Samarkand, they visit for extended periods. In either case, Clavijo's observations are always careful and often trenchant.

In one of the few studies to make detailed comparisons between the Embajada and the work of Tafur, Rolf Eberenz studies the image of the city in the two texts. He observes that the techniques employed in the descriptions of the cities are similar. He also points out that discourse about cities has traditionally distinguished between "urbs" and "civitas": "c'est-à-dire entre la réalité matérielle et la communauté humaine que l'habite" (35). In the case of Clavijo, Eberenz correctly notes that the former is accorded more importance. He goes so far as to suggest that Clavijo sees cities essentially as works of civil engineering (35). This is certainly true in some measure. As an example, Eberenz offers Clavijo's description of Trapizond (35-36). Other examples are easy to find. One of the more interesting, which Eberenz mentions only briefly, is that of the city of Pera. As Clavijo explains (and Eberenz does refer to this passage), Pera is near Constantinople:

"E la ciudat de Constantinopla está junto con el mar, e las dos partes d'ella cerca el mar, como vos he dicho; e de fruenta d'ella está la ciudat de Pera. E entre amas las ciudades, está el puerto. Constantinopla está así como Sevilla, e la ciudat de Pera, así como Triana; e el puerto e los nabíos, en medio." (144)

Having described the geographical situation of the two cities and their port, and having offered a comparison to make the physical relationship more comprehensible to his Spanish readers, Clavijo proceeds to describe the city itself:

La ciudat de Pera es una ciudat pequeña e bien poblada e de buen muro e de buenas casas e bien fermosas, e es de genoeses e del señoría de Genoa; e está poblada de genoeses e de griegos, e junta está con el mar. Entre el muro e la mar, no ha más anchura de quanto una carraca podría ir, poco más. E la cerca va junto con el mar a luengo. E desí sale un cerro arriba; e en lo más alto, está una torre grande donde se velan e guardan la ciudat. E este cerro en que está la torre no es más alto, que, de partes de fuera, no está otro en su derecho que es más alto que no el que hestá en la ciudat.”

(145).

This passage provides an excellent illustration of Eberenz’s points. He writes of Clavijo’s “vue verbalisée” (35). Certain other aspects of the text, however, are of more interest here, above all for the information they provide about Clavijo’s values. In the first place, he is willing (as are Tafur, Columbus, and many of the authors of chronicles of the Indies) to draw explicit comparisons between the known (Seville and Triana) and the unknown (Constantinople and Pera). This sort of analogy is sometimes considered to be a negative reflection on the author: it can be seen as implying unwillingness to accept the unknown on its own terms and an insistence on forcing it to conform to the author’s known world whether or not it fits logically there. Certainly this sort of argument can be made, for instance, in the many cases where explorers applied the names of animals and plants from their homelands to new, often very different, species. Some might argue that frequent comparisons of foreign cities to known ones is part of a similar process. I would argue, however, that comparisons like this one are in fact a very different phenomenon. In this particular case, certainly, Clavijo is not offering a comparison between cities.

Rather, he is simply providing an analogy to describe the geographical relationship. The distinction between explicit comparison and analogy is, I believe, important. No value judgment is expressed or implied, and the fact that Seville and Triana, like Constantinople and Pera, are examples of a larger city separated from a smaller one by a body of water that serves as a port is exactly that: an indisputable fact. This is not to say that Clavijo never makes explicit comparisons of Spanish cities to foreign ones. He does, certainly. However, it is worth noting that in such comparisons, he sometimes describes the foreign city in terms that make it appear to be the equal of, if not superior to, the Spanish one. Samarkand, for instance, is “poco más grande que la ciudad de Sevilla” (310). Like Sevilla, Samarkand is surrounded by walls, but Clavijo emphasizes that in the case of Samarkand, “fuera de la ciudad, ay muy grand pueblo de casas que son ayuntadas como a barrios en muchas partes, ca la ciudad es toda en derredor cercada de muchas huertas e viñas” (310). Clavijo is neither bent on viewing the world as a sort of macrocosm of his homeland nor convinced that a Spanish city must automatically be somehow superior to one elsewhere.

One other aspect of this passage deserves special note here. Clavijo’s perspective is certainly utilitarian. The reader is informed of the existence of a port (necessary for commerce) and of the physical features (tower and wall) that provide for the defense of the city. The defense-related aspects of the city obviously receive more attention, which is perhaps logical for a Castilian of Clavijo’s time. Yet the mention of the port and of the city’s inhabitants shows that he is not indifferent to the practical details of civil life. This fact is even more apparent in other passages, where he makes frequent mention of agricultural activity. One of his favorite terms is “huerta”. The Italian city of Tarracina

has “huertas e árboles” (87). The nearby city of Gaeta has “muchas viñas e huertas e olivares” (87). Further afield, near Arzinga “el llano está eso mesmo todo labrado de panes e viñas e huertas e vergeles bien hermosos” (179).

Thus Clavijo’s description of urban landscapes neglects neither military fortifications nor economic life, both being essential if a city is to thrive. These passages, however, are not merely descriptive. Pera has not just a “muro” but a “buen muro.” Such a description is, admittedly, essentially utilitarian. A good wall is, one assumes, one that is sufficiently strong and well constructed to keep potential invaders from breaching it. Eberenz’s reference to civil engineering certainly seems apt here. The people of Pera, on the other hand, live not simply in “casas” or even “buenas casas,” but in “buenas casas e bien hermosas”. This last adjective is not in the least utilitarian (or, it might be added, the typical language of an engineer). To describe the houses of Pera or the flora of Arzinga as “fermoso” expresses a strictly esthetic judgment on the part of Clavijo.

Clavijo in these passages shows himself to be a careful observer, able to describe urban spaces in a strikingly spatial way. He is also able to use analogies to places likely to be more familiar to his readers without falling into the trap of conceiving the “Other” simply in terms of what is known to him. He sees himself, though, not as merely an observer. He is willing to evaluate what he sees, but to a surprising degree, he does so on the basis of his own observations rather than on preconceived notions. His descriptions of the food and drink encountered are equally vivid, and his opinions are equally forthright (if often less enthusiastic). Even on the question of food and drink, judgments about which can have surprisingly strong ideological, cultural, and religious bases, this

traveler tends to form opinions based on his own observations. I explore this issue in the following section.

2.4. An Abstemious Spaniard at Timur's Court

As described above, Clavijo's descriptions of urban centers frequently include references to the agricultural activities of their inhabitants. This interest is entirely logical, given the ambassadors' persistent curiosity about the lifestyles of the people whose cities they visit. Their interest in this area, however, is not limited to the farm: it extends to the preparation and consumption of food and drink. Clavijo is especially fascinated by the variety and quantity of victuals with which they are presented as guests at Timur's court.

This topic is of interest here for two reasons. In the first place, dietary customs are in many cases of fundamental importance to the cultural identities of religious, ethnic, and national groups. The observance of traditional dietary laws, for example, is an important aspect of religious life for observant Jews and Muslims. Similarly, the avoidance of meat during certain periods of the liturgical calendar has historically played a significant role in Catholics' practice of their faith, and Clavijo is well aware of this, as earlier examples indicate. Nor is such identification of food with culture limited to the sphere of religion. Culinary traditions are a fundamental part of national identity for many countries even today: French news reports on the wine industry regularly make plain that falling sales of French wine are a matter of concern that goes far beyond the realm of economics. Similarly, Europeans unhappy with U.S. foreign and economic policy have in recent years occasionally expressed their displeasure by vandalizing McDonald's restaurants.

Similarly, food can also be one of the most enduring links to ancestral culture among many immigrant groups, often persevering long after linguistic and other traditions have been replaced by those of the new country. In the U.S. state of Louisiana, for instance, young descendants of the French-speaking immigrants today rarely speak the language of their grandparents. They do, however, enthusiastically embrace their community's culinary traditions. Tracy N. Poe observes that the "red, green, and white cuisine" enjoyed by many Italian-American families, while often bearing little resemblance to the traditional foods of their ancestral homeland, nonetheless served as "a unifying force between the various regional Italian immigrant groups" (131). Likewise, on the level of the individual, food can be a tool for asserting one's cultural or even political identity, as is the case for many (although certainly not all) vegetarians in western societies.

Food, then, is a fundamental cultural identifier. Therefore, the reactions of Clavijo and his party to the food and drink they encounter among other cultural groups are of obvious interest as a way to gauge their reaction to the Other. More specifically, I demonstrate here that Clavijo's attitude toward unknown foods is entirely consistent with his reaction as he observes unknown cities. He describes certain dishes in detail, and his descriptions regularly include expressed or implied judgments. In general, however, these judgments are not based on religious grounds. Nor is he inclined to reject foods a priori simply on the grounds that they are different from those to which he is accustomed. Rather, Clavijo's main criterion for deciding whether a given food meets with his approval is, sensibly, whether he likes its taste. Such judgments thus provide another

example of Clavijo's willingness to describe (and sometimes to evaluate) the other based not on ideology but on his own esthetic values.

Clavijo makes relatively few references to food during the European stage of his voyage. This fact is not surprising, since he would have less occasion to come into contact with unknown products during his passage through the Mediterranean. Even during this part of the voyage, though, when he does notice dietary practices that he finds interesting, he comments on them, as in the case of some Greek monks on the island of Tanio. Clavijo notes, with evident approval, that they do not eat meat (110-11). He also includes occasional observations about the diet of the ambassadors themselves, as for example when the Emperor of Constantinople "envió a los dichos embajadores medio puerco que avía muerto" (134).

Not surprisingly, Clavijo's description of foods becomes more detailed as his party leaves the relatively familiar territory of Europe and enters the Asian domains of Timur. The ambassadors left Trebizond on April 28, 1404. On May 3 of that year they arrived at a village near Erzincan (Arzinga in the text) in present-day Turkey. Clavijo's description of life in this village is one of the first descriptions of life in lands ruled by Timur. The bread consumed by its inhabitants attracts Clavijo's attention: "E el cual pan d'estas aldeas era muy malo e fecho d'esta guisa: amasavan un poco de farina e fazían unas tortas delgadas e ponían unas sartenes sobre el fuego, e desque era caliente, echavan aquella torta dentro; e quando era caliente, sacávanla luego" (173). Here again, Clavijo presents his reader with a detailed description of what he sees and does not hesitate to give his opinion. Yet here there is no comparison with the sorts of bread that the ambassadors were accustomed to eating in Castile: Clavijo sees no need to find parallels

with his own culture. At the same time, he is willing to judge that the bread's quality is "muy malo." The accuracy of his description is also noteworthy. In his French translation of the work, Kehren includes a full-page undated color photograph of a woman preparing these "galettes que remplacent le pain" over a fire on what appears to be a cast iron griddle (146-47). The photo corresponds perfectly to Clavijo's description, thus offering additional proof of the fundamental and enduring importance of dietary traditions in the cultural lives of people.

This description of the ambassadors' reception in Erzincan is also of interest for the manner in which Clavijo combines a factual description of the preparation and serving of food with other, more disturbing aspects of daily life under Timur. Notwithstanding the doubtful quality of the bread, Clavijo observes that he and his party were served generously by order of Timur's ambassador. With no perceptible change in tone from his words describing the baking of bread, the Spaniard notes that service was also quick, since if the village's residents hesitated, the ambassador "dávalos de palos e de açotes, tantos que era maravilla" (174). Here, too, Clavijo is a disinterested observer of foreign customs. By using the term "maravilla," he expresses his surprise at such behavior, but this term has no particular positive or negative connotation for him.

Clavijo's striking enthusiasm for Central Asian melons, to which I allude above, is interesting for similar reasons. The frequency with which he praises this fruit is striking. They are at different points in the text "grandes y buenos" (226), "muchos y buenos" (232), "muchos e buenos e muy grandes" (243), and "muchos" (245). Indeed, "por Navidat ay tantos melones e ubas que es maravilla; e de cada día vienen muchos gamellos cargados de melones, e tantos que es maravilla cómo se gastan e comen" (311).

If camelloloads of melons have any particular religious or patriotic significance, I am unaware of it. Yet Clavijo mentions (and praises) them not once but repeatedly. He, perhaps to a greater degree than Tafur, is generally a careful writer: one rarely feels that the information he includes in his text is chosen at random. Perhaps the reason for the emphasis on this subject is simply that he is genuinely impressed by the abundance and quality of these melons. López Estrada, in a footnote, points out that “los melones son uno de los mejores frutos de esta tierra, aun hoy” (226). This explanation may seem either facile or of little interest, but in fact, it demonstrates once again that Clavijo is willing to praise aspects of the places he visits even when there is no clear ideological reason for doing so. Moreover, he considers such information to be important enough to merit relatively extensive commentary.

By far the most striking of Clavijo’s comments on matters of food and drink are related to the time he spent at the court of Timur in Samarkand. The descriptions of near-bacchanalian behavior figure prominently in the Embajada, but they are best understood as only one of many aspects of life at Timur’s court that strike the ambassadors as almost unbelievable. Clavijo’s amazement at what he sees is apparent from the moment they enter the city through a gate that is “labrada muy fermosamente de oro e de azul e de azulejos” (257). Opulence and culinary excess coexist with cases of stunning cruelty. At times celebration and brutality coexist, as when the ambassadors fail to attend a festival given in their honor. Their absence was judged to be the fault of a servant who failed to transmit their invitation. Timur is angered, and his guards inform the miscreant messenger that “[c]omo por ti oy el Señor es ensañado e avido enojo porque no estavas con los embaxadores de los francos, e por que te castigues e estés todavía presto,

mandamos que te foraden las narizes e te metan por ellas una cuerda, e te trayan por el ordo por que te castigues” (267). The sentence is eventually commuted, but it nonetheless demonstrates both the importance attached by Timur and his men to hospitality and the degree to which life in Samarkand under Timur was at once sensuous and brutal. Even so, Clavijo’s narrative maintains its matter-of-fact tone, and Timur’s religion is rarely mentioned.

The sensual aspects of life at Timur’s court are effectively conveyed by Clavijo in his description of their first meeting. Some of Timur’s men first take him the letter that Clavijo has brought from the King of Spain. After some time, they are invited to enter the presence of Timur. Their first glance of him is striking:

E el Señor estava en uno como portal que estava ante la puerta de la entrada de unas hermosas casas. E allí estava un estrado llano en el suelo, e ante él estava una fuente que lançava el agua alta, faza arriba; e en la fuente estaban unas mançanas coloradas.

E el Señor estava asentado en unos como almadragues pequeños de paños de seda borslados; e estava asentado de codo sobre unas almoadas redondas, e tenía vestidos una ropa de un paño de seda raso, sin labores; e en la cabeça tenía un sombrero blanco, alto, con un balax encima, e con aljófar e piedras. (259)

This image of Timur and his surroundings—flowing water in which apples were floating, luxurious cloths and soft pillows, and Timur himself resting on an elbow while wearing a richly adorned white hat—is certainly striking. On first reading, one is led to wonder if Clavijo is not consciously painting Timur as an exotic figure, as almost a

precursor to what Billie Melman describes as the “Saidian paradigm” of “colonial cross-cultural exchanges” (107). Significantly, Melman includes in her list of stereotypes of the Middle East “the image of the oriental despot” (107), which would certainly appear to be an accurate description of Timur, especially as he is described by Clavijo in this passage.

It is worth noting, though, that Clavijo’s description of his arrival at the court of Timur seems remarkably free of religious tension. More importantly, a Saidian reading of this passage is made almost impossible by the existence of a strikingly similar account of another foreign visitor to Timur, this one a Muslim, a few years previous. This traveler, the Tunisian Ibn Khaldun, arrived at Timur’s court at Damascus coming from Cairo in the year 1401. The Egyptians, under the rule of the child king Faraj, were under immediate threat from Timur: in the words of Franz Rosenthal, “[t]he Tatar hordes under Timur were . . . knocking at the Syrian gateway to Egypt” (Ibn Khaldun lxiii). The civilian authorities decided, against the wishes of the military, to surrender. Damascus fell and was promptly sacked, but, according to Rosenthal, “the civilian authorities’ lack of courage provided Ibn Khaldun with a chance to meet Timur face to face and to leave posterity a vivid account of their historic meeting,” which took place on January 10, 1401 (Ibn Khaldun lxiii). As is the case with Clavijo, his arrival is preceded by some confusion. As Rosenthal explains, Ibn Khaldun is unable to enter Timur’s compound by the normal route because the military authorities “were still in control of the city gates” (Ibn Khaldun lxiii). Therefore, he has himself lowered inside the city’s walls by ropes. Once inside the city, he is able to see Timur in short order. The following passage, in which Ibn Khaldun describes his initial presentation to Timur, is representative:

When my name was announced, the title “Maghribi Malikite Cadi” was added to it; he summoned me, and as I entered the audience tent to [approach] him he was reclining on his elbow while platters of food were passing before him which he was sending one after the other to groups of Mongols sitting in circles in front of his tent. (Fischel 31)

Ibn Khaldun’s account is much briefer than that of Clavijo, and, admittedly, certain aspects of an emissary’s presentation of himself before a ruler are almost inevitably going to have some similarities. Even so, this brief passage resembles Clavijo’s description in no less than three respects. In the first place, Ibn Khaldun is careful to make note of the degree to which Timur’s retinue shows him deference. Second, Timur is portrayed, through the description of his posture (Ibn Khaldun, like Clavijo, first encounters Timur while the latter is reclining on an elbow), as at once intimidating and vaguely sybaritic. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the description of food and eating features prominently in the description.

Food is also mentioned regularly in the remainder of Ibn Khaldun’s report of his time with Timur. Ibn Khaldun had, on the advice of a friend, brought “four boxes of the excellent Cairo sweetmeats” as a gift to Timur. When the ruler was presented with this gift, he accepted it “and took a bit of them, according to the custom of courtesy, and he distributed the sweetmeats in the box among those present at his council. He accepted all this and indicated that he was pleased with it” (Fischel 42).

Later during the period that Ibn Khaldun spends with Timur, he tells of being served “some of the kind of food which they call ‘rishta’ and which they were most expert in preparing. Some dishes of it were brought in, and [Timur] made a sign that they

should be set before me. I arose, took them, and drank, and liked it, and this impressed him favorably.” Rishta, according to Ibn Khaldun’s English translator, is a term for both dried macaroni “and also a soup containing it” (Fischel 78).

Again, these passages are of interest here because of their striking resemblance to Clavijo’s own experience. Even more, they show the degree to which a Muslim visitor to Timur is struck by many of the same practices and customs as Clavijo. The meeting with Timur was, after all, the most important moment of the ambassadors’ voyage. Yet Clavijo does not feel compelled to view Timur through a prism of religious prejudice, and he paints a portrait of Timur that is remarkably similar to that of another traveler who was himself a Muslim.

Returning to Clavijo’s text, one is struck by the continued references to food and drink. The descriptions of the behavior at the banquets and parties that the ambassadors attended are similar in tenor to the passage quoted above, although Clavijo does at times seem bemused by the drinking habits of his hosts. These descriptions are noteworthy in the first place for their number. A representative sample, with approximate dates, follows.

- Clavijo and his men arrive at Samarkand on September 8, 1404. They are welcomed with a meal including “muchos carneros adovados e albóndigas e arroz de muchas maneras.” To drink, they enjoyed “leche de yeguas con azúcar, que es un buen brebaje que ellos fazen para en tiempo de verano” (263-64).
- On September 15, “mandó el Señor fazer una grand fiesta, a la cual ordenó que viniesen los dichos embaxadores” (265).

- On September 22, “ordenó el Señor una grand fiesta.” Furthermore, “en esta fiesta mandó el Señor que beviesen vino, e bebió él eso mismo [. . .]. E el vino dan ellos antes de comer, e dan a beber tantas vezes e tan a menudo, que fazen a los omnes beúdos; e que no ternían que sería alegría ni fiesta, sino se embeudasen” (268).
- On September 29, “el Señor mandó fazer [. . .] una grand fiesta.” (271).
- On October 6, Timur orders yet another “gran fiesta” (272). Yet another is celebrated the next day (278).
- On October 8, a relative of Timur’s celebrates her wedding, and “ante ella estaban puestas muchas jarras de vino, e otras, que tenían brebaje que ellos beven mucho, que llaman vezin, que es de leche de yeguas, fecho con açúcar” (279). When the ambassadors arrived at the party, the other, men and women, “estavan beviendo” (280). “E este beber no pesedes que duró poco, mas un grand rato, e sin comer” (280).

These comments are, as mentioned above, striking because of their frequency. They are also noteworthy because of their tone. Daly quotes some of these same passages and finds their tone to be negative: she suggests that “[t]he Mongol love of alcohol and admiration for drunkards, negative and ignoble qualities in the eyes of the Castilians, reflects a critique of Mongol society and customs” (124). It is true that there is an element of criticism. Yet I disagree with Daly’s reading. I find Clavijo’s tone here to be uncharacteristically jocular. Flashes of humor or of obvious relish in telling amusing stories occur only occasionally in Clavijo’s narrative: if one wished, one might describe the Embajada as a very sober text. It is obvious, however, that Clavijo derives

real pleasure from recounting these stories of drunken “fiestas” at Timur’s court. This attitude is especially interesting because Clavijo himself, ironically, was a teetotaler: “Ruy Gonçales no bevía vino” (292). For some of the people he meets, this fact is a defining feature of the Spaniard: on one occasion he is explicitly pointed out as “el cavallero que no bevía vino, que era Ruy Gonçales” (178). Even so, Clavijo’s attitude is not particularly critical, at least if one disregards the slightly humorous tenor of some of his comments. Rather, he seems to recognize that excesses of food and drink are in some sense a logical component of life at Timur’s court, which is utterly unlike anything he has seen before. From the opulence of the houses, in which tables of gold are covered with “aljófar bien grueso e de esmeraldas e turqueas” (266) to the incredible fourteen elephants that serve the emperor, each of which carried “un castillo de madero encima que eran cubiertos de paño de seda” (293), the things Clavijo sees at Timur’s court are simply beyond anything that he or his men have observed before. In such an environment, outlandish displays of alcohol consumption must have seemed unsurprising.

In fact, I would suggest that the very enormity of the differences in behavior and customs may have actually made the ambassadors less rather than more inclined to record negative judgments about their hosts and their way of life. In some sense, it must have been easier for them to observe and to criticize the behavior of other Europeans, whose religion and cultural traditions were different from but not wholly unlike their own than for them to assimilate and assess the behavior of people whose customs were completely unknown to them. This fact is particularly apparent in Clavijo’s attitude toward his hosts’ religion. The above descriptions of alcohol consumption are a case in point, as I

describe in the following section of this study. Timur and the men and women who surrounded him at court were, at least nominally, Muslims. This makes their enthusiasm for alcohol especially surprising, since, as López Estrada correctly observes, “[e]sto no conviene con las normas de un Islam ortodoxo, y aquí hay que considerar el fondo chamanítico de estas gentes y sus costumbres ancestrales” (176n). This fact should not be surprising: I have already pointed out that a cultural group’s customs related to food and drink are often among the most deep-rooted and lasting. In fact, the attitude of Islam with regard to alcohol is much more complex than is typically assumed. López Estrada quotes a passage from the Koran in which wine is described as a “bello sustento,” and points out that the Koran’s strictest alcohol-related edict is against attending prayers while under the influence (176n).⁴ Nor is the Islamic prohibition against alcohol consumption universally observed even today. This appears to be the case especially among non-Arab Muslim societies. The U.S. Department of Agriculture helpfully reports that Turkish producers of raki, a “hard Turkish alcoholic drink [. . .] made with low quality raisins,” annually consume some 70,000 metric tons of “fresh or dried grapes, including raisins” (4). According to a recent Australian newspaper article, in contrast to the Visigothic concept of the law as a code of behavior that should be applied equally to all the inhabitants of a nation, Pakistani leader Ali Bhutto prohibited the sale of alcohol to Pakistani Muslims in 1977. The law continued to allow sales to non-Muslims. The same newspaper reports that “[w]hile purchase permits are issued to Christians, Hindus and

⁴ In this context, it is interesting to note the following words from Leviticus, in which the Lord warns Aaron against the same practice: “Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations” (Lev. 10:9).

others, they are then largely sold on to Muslims,” thus providing an additional source of income to Pakistan’s religious minorities (“Lone Brewer Small Beer in Pakistan”). Even in Arabic-speaking Morocco, bars operate openly in large cities. Some caution, then, is clearly necessary when dealing with this topic.

Even so, the fact remains that orthodox Muslims have traditionally avoided alcohol, and it seems safe to assume that this fact would have been known to Clavijo and his men. Yet the text of the Embajada, despite the extensive discussion of alcohol consumption, makes no reference to this fact. At first glance, it may appear that Clavijo’s lack of interest in this question could be a consequence of a lack of respect for the tenets of non-Christian religions. I believe, however, that this is another case in which the ambassadors are in fact more tolerant of and less ready to criticize the rituals and conduct of people whose religion is very different from their own than of Europeans who practice different versions of Christianity, especially when such behavior presents them with no threat.

3. Tafur: Traveling on One’s Own Account

In the introduction to his English translation of Tafur’s Andanças é viajes, Malcolm Lett bluntly informs his readers that Tafur “tells us much that is valueless, and at times omits the very things we desire most to know” (17). This assessment is in my estimation too harsh, but it does serve to point out the somewhat inconsistent nature of this text. As I have noted previously, Tafur, unlike Clavijo, composed his narrative many years after completing his travels, and the fact that Tafur tells the story of several different voyages tends to reduce the thematic unity of his text. Also, this work, like the voyages themselves, was undertaken for personal rather than political reasons. For all

these reasons, direct comparisons between the Embajada and Andanças é viajes are problematic. Even so, Tafur naturally discusses many of the same issues as Clavijo, most notably relations both personal and political between West and East. His conclusions are in large measure similar to those of Clavijo: he is surprisingly tolerant of people of other faiths, and is not at all hesitant to reproach fellow Christians for their own shortcomings. There are, however, differences in emphasis. While Clavijo aims much of his criticism at non-Catholic Christians, Tafur tends to reproach fellow Roman Catholics. Also, where Clavijo typically makes note of political and military leaders with whom he has contact, Tafur typically prefers to concentrate on other travelers and assorted individuals whom for whatever reason he finds interesting. The main part of this section is organized around two specific sections of Andanças é viajes: Tafur's descriptions of two cities. The first, Rome, is of course a Christian, western city, cradle of Latin civilization and home of the Roman Catholic Church. The second passage considered here is the one in which Tafur describes his visit to Jerusalem and surrounding areas, where Christians of different denominations coexisted—not always easily—with Muslims.

3.1. The Past as Other: Tafur in Rome

[. . .] qualquiere tiempo passado fue mejor.

-Jorge Manrique (148)

After arriving at Venice, Tafur made inquiries about continuing on to the Holy Land. He was told that he “non lo podía fazer dende á tres meses, por que acostumbran los naviós, que fazen el pelegrinaje, non partir fasta el dia de la Açension, que es en el mes de Mayo” (20). He decided to spend those three months exploring Italy and ultimately spent the entire Lenten season in Rome.

Rome in Tafur's time presented the visitor with many contradictions. Despite the destruction inflicted by time and by humans, the ruins of the city's classical past were still very much in evidence. Rome's role as home of the Catholic Church was demonstrated by the city's churches and monuments. On the other hand, the contemporary city was neither particularly pleasant nor particularly healthy. In Lett's words, "[t]he buildings and houses had fallen into decay: the streets, reduced in some cases to marshes or filled with rubbish, were hardly passable" (5). Tafur comments in some detail on each of these aspects of the city. His observations tell the reader much about his attitude toward the unknown.

The notion that the past is another country has perhaps become a commonplace, but the observation would have made perfect sense to Tafur as he visited Rome. His homeland, of course, had been an important part of the Roman Empire. His native language had its origins in Latin, of which, to judge from his ability to read inscriptions, he had at least some knowledge. In Rome he would have been literally surrounded by physical reminders of the city's past. Yet Ancient Rome clearly seemed very distant to him as he surveyed the landscape. What he saw clearly affected him deeply: more than once he laments that he is unable adequately to describe the city. Of the old buildings that he observes, he comments that "yo dubdo non solamente poderlos escribir, mas aún aver mirado entiendo como se devía" (21). He asks for the reader's indulgence: "si yo, segunt la magnificencia é grandeza de la cosa, en algo menguare, sea perdonado, porque yo non soy bastante á tan grant fecho [. . .]" (21-22).

There is no doubt that Tafur was much impressed, as reflected by his frequent use in this passage of terms such as "magnífico." He writes of "magníficas obras" (22),

“cosas é obras magníficas é así miraculosamente fechas” (24), and a church whose entrance is “magnífica” (25). Of the Coliseum he writes that:

fué, segunt dizen, el mayor é el mejor é más rico edificio que en el mundo fué fecho, é bien paresçe, aunque por la mayor parte está desfecho, su grandeza é maravillosa fábrica. É sería largo de dezir cómo los romanos tenían este Coliseo, é con quanta reverençia, é la estatua que allí tenían, tan grande, que teniendo los pies en el suelo, tenía la cabeça en lo más alto de la techumbre [. . .]. (30-31)

Apart from providing an illustration of the almost unbounded enthusiasm that Tafur feels for the monuments of ancient Rome, this passage demonstrates two other important aspects of Tafur’s record of his visit to that city. In the first place, it offers another example of Tafur’s admitted inability—or, in this case, unwillingness for reasons of space—to even attempt to do justice to the object of his description. Second, this text shows the esteem in which he held the ancient Romans, who after all constructed this “rico edificio” and who, once it had been constructed, held it in great reverence. Tafur shares this attitude, and in some sense identifies with the Romans despite his temporal remoteness from them. I return to this issue in the following pages, but for the moment it is sufficient to observe that Tafur is willing to praise a people who lived many centuries before his own time and, significantly, did not share his religious faith. Indeed the fact that the Coliseum was on occasion the site of cruel persecution of early Christians seems not to have concerned Tafur in the least. He concludes his description of the Coliseum with even more words of encomium: “Como quier que ello sea, este Coliseo muestra aver deydo una muy magnífica é suntuosa obra” (31).

One could argue that I am attaching too much significance to Tafur's fascination with a ruin: after all, if a present-day tourist were to visit Rome and write an enthusiastic description of the Coliseum (or of, for instance, Saint Peter's Basilica), no one would think to draw any conclusions about that traveler's attitudes toward Roman (or Christian) religious beliefs. Also, admittedly, many of the monuments of ancient Rome date from before the time of Christ, so to criticize them for not being Christians would be problematic. In the case of Tafur, however, I believe that the interest and enthusiasm he shows for Roman civilization is important. This is especially noticeable in the passages in which he describes Roman religious monuments with little or no condemnation of their beliefs. I provide examples in the following paragraphs. First, however, it is worthwhile to consider Tafur's description of the area surrounding the Coliseum, which in his text immediately follows that of the ruin itself. He mentions the statues of Octavius Augustus, which, according to legend, would collapse when the Virgin Mary gave birth. Tafur reports that this did in fact occur, and that the destruction of these buildings continues apace in his own day: "aún se dize que en cada año en el dia del nascimiento de Nuestro Señor una parte se cae" (31-32). Tafur is clearly less impressed with this story, which he has only heard at second hand ("se dize"), than with the wonders of the ancient city that he had seen with his own eyes. Yet he makes a point of immediately following his praise of the Coliseum with this bit of Christian religious lore. It seems clear to me that geography was not his only reason for doing so. I believe that Tafur was conscious of the fact that if his praise of the ancient city was too fulsome, some readers could object that he appeared to be valuing a pagan civilization more highly than that of contemporary, Christian Rome.

In her study, Daly flatly declares that “Tafur’s own personal religiosity does not appear to be that of a pious Catholic [. . .]” (139). I would hesitate to go that far, but it is certainly the case that, as Daly also points out, Tafur was not really a Christian pilgrim to Rome in any conventional sense (150). His main enthusiasm is reserved for assorted non-Christian features of the city. He is impressed by the walls that surround the city and by the quality of their construction: “ansí lavrado é enfiesto, que parece que hoy sale de la mano del maestro” (22). He is equally struck by their durability, noting that “la obra es tal, que, áun derribándola é estruyéndola, non la pueden acabar, quanto más dexándola estar como los antiguos la fabricaron” (22-23). In a similar vein, he acknowledges, without express criticism, that some of beliefs of non-Christian Romans were also long-lasting, as demonstrated by an idol, worshipped not only by non-Christians but also “secretamente de algunos aunque xpianos, porque algo les oviese quedado del rito gentílico” (23-24).

This religious syncretism, to which Tafur does not appear to object, is also manifest in his description of Saint Peter’s Basilica itself. Not surprisingly, most of his observations relate to the Christian traditions surrounding the site: he is particularly impressed by the altar where the bodies of Saint Peter and Saint Paul are located, and he makes special mention of “la silla donde Sant Pedro fué asentado” (26). Yet in the same passage, he mentions “una alta torre fecha de un pedaço de losa” that had been constructed to honor Julius Caesar (26). While he does express concern about some people’s apparent belief—incorrect, of course, from his perspective, that this tower “sea cosa santa” (26), Tafur nonetheless recognizes that “çiertamente es un noble edificio é maravillosamente ordenado” (27).

This attitude permeates Tafur's description of ancient Rome. The monuments of early Christianity are of far more interest to him than those of the gentiles. Even so, he is willing to describe the latter, and he rarely feels obliged to condemn the religious practices of non-Christian Rome. Moreover, he laments the decay of many of these monuments, which he attributes in part to "la antiguedad del tiempo, en el qual todas las cosas se consumen" (22). The passage of time, however, is not the only culprit: Tafur also relates the story of Pope Gregory I. This pontiff, who is probably best remembered today for his contributions to the development of plainsong or Gregorian chant, was also widely accused of having ordered the destruction of many of the remnants of pre-Christian Rome. As Tafur writes,

el papa Sant Gregorio, veyendo que los fieles xprianos que del universo allí concurrían, por procurar salvaçion de sus ánimas, viendo la magnificencia de los edificios, en tal manera espedían en los visitar, que empachavan el santo propósito con que vinieran, por tanto mandó desatar todas ó las más de las magníficas obras, que avían quedado de los antiguos tiempos (22).

Whether Pope Gregory was in fact responsible for the destruction of many ancient monuments is doubtful. At the least, this version of events is probably an exaggeration. The story, however, would have been well known to Tafur: Vives Gatell notes in a footnote to his textual analysis of this passage that "[s]on varios los autores medievales que atribuyen al papa Gregorio Magno la destrucción de los monumentos paganos" (78). More interesting is Tafur's attitude toward Gregory's alleged actions as demonstrated in the passage quoted above. While he is careful to explain in detail the pious reasoning

behind Gregory's decision to order the destruction of monuments, Tafur also refers to these same monuments as "magníficas obras," thereby strongly implying that he considers their destruction to be a cause for regret.

In summary, Tafur is an unabashed admirer of the remnants of ancient Rome that he is able to observe during his visit, be they pagan or Christian. In this he is by no means unusual: Vives Gatell points out that almost all medieval travelers to Rome shared similar sentiments (78n). Even so, Tafur's enthusiasm is significant because it demonstrates a certain universality of outlook. An architectural work or a statue need not be Spanish, nor Christian, nor contemporary in order for Tafur to appreciate it and to respect the culture that produced it. This broadminded attitude, even if not unusual in itself, is certainly worthy of note: fifteenth-century Castilians are not often thought of as great admirers of artifacts produced by cultures very different from their own.

Even more important, the passages I have discussed in the previous pages provide a basis for comparison with Tafur's description of the Rome of his own day. The picture he paints of the city and its residents is not attractive. In her dissertation, Merschel quotes Sofía Carrizo Rueda, who accuses Tafur of engaging in "invektiva in romanos" (92). He is certainly harsh in some of his judgments. Even the Pope's residence is unimpressive: "es comunal aposentamiento, mas, segunt yo lo vi, mal parado" (25). In addition, Tafur emphasizes that Rome is not a healthy environment for its inhabitants, and that its population is in decline, with many great buildings currently being uninhabited because of the poor quality of the air. In particular, he mentions "bóvedas baxas, que agora están desabitadas," from which "sale tan inponçoñable ayre, que faze impresion en los cuerpos humanos" (27). Even the church of Saint John Lateran, where

“se faze la election del Papa,” is large but “non rica, nin bien labrada, nin limpia, nin bien aderesçada” (30).⁵

Tafur also points out that Rome, despite its size, has wild animals living inside the walls of the city: “liebres é raposos, é lobos, é ciervos, é dizen que puercrespines” (36). Even more damning, the cities inhabitants are from his point of view barely civilized. They attempt to maintain a veneer of respectability: “en sus çirimonias non pierde nada de aquello que, quando sojudgava al mundo, tenía; pero está en tan baxo estado que dezirlo es vergonçoso” (34). The Romans’ true interests, however, lie elsewhere. Given his interest in the ancient city, Tafur naturally makes inquiries among the city’s residents, but he never finds anyone “que me sopiese dar raçon de aquellas cosas antiguas por que yo demandava; mas creo que lo supieran dar de las tavernas é lugares desonestos” (35).

Between the Rome of Caesar’s or Constantine’s time and the Rome of his own day, Tafur very clearly prefers the former. Furthermore, this preference is not based on mere nostalgia for an imagined, glorious past. Rather, it springs from his own experience as a visitor to that city. As Lett puts it, Tafur’s time in Rome “must have been something of a penance in itself, for Rome in 1436 cannot have been a very pleasant place” (5). Even so, the fact that Tafur is willing to make the comparison in such an explicit way and to express his preference so unambiguously is striking. In much the same way that Clavijo is often more tolerant and less judgmental in his appraisal of people and places that are far removed geographically and culturally from his own country, so is Tafur

⁵ The Church of Saint John Lateran is still used for the election of popes. The College of Cardinals met there in April, 2005 to elect Pope Benedict XVI.

capable of enthusiasm for ancient Rome—a place remote from him in temporal terms.⁶

This open-mindedness on Tafur's part is also apparent in his description of his visit to Jerusalem, a contemporary city that impresses him far more favorably than the Rome of his day. That experience is the subject of the following section of this study.

3.2. The Guided Pilgrim: Tafur in the Holy Land

The Encyclopedia Britannica entry for the Crusades declares that the Crusaders' objectives were "to check the spread of Islam, to retake control of the Holy Land, to conquer pagan areas, and to recapture formerly Christian territories" ("Crusades."). Judged against these objectives, the Crusades were not particularly successful. While it may well be true that they helped prevent Islam from spreading throughout Western Europe, they certainly did not succeed in recapturing large amounts of land from the Muslims. As Runciman succinctly states, "The Crusades were launched to save Eastern Christendom from the Moslems. When they ended the whole of Eastern Christendom was under Moslem rule" (469). This was not yet entirely the case when Tafur was traveling: Constantinople would not fall until 1453. But it is important to remember how far to the west Islam's hegemony extended in Tafur's time in order to appreciate fully how deeply he penetrated into the world of the Muslim "Other" during his second voyage. When he left Venice on Ascension Day of 1437, the day on which "los navíos,

⁶ A central argument of Merschel's study of Tafur's time in Rome relates to her thesis that Tafur wrote largely to promote himself as a member of the nobility and to emphasize the virtues of that class of citizens. In particular, she suggests that Tafur's retelling of the events surrounding the fall of Rome are a lesson in the consequences of the violation of noble privilege (96). Merschel's study of the *Andanças* is thorough and often convincing, but I have reservations regarding her central thesis. Her argument does, however, offer an interesting alternative explanation for Tafur's praise of the ancient city. I address this issue in the following chapter.

especialmente los del pelegrinaje, an liçençia é parten para donde an de yr” (41), Tafur was, paradoxically, leaving Christendom behind in order to visit the most holy sites of the Christian faith. Such an experience must have been a very powerful one for a Christian European such as Tafur. Seeing that the land where his Lord lived, died, and rose again was now under Muslim control would have produced, one imagines, a variety of exceptionally powerful emotional reactions.

To judge from his text, however, Tafur felt nothing of the sort. Vives Gatell observes that this visit to the Holy Land “no fué para él de importancia extraordinaria” (32). Daly expands on this idea, observing that his visits to Rome and Jerusalem “do not appear to be the type of transcendental religious experience that makes any lasting impression on Pero Tafur” (154). This seems a very strange reaction, especially if one agrees with Vives Gatell that “Tafur nos aparece en su libro como el prototipo ideal del caballero cristiano, del noble hidalgo de Castilla en lucha contra el Mahometismo” (11). Why is this “caballero cristiano” not incensed that the Holy Lands are controlled by his enemy?

One possible answer, of course, could be that Tafur, despite the time and place in which he lived, was simply not a particularly pious individual. I do not dismiss this possibility out of hand: as described in the previous section, Tafur’s observations about Ancient Rome certainly suggest that he did not look at the world exclusively through the prism of Christianity. Likewise, his comments about the women he met during his journey suggest that he was not entirely immune to what the Juan Ruiz called “loco amor.” In any case, attempting to discern Tafur’s religious beliefs from this one text is problematic. Even so, and despite such passages as these, I think that the balance of

evidence is that Tafur was in fact sincere in his Christian faith. He constantly mentions relics that he is shown during his travels, especially in Rome and Jerusalem. Also, he is certainly a knowledgeable observer, whether of churches in Rome or of Biblical sites such as Mount Zion, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, or the Via Crucis in the Holy Land. Furthermore, Tafur's willingness to risk his life in the service of his faith and his country are not in doubt: he begins the Andanças by recounting his participation in the Count of Niebla's unsuccessful attempt to recapture Gibraltar, "una fortaleza muy buena é muy señalada en el mundo, porque está á la boca del estrecho donde se parte el mar Océano con el mar Mediterráneo," from the Moors (5-6).⁷ Also, it is difficult not to notice the very personal expression of faith that Tafur offers after nearly losing his life at sea. After safely arriving at Genoa, he promptly goes to bed "bien cansado, é enojado, é mareado, é quito de toda ufanía." He adds that this was "la primera vez que començé á conosçer á Dios" (11). As Letts observes, "[t]here is something rather moving" in this passage (17). This near-drowning took place before Tafur's arrival in Jerusalem. Taken together, these passages seem to suggest that the fact that Tafur displays little overt religious fervor during his visit to the Holy Land cannot be ascribed exclusively or even primarily to a general lack of religious faith.

There is one other obvious fact about Tafur's travels that deserves mention in this context. As I have mentioned previously, he was a young man—about 25 years of age—at the time he undertook these voyages. (Clavijo, as noted previously, was active at Court some 15 years before the embassy, so he would have probably been at least 50 by

⁷ Gibraltar's strategic importance, of course, is still recognized today, and it is still disputed territory. The United Kingdom maintains a naval base on Gibraltar, and ships regularly stop there before continuing eastward through the Mediterranean.

the time that his text was completed. Also, Clavijo, unlike Tafur, was married at the time of his voyage.) To assert that Tafur's actions and the things he chose to emphasize in his written record of those actions are merely a function of his youth would of course be misleading, and it would trivialize his extraordinary accomplishments. Yet the fact remains that certain activities and attitudes are more typical of the young than of the middle-aged or the elderly. Fighting in battle, as Tafur did at Gibraltar, is one example. (Planning or starting wars is, of course, a different matter.) Setting out on an extended trip to distant, little-known lands with only a vague idea of one's itinerary and changing one's plans regularly based on casual conversations with other travelers is another. It is also easier to risk one's life in adventures that to some would appear foolhardy (such as Tafur's visit to the Mosque of Umar) if one is young enough to consider oneself immortal. Something similar could be said about Tafur's comments about women.

Tafur traveled as a young man. He wrote Andanças é viajes many years later, by which time his perspective would have changed, both because of his own experiences and because of the changing historical circumstances. Daly mentions in particular the power of the Ottoman Turks, which increased substantially between the time of Tafur's travels and the time of the writing of Andanças, speculating that the negative references toward this (Muslim) group "were added in the final redaction of his narrative along with other expressions of concern regarding the power of the Muslim collective" (169). Daly further suggests that the work may have been based on Tafur's own record of his voyages. I find Daly's hypothesis to be more than plausible, if not necessarily provable. In any event, it seems clear to me that the narrative voice of Andanças is more that of the young man who traveled than of the older man who wrote about his memories. This fact

is worth keeping in mind when returning to the question of what aspects of his visit to Jerusalem and the Holy Lands figure most prominently in Tafur's narrative.

If Tafur's references to religion in these pages seem rather perfunctory, one inevitably asks whether other aspects of his travels there receive more enthusiastic attention. In fact, two subjects are of particular interest to him. The first—and one which, I believe can be explained in part because of his youth—is that of violence, danger, and death, whether actual or potential. Even a casual reading of these pages shows that the number of references to death, danger, and violence is strikingly high.

This is true whether Tafur is relating stories from scripture or telling of his own experiences or those of his traveling companions. He is certainly attracted to the more gory Bible stories, as for instance when he mentions having visited a chapel “en la cual Nuestro Señor apareció á Santo Tomé Apóstol, quando dixo que metiese la mano en su costado” (53). Tafur also mentions “el saúco de que se ahorcó Júdas” (57) and the “casa de Pilátos, é de Cayfas, é en aquel lugar donde Iesuxpto fué judgado” (57).⁸ Interestingly, Tafur draws a parallel with this last site and contemporary practice: “allí se judgan los onbres á muerte” (57) (emphasis added).

This is not, perhaps, accidental. Tafur often seems more interested in recounting what he himself saw and experienced in Jerusalem than in summarizing the history of the places he visited, especially if contemporary events involved violence. He visits a particular place on the banks of the River Jordan. He and his fellow pilgrims decide to go swimming there. Unfortunately, “allí se nos afogó aquel día un cavallero de Alimaña;

⁸ The reference is to John 20:27, in which Jesus tells Thomas, who doubts his resurrection, “reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

este lugar es de grandísima devoçion” (60). Tafur sees nothing incongruous in commenting on the day’s activities—including a death by drowning—in the middle of his description of the place where Christ was baptized. At least in passages such as this one, he simply describes what he saw and experienced. It is difficult to detect any particularly strong ideological or religious agenda. The same could be said of his visit to Jericho, a “lugar santo” (61). Here, too, a member of the party suffers a violent death: “un escudero de Galliçia, por socorrer á una dueña, cayó de ençima de la montaña, é de que llegó abaxo yva fecho pedaços” (61). The pilgrims take time to bury their fallen comrade the next day. Then they continue about their business.

Tafur relates scenes of extraordinary violence in the same matter-of-fact way. When the pilgrims visit the church where Lazarus was raised from the dead, their Moorish guide becomes involved in a dispute with an officer of the church (“alcayde”) over “çierto tributo” that the pilgrims did not wish to pay (62). The discussion between the Moorish guide and the church officer becomes violent, and the pilgrims attack the officer. They later go before the authorities, and the Governor (“Adelantado”) hands down a death sentence against the alcayde: “luégo le fué cortada la cabeça—é açotar á los que ivan presos; este dia estovimos allí fasta la tarde” (62). Here, too, Tafur relates a very violent scene in a few words and then continues his narrative. As Letts dryly puts it, “[a] dead squire, a decapitated soldier, or a drowned German gentlemen were matters for comment possibly, but not for concern” (7).

Why does Tafur include events such as these in his text while, as Merschel points out, he omits the sorts of detailed description and judgment of Jerusalem that characterize his treatment of the other principal cities that he describes (106)? At first glance, the

description of conflict with the alcayde could have a religious or ideological component. Perhaps Tafur sought to emphasize the brutality of Muslim civic life. Yet this explanation breaks down if one observes that it is essentially the story of a Muslim (the guide) defending the interests of Tafur and his (Christian) companions. I offer two explanations, both of which are logical if perhaps somewhat prosaic. The first is that Tafur (who, as I have suggested, was writing from the perspective of a young man) sought simply to include the aspects of his visit to Jerusalem that he found most striking in the hope that his readers would also find those events interesting. Passages such as those discussed above involve violence and death. Tafur's visit to the Mosque of Umar, apart from offering Tafur the opportunity to demonstrate his personal courage to his readers, also included the distinct possibility of violence: as he recognizes, "si yo allí fuera conocido por xpiano luego fuera muerto" (63). Perhaps Tafur really did emphasize such events at least in part simply because they were dramatic and thus interesting. There is an old saying among journalists: "If it bleeds, it leads." While it may seem incongruous to mention such a cliché in a scholarly study, the fact is that it is true. Violence sells newspapers and increases television ratings today, and despite what some social commentators would have us believe, this is not a new phenomenon. Whatever Tafur's reasons for composing the Andanças, he would only have a chance to see his objectives realized if people actually read his text. In addition, passages such as these emphasize Tafur's own courage, and thus enhance his own image as a brave and crafty individual in the eyes of the reader. This would have been a matter of some importance to him. Unlike Clavijo, who was reporting on his voyage in an official capacity for an official audience, Tafur did not have a ready-made audience for his work.

A second reason for Tafur's choice of information to include in his pages about the Holy Lands may well lie in the specific circumstances under which his visit took place. For the most part Tafur traveled independently, making his own arrangements for everything from transport to lodging. Earlier I compared him—somewhat but not entirely in jest—to a college student backpacking around Europe today. An analogous comparison for the circumstances under which he visited Jerusalem would be to say that he went, essentially, as a member of an organized tour group. More precisely, he went as a member of the medieval equivalent of such a group: an organized pilgrimage. He makes the arrangements before leaving Venice—and informs the reader of the details:

É en este tiempo yo me igualé con el patron de la galea, segunt la
costumbre ellos an, por el nolito del navío é por el comer abastadamente,
con las colaçiones de muchas é buenas conservas así á la mañana como á
la tarde é noche, yda é venida fasta Veneja treynta é çinco ducados por
cada persona; é yo, porque me yguale que me dexasen en Ierusalem, díles
por mí é dos escuderos mios sesenta ducados, á cada veynte por persona.
(41).

While Tafur regularly includes such itinerary-related information, and regularly addresses financial matters, this level of detail is greater than normal.⁹ Moreover, as I have noted, he mentions specifically that he is to travel in a ship “del pelegrinaje” (41). The procedures that Christian pilgrims must follow upon their arrival at Jaffa are similarly

⁹ I consider the broader issue of Tafur's comments throughout the Andanças about money, merchants, and trade in the following chapter.

well-established. When a “navío de romería” arrives at the port, the guardian of Mount Zion is informed,

é embía dos ó tres frayles al Adelantado de Ierusalem, que vanan con el seguro del Soldan á resçebir los pelegrinos. [. . .] [É] sacan todos los pelegrinos en tierra, é entréganols al Adelantado por escripto [. . .] [É] luego allí están moros con sus asnos bien ataviados para los pelegrinos, é ellos los cavalgan todo el tiempo que están en la tierra de Ierusalem; é a de dar por el alquiler dos ducados, que non se puede crescer nin menguar más el precio [. . .] (51)

As Letts observes, “[l]ife at Jerusalem at this time must have been an extremely profitable business for the infidel, as most Christians found to their cost” (6).

These comments make abundantly clear the fact that Tafur was traveling as a member of an organized group. This fact goes a long way toward explaining the slightly anomalous character of his writings about the Holy Land. He mentions the standard sites that a tourist would want to see (and of which his readers would no doubt be aware). He makes note of costs, which is also a constant topic of conversation among tour groups today. Finally, he pays at least as much attention to the misfortunes of other members of the group as to the lives and character of the residents of Jerusalem. Neither religion nor any other transcendental issue seems to have been uppermost in Tafur’s mind when he recorded his experience in the Holy Lands.

In this both Clavijo and Tafur are consistent. Their perspectives on the people and places—the Others—with which they come in contact vary from one work to the other and even within each work. Sometimes, as in the case of Clavijo’s analysis of cities

and their design, practical matters such as agricultural production are addressed at the same time as aesthetic ones. Comparisons to the known—cities on the Peninsula—occur regularly, but not always to the detriment of the foreign cities. Other times judgments are made simply on the basis of personal taste—sometimes, as in the case of Clavijo’s comments about food, literally so. Likewise, Tafur feels free harshly to criticize the state of affairs in contemporary Rome and to compare the present-day city unfavorably with the pagan Rome of many centuries ago. When he arrives in Jerusalem, his impressions of the city are shaped by the specific circumstances of his visit there. Clavijo and Tafur write for assorted reasons and from varying perspectives. They generally do not, however, write from an aggressive, dogmatic, intolerant religious ideology. This is the case despite the fact that the fifteenth century, in the wake of the plague and the pogroms of 1391, the Castile of this time was to an ever-increasing degree a place rent by religious division and intolerance: Hillgarth titles a chapter on this period “The Breakdown of Convivencia” (126).

If religion is not an overriding ideological concern of these two writers, the obvious question is whether there is any one issue that is reflected consistently in the perspectives of the authors of the Embajada and of the Andanças. I argue that there is. Both writers are deeply concerned with the development and advancement of the Castilian—and by extension, Spanish—nation. That aspect of these works is the subject of the following chapter of this study.

Chapter 4: National Unity as Objective and Consequence

In the first chapter of this study, I examined the increasing belief in the importance of individual human beings—both as active participants in the world around them and as authors—as reflected in the Embajada and the Andanças. In the second chapter, I considered Clavijo's and Tafur's contact with different religious and cultural Others. My principal conclusion was that the two men's reactions to the people and places with which they came in contact were in general very individualistic and only rarely based on explicitly ideological grounds. I noted in particular that their attitudes toward religious differences, both within Christianity and between Christianity and Islam, were surprisingly non-dogmatic. These attitudes are frequently more easily explained by personal or political circumstances than by religious orthodoxy as such.

This fact does not mean, though, that I view Clavijo, Tafur, or their texts as lacking in purpose or point of view. Rather, I believe their texts are best interpreted as examples of fifteenth-century Spaniards' developing national identity. In other words, I believe that they wrote more as Spaniards than as Catholics or even as Christians. This chapter is an examination of that facet of the two works.

At first glance, this topic appears hopelessly complex. It involves two of the most fundamental questions of Spanish history. At what point in history does it become reasonable to speak of Spain as a national entity? In the case of a nation such as Spain, where the Roman Catholic Church has for so long played such a central role both in public life and in popular life, is it possible to speak of a Spanish national identity independent of Catholicism?

The first of these questions was of course the subject of a long-running polemic between Castro and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz during the middle of the twentieth century. Sánchez-Albornoz believed that something called Spain existed as far back as the time of the Romans. Castro, on the other hand, argued that Spain only came into existence as an identifiable entity in the years following the Muslim invasion, “porque entonces, y sólo entonces, empezó el habitante de la Península a sentir la conciencia de pertenecer a un pueblo” (46). As I have discussed in a previous chapter, Castro’s arguments have come under scrutiny in recent years from scholars who feel that he exaggerated the degree to which the three different religious groups lived together happily during the earlier years of the Middle Ages. I agree that the term convivencia has probably been overused, and that it may have come to imply something beyond what Castro actually meant when he used it. Furthermore, I agree with scholars such as Glick, who prefer the English term “coexistence.” Despite these refinements, the conflicting points of view of Castro and Sánchez-Albornoz remain useful as two competing, broad frameworks for understanding how the Spanish people and nation came to be. I am more sympathetic to Castro’s view, and in fact, it seems to be the more widely accepted one today. In the very simplest terms, Castro’s perspective has the important virtue of recognizing, as Sánchez-Albornoz’s work generally does not, that whatever the precise nature of the interaction of Christians, Muslims, and Jews during the centuries before 1492, the Spain of the Golden Age and beyond owes a substantial part of its identity to the contributions of minority religions. It may also be worth noting parenthetically that Sánchez-Albornoz’s work may also have lost some adherents for occasionally being, as Jackson puts it, “marred by anti-Semitic innuendos” (200).

Moreover, even some scholars who view Castro's argument as excessively idealistic and overly dependent on evidence from literary texts have been at pains to point out the contributions of Jews and Muslims to other aspects of life in the Iberian Peninsula. In one article, Glick emphasizes the role of Jews as translators and as students of astronomy and mathematics. He concludes his study with the declaration that the Jewish contribution in these areas "was one of active participation in Islamic and Christian Spain" ("Science" 107). Similarly, Vicente A. Álvarez Palenzuela and Luis Suárez Fernández devote a chapter in their history of medieval Spain to the contributions of Muslims to agriculture and commerce. More interesting for this study, however, is a study by Abbas Hamdani in which he examines Muslim contributions to geographical and maritime knowledge and their importance for the voyages of discovery that would set forth from the Peninsula in 1492 and subsequent years. Interestingly, Hamdani even suggests the possibility that the Spanish word carabela may in fact be of Arabic origin (291). In any case, the contributions of Jews and Muslims to the economic and cultural development of medieval Spain are undeniable, and at this point, not controversial.

My primary interest here, however, is the question of nationhood in a more political sense. The Spanish nation, defined in a narrow, political sense, really only came into being with the marriage in 1479 of Fernando and Isabel. At that point, and not before, Spain became both a clearly defined geographical entity with borders largely corresponding to geography and a political unit under the control of one monarchy (albeit two monarchs). Ironically, the national entity that came into existence during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, which, as I have suggested, owed so much to Jews and Muslims,

was based in large measure on a shared religious identity which could no longer tolerate the presence of minority religious groups.

I do not propose to offer here a comprehensive analysis of the interplay of religious and national sentiment in fifteenth-century Castile. I do, however, seek to understand how Clavijo and Tafur reflected and sought to advance the development of a Spanish national consciousness. As I have already argued, both the Embajada and Andanças display a surprising lack of religious chauvinism. At first glance, this seems almost paradoxical, at least if one accepts my argument that furthering national development is a central concern of both authors. To understand how the texts could be relatively mild in terms of their religious judgements while still seeking to advance the development of a national identity, it is useful to consider the role of religion in the political and social evolution of Peninsular society during the previous centuries. It would be absurd to deny that religion has always played an important role in this regard, but at times the centrality of religion has been exaggerated. My purpose here is to demonstrate that the Embajada and the Andanças show evidence of a rapidly developing national consciousness that is not directly—or at least not exclusively—dependent upon religious unity.

1. Guiding Fictions: The Forging of a Nation

The nation that came into existence politically with the unification of the Peninsula under Fernando and Isabel was, as I have stated above, an amalgam of religious and cultural influences. Yet the residents of that political entity tended not to see themselves as such, but rather as a cohesive religious and national community. In this section I consider some of the popular beliefs and stories that helped form that self-

image. Nicolas Shumway, following the lead of Edmund S. Morgan, calls these events and the legends that grew around them “guiding fictions’ (xi). In Shumway’s words, “guiding fictions of nations cannot be proven, and indeed are often fabrications as artificial as literary fictions. Yet they are necessary to give individuals a sense of nation, peoplehood, collective identity, and national purpose” (xi).¹ In the case of the United States, Shumway mentions such notions as “representative democracy,” as well as more nebulous concepts as “manifest destiny, melting pot, and American way of life” (xi). In the case of Spain, I consider such topics as the Islamic invasion of 711, early Christian resistance to that invasion, the legend of Saint James, and the lives and legends of Fernán González and Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar. In each case, I demonstrate that the role of religion is more complex and often less central than is commonly assumed. At times, moreover, the explicitly religious aspect of these guiding fictions seems almost to have been incorporated after the fact.

It should be noted that the object of my interest here is the interplay between religion and national identity in the popular memory of these events. For example, I feel fully justified in considering the Cid as a Castilian national hero, and in looking at the role of religion in his own conduct. To do so does not in any way suggest that I regard the Poema de mío Cid as having been composed in an effort to promote the development of Spanish national identity: after all, there was at the time of the Cid no such thing as a Spanish nation. That his life story, largely as represented in the poem, became one of the

¹ Shumway uses this term as part of a study of nineteenth-century Argentina. Even so, I believe that it is legitimate to apply it in the context of medieval Spain. However much the concept of nation may have evolved over the centuries, the idea that such social groups bind themselves together in part with such collective memories as these is, I believe, universal.

“guiding fictions” of the Spanish nation, and had become such by the fifteenth century, is to my mind undeniable.

Following this examination of key events in the development of the Spanish national identity, I consider the specific cases of the Embajada and the Andanças. While I do not suggest that these works were as fundamental to the development of Spanish identity as the historical events I consider, I do believe that they were both written in substantial measure with an eye toward contributing to the consolidation of Spanish identity and political power.

It is not my intention to suggest that the role of religion in the development of a Spanish national identity was purely utilitarian. Even so, it is worth noting that at least one political theorist of the late fifteenth century, himself an admirer of Fernando, did in fact conceive it in this way. Niccolò Machiavelli often praises religion in The Prince, as for example when he lauds the pope of his day for “his generosity and countless other talents,” which will make the papacy “even greater and more to be revered” (35). Yet, as Leo Strauss observes, Machiavelli’s teaching can be viewed as “immoral and irreligious” (182). Tellingly, Strauss notes that “Machiavelli was a friend of religion” only in the sense that “he stressed the useful and the indispensable character of religion,” while manifesting “complete indifference to the truth of religion” (182). Whatever one may think of Machiavelli, he was a perceptive student of people and of political strategy. I am not, of course, ascribing Machiavellian motivations to Clavijo or to Tafur. Even so, the fact that Machiavelli viewed religion in utilitarian terms, at least in Strauss’s opinion, demonstrates that this attitude was part of the political and intellectual discourse of the time. That fact is in itself significant.

Contemplation of the relation of religion to social groups was not restricted to Christian Europe during the time of Clavijo and Tafur. The same Ibn Khaldun who visited Timur at Damascus considers the issue at some length in his vast treatise on social organization known as the Muqaddimah. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the term asabiyya, which Rosenthal translates as “group feeling.” According to Muhammad Mahmoud Rabi, the term itself is of pre-Islamic origin, and originally meant “making common cause with one’s agnates” (3-4). The term had a negative connotation for many scholars: in Rabi’s words, “[w]ith the advent of Islam, asabiyya and its bad manifestations were strongly condemned” (4). Ibn Khaldun, however, uses the word in a more positive way. His conception is, if not exactly secular, nonetheless distinct from the sort of community that can result directly from shared religious belief. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the importance of this “group feeling” not so much as a way for societies to remain united and for dynasties to stay in power, but as a necessary condition for the establishment of such social groups. In his words, by the time a dynasty is clearly established, “(the rulers) will not need much group (feeling to maintain) their power. It is as if obedience to the government were a divinely revealed book that cannot be changed or opposed” (314). Religion can play a role: “religious coloring does away with mutual jealousy and envy among people who share in a group feeling” (320). Yet this formulation emphasizes that the group is established first, and that religion then can help to moderate and regulate interaction among its members. Thus Ibn Khaldun is comfortable contemplating the practical role of religion as a regulator of social interaction. The parallel with Christian Spain at the end of the Middle Ages is admittedly inexact: the kind of group envisioned by Ibn Khaldun is not the same as the sort of national entity that would come to exist

under the Catholic Monarchs. Nonetheless, the way in which Ibn Khaldun considers these analogous issues is striking.

1.1. Religious Identity versus Territorial Identity: The Visigoths

The Moorish conquest of Visigothic Spain, begun by Tariq in A.D. 711 and nearly completed within a decade, was by any measure an event of extraordinary and lasting importance to the groups involved. It was a clash of civilizations, cultures, languages, and ways of life. Traditionally, though, it has been seen as above all a conflict between two religions. So it was, to a considerable extent. A closer examination of the two groups involved, however, shows that neither was religiously homogeneous, and that the predominant religious attitudes of both the Visigothic inhabitants of Spain and the Muslim invaders, far from being settled and uniform, were in a state of flux.

The Visigoths arrived in the Peninsula some three centuries before the Muslim invasion of 711. They had reached an agreement, called a foedus, with the Roman authorities, which permitted their settlement in the Peninsula (García de Cortázar 8). At first their integration with the existing Hispano-Roman population was limited, in part because they were relatively small in number: José Ángel García de Cortázar estimates that they numbered between 80,000 and 100,000, while the Hispano-Roman population of the Peninsula was something like 4,000,000 (11). With time, however, the two groups began to integrate—García de Cortázar writes that “se va operando la fusión entre ambos grupos” (23). Perhaps the most notable aspect of this fusion is the degree to which the invading Visigoths adopted the language and customs of the Hispano-Romans. Indeed, with the conversion of King Recared from Arian Christianity to Roman Catholicism in 589, the Visigoths even adopted the religion of their subjects. Consequently, by the

beginning of the eighth century the Visigoths found themselves in the strange position of being the most important group keeping alive the Hispano-Roman religious and cultural heritage in the Peninsula. This was particularly the case after Recared's conversion, which was especially significant given the central importance of religion to the Visigothic political and social structure. O'Callaghan, while refusing to describe Visigothic society as theocratic, nonetheless acknowledges "the influence of the church appeared greater than that of the monarchy" (47). Significantly, however, O'Callaghan attributes the dominance of the Church to the relative weakness of the civil authority, which itself was in large measure a result of the non-hereditary nature of the Visigothic monarchy and the struggles for influence that this situation entailed. This internecine strife was a near-constant feature of Visigothic society, and by the time of the Islamic conquest the monarchy was as weak and divided as civil society. Some steps had been taken to encourage diverse sectors of the population to develop a consciousness of themselves as part of a larger, unified entity. Most notable among these, the Liber iudiciorum, promulgated by King Recesvinth in 654, sought to base application of laws on territory rather than on the specific historical or cultural affiliations of individuals. In addition to making the same law applicable to everyone, the Liber iudiciorum included extensive guidance for the management of conflicts and disputes among members of different groups (O'Callaghan 65). It also made provisions for matters such as intermarriage. Unfortunately, however, such a system of laws was not sufficient in itself to bring about a strong sense of territorial unity, especially given that, as Reilly speculates, many of the provisions of Visigothic law, including much of the Liber, were "utterly ineffective" (48).

It may seem strange to speak of Visigothic Spain as one of the “guiding fictions” upon which the idea of a Spanish nation would be built over subsequent centuries. Yet it is entirely reasonable to do so: however tenuous the relationship between the pre-711 Christian kingdom and the Christian society that developed during the later Middle Ages and eventually expelled the Muslim from the Peninsula, generation of Christians would feel a strong connection to the earlier Christian society. This identification was not entirely emotional. Whatever the limitations of Visigothic government and society may have been, García de Cortázar is correct when he points out that the invasion of these Germanic tribes “trae como consecuencia el establecimiento de un poder político, la creación de un Estado: el primer Estado español” (7). It is also important to remember the contributions to the development of a concept of the Spanish nation made by Saint Isidore of Seville. O’Callaghan calls his Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum et Suevorum “the first truly national, rather than universal, history to appear in the peninsula” (86). Visigothic Spain may have been relatively weak and divided in many ways, but it was the first politically independent entity to be established in the Peninsula. As such, it would loom large in the minds of the Christian inhabitants of the region for many centuries to come.

Nonetheless, given the state of Christian society in the Peninsula as described above, the success of the Muslim invasion of 711 has less to do with religious zeal or even military prowess than with issues internal to Visigothic Christian society. Jackson goes so far as to attribute the Islamic conquest explicitly to the “disunity of the Visigothic rulers” (10). He also emphasizes the “indifference if not the hostility of the mass of the Hispano-Roman population” (10). The depth and intensity of this hostility is apparent in

O'Callaghan's qualified support for Vicens Vives's theory that "the Hispano-Roman population, disgusted by the disorder perpetuated by their Visigothic rulers, rebelled and helped to bring down the kingdom" (O'Callaghan 92). Certainly, as O'Callaghan also observes, the Jewish population of the Peninsula would have been glad to see the last of the Visigothic kings (92). These words are, I believe, even more significant than they appear at first glance. If Vicens Vives's hypothesis is correct, it means that the quasi-theocratic Visigothic society was not just disunited but rent by divisions so bitter as to lead European Christians actively to make common cause with a non-Christian invader. Thus medieval Spain from the beginning saw collaboration between Christians and Muslims against other Christians for reasons of political expediency.

Visigothic society, then, was one in which the state religion had changed only a century and a half before the arrival of the Muslim invaders. Its most important political document emphasized interaction between people of different faiths and sought in some sense to minimize the importance of religious identity while emphasizing the centrality of "belonging" to a defined geographical area. For all the undeniable importance of the Church in Visigothic political life, and at the beginning of the eighth century, their society was by no means unified; certainly it was not unified on the basis of religion.

1.2. The Muslim Conquest: Heterogeneous Invaders

When the invasion did come, it was undertaken by the Berber warrior Tariq, whose victory over the Visigothic king Rodrigo in July, 711 "sealed the fate of the kingdom of the Visigoths" (O'Callaghan 92). In the traditional ballad "El reino perdido," for example, the king himself is overcome with grief at how far he has fallen:

"Ayer era rey de España,

hoy no lo soy de una villa;
[.]
¡Desdichada fue la hora,
desdichado fue aquel día
en que nací y heredé
la tan grande señoría,
pues lo había de perder
todo junto y en un día![""] (Menéndez Pidal Flor 51)

Of course, a less sympathetic view also exists within the ballad tradition: that of a Rodrigo brought down by lust, having seduced the daughter of Count Julián, the military commander whose task it was to defend against a Moorish invasion.² According to this tradition, this commander was so angered by Rodrigo's treatment of his daughter that he made common cause with the Moors. Rodrigo was left to spend a period of penance pondering the loss of his kingdom while being attacked by a snake "por do más pecado había" (Menéndez Pidal Flor 54).

This tradition places blame for the failure to resist the invasion squarely on the shoulders of one man: Rodrigo. Lines like those quoted above are of interest here because of the way they portray his failure as a king and as a man. Certainly there is a religious undertone to the notion that the invasion took place because of his sexual misdeeds, and God punishes him accordingly (although he is eventually pardoned, and the ballad ends with his ascension to heaven) (Menéndez Pidal Flor 54). Yet the tone of

² The nature of Rodrigo's relationship with the woman and whether it was consensual is unclear. Crow uses the term "seduced" (41). O'Callaghan says "ravished" (52). García de Cortázar writes that Julián rebelled "al ver a su hija deshonorada" (49).

these poems is not in the main explicitly religious. When Rodrigo observes that he is no longer “Rey de España” or even king of a village, he is lamenting the loss of a nation and of his own señoría over that nation. To judge from these words, his desolation is scarcely greater than if he had lost Spain to a Christian invader. Furthermore, his tryst is not with a Muslim woman but with another Christian, and it is the anger of her father that leads to the loss of Rodrigo’s kingdom. Rodrigo is a sinner, but not an apostate.

In many obvious respects, the situation in the Muslim world could hardly have been more different from that of the Visigothic kingdom. The religion’s founder, the Prophet Muhammad, had himself only died in 632, well under a century before his followers crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. While it is true that most of the great scientific and cultural achievements that were to make Islamic civilization the world’s most brilliant during much of the Middle Ages had not yet occurred, the expansion of Islam was already striking. Crow describes the followers of Muhammad at the time of his death as “but simple nomads, who lived in tents” and “wandered about from place to place” (46). This description, while not inaccurate, is obviously incomplete. The Muslims may have lived in tents, but in the space of a few decades they would manage to traverse—and to conquer—a vast swathe of territory. They began in Arabia and soon found themselves in the Maghreb, where on a clear day they could literally have seen the European mainland.

The invaders, however, did share one fundamental characteristic with the Visigoths: they were themselves not a homogeneous group, religiously or otherwise. Jackson acknowledges as much when he observes that “[w]ithin the ruling group, Arabs, Syrians and Egyptians were mutually suspicious, and none of them could be sure of the

loyalty of their largely Berber troops” (11). Even more important for this study, these Berber troops were not even Muslims (Cantarino Monjes 25). There was also dissension among the military leaders, as would become apparent during the invasion itself. Tariq, who, Vicente Cantarino indicates, was himself a Berber tribesman rather than a member of the Arab elite (Civilización 42), was regularly in conflict with his superiors. In particular, Musa, the Arab governor of North Africa, was so annoyed by his lieutenant’s behavior that he would begin his own campaign in the Peninsula within a year of Tariq’s. Musa’s son had no qualms about concluding agreements with the remaining Visigothic rulers over the following years (O’Callaghan 93). This fact is significant because it provides another example—this time from the other side—of the primacy of political and strategic issues over the question of religion.

The factional tensions among Muslims in the Peninsula, moreover, were mild in comparison with the conflicts taking place in the wider Muslim world. As an indirect consequence of these disagreements, both Musa and Tariq were called to the court at Damascus. Despite being jointly responsible for a breathtaking expansion of Muslim domination, they shared similar fates. As O’Callaghan reports, Musa was “stripped of his honors ... and died in ignominy” (93). Tariq fared no better. The dissension at Damascus would continue and intensify until the middle of the eighth century, when the Umayyad caliphate would be overthrown by the Baghdad-based Abbasids, leading, in Jackson’s words to a “slightly more stable political system” in the Peninsula (11). One of the defeated Umayyad princes would flee to Spain and establish al-Andalus as an independent emirate over which he would reign as Abd-al-Rahman I (O’Callaghan 101).

Hispano-Moorish society would continue to be divided along ethnic and religious lines for the duration of its presence in the Peninsula. At a difficult moment in 1085, according to María Jesús Viguera Molíns, the Taifa kings petitioned the Almoravids in North Africa for assistance (169). The Almoravids—described by Jackson as a “primitive, fanatical” group of tribesman who were themselves only partially Arabized—looked with some disdain upon their more cultured co-religionists in the Peninsula. Nonetheless, their leader, Yusuf, sent his men across the Strait of Gibraltar in 1086 (Viguera Molíns 169). Further, given the religious fervor that characterized the Almoravids, it appeared likely that the conflict would take on a more explicitly religious character. To a degree this was in fact what happened over the following decades. They rapidly dominated the Taifa kings, and their aggressiveness caused a counter-reaction among the Christians: as Jackson writes, “[t]he combination of official crusade propaganda from the north with Almoravid fanaticism in the south injected a greater degree of religious animosity into the fighting at the turn of the twelfth century than had been present during the decades after the fall of the caliphate” (67).

Even under these circumstances, however, I believe that it is easy to exaggerate the centrality of the religious issue in determining subsequent events. For all their supposed religious fanaticism, the impact of the Almoravid invasion on al-Andalus was decidedly mixed: Jackson goes so far as to describe it as a “psychological and cultural defeat for Spanish Islam” (67). In any event, as happened so often to one group or another throughout the centuries in the Peninsula, their primitive, ascetic attitudes seem to have been quickly cast aside in favor of the more cosmopolitan values of existing Hispano-Muslim civilization. Nor would their dominance prove to be lasting: as Jackson

observes, the Almoravids had lost power not only in the Peninsula but in North Africa as well by the middle of the twelfth century (67). The authors of the defeat of the Almoravids, however, were not crusading Christians but fellow North African Muslims. The Almohad sect was both young (its founder, Abu Abd Allah ibn Tumart, died in 1130) (O'Callaghan 227), and, it seems fair to say, fanatical. They were in conflict with the Almoravids from the beginning. In part their differences were doctrinal: ibn Tumart advocated what might almost be called a charismatic form of Islam in response, according to O'Callaghan, to "the sterility of orthodox theological teaching" (227). The real sin of the Almoravids in the eyes of ibn Tumart, however, seems to have been that the influence of the Christians under their rule had made them spiritually lax and physically soft.

During the reign of ibn Tumart's successor, according to Richard Fletcher, the Almohads would "eradicate the Almoravids and extend their own power throughout the Maghrib from the Atlantic to Tunisia" (120). Having consolidated their power in North Africa, they proceeded to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. By 1147 they had taken Seville (O'Callaghan 229). They would advance rapidly over the coming years, but, as others before and since, their territorial conquest ultimately proved to be too rapid and too extensive to maintain. An uneasy peace reigned for a time toward the end of the twelfth century. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, the Christians, and especially the influential religious orders, were "increasingly anxious to resume hostilities against the Muslims" (O'Callaghan 245). Encouraged by Pope Innocent III, "a great Christian army, with French contingents as well as representatives of all the peninsular kingdoms" faced the Almohads at a Castilian mountain pass (Jackson 81).

The battle of Las Navas de Tolosa was a disaster for the Muslims: in Jackson's words, "the Christians literally destroyed the Almohad army" (81). The Almohads would never recover from this blow. City after city fell to the advancing Christians. In 1150 the dividing line between Christians and Muslims ran along the Tagus River in the west and center of the Peninsula and extended well past Teruel in the east. The situation a century later was profoundly different, as Kamen affirms: "By the mid-thirteenth century Muslim power had been restricted exclusively to the southernmost part of Al-Andalus, the kingdom of Granada" (31). Thus the Reconquest was substantially complete by this point, even though political divisions among the Christians and economic considerations would delay the fall of Granada until 1492. From the initial invading armies to the last days of al-Andalus, then, the Moors were consistently troubled by internal political—and especially religious—conflict. Neither Moorish Spain nor its Christian counterpart was religiously heterogeneous, and internal strife was often as destructive as conflicts with the other side.

1.3. Saint James: From Religious to National Icon

The ambiguous—and sometimes secondary—role of religion in the development of Spanish national identity during the Middle Ages was not limited to the political sphere. The legend of Saint James is arguably the single most important "guiding fiction" of Spanish history. It is, of course, explicitly religious in nature, and in some respects represents the fusion of religion and nationalism. Yet even here, the religious aspect would ultimately be subsumed by the need to appropriate the legend as a national symbol.

The legend has its origins, according to Jackson, “sometime in the 820s,” with the discovery “of the tomb of St James the Greater in a field near what later became the city of Santiago de Compostela” (34). Roger Collins gives the traditionally accepted date of 813, while acknowledging that “it may have been two or three decades later” (236). In any case, this event attracted immediate attention, and a shrine was erected on the site. The question of why this event took place at this particular historical moment and what its significance was for the development of Asturian society, as Collins puts it, “is a very vexed one” (236). Castro suggests that the legend came about as a consequence of low morale among the Asturians, who, he speculates, “se sentirían muy caídos material y moralmente.” Castro also emphasizes the increasing isolation between the community in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Christendom (106).

Castro’s explanation certainly seems logical, but the more relevant question here is why the cult of Saint James remained for the next two centuries, in the words of Álvarez Palenzuela and Suárez Fernández, “un hecho ciertamente importante pero de ámbito local” (367). I believe that this fact can be explained to a large degree by the evolving political and military relationship between Christians and Muslims in the Peninsula. At the beginning of the ninth century the Christians no doubt felt as isolated as Castro suggests, and certainly they felt no great affection for their Muslim neighbors. Crucially, however, as a consequence of their relatively small numbers and inconsistent leadership, there could hardly have been much thought of launching a crusade with the objective of retaking large expanses of territory in the name of the faith. The Asturians of this period needed both to repopulate the empty lands to their immediate south and to ensure orderly successions among their rulers. There was also increasing tension

between the Asturians and some of the non-Asturian Christians under their rule, most notably Galicians and Basques. In fact, Collins suggests that “[t]he emergence of the cult of St James at this time is probably indicative of the self-assertion of the Galicians, not least towards the Asturian kings to whom they were subject” (237). Taken together, these tasks must have seemed a more than adequate challenge to Alfonso II and his successors. The immediate development of an image of Saint James as a slayer of Moors and protector of Christian soldiers marching relentlessly onward into the lands of the infidel would under such circumstances have been neither necessary nor logical. As is discussed below, by the early years of the twelfth century, circumstances would have changed, and the story surrounding the supreme religious symbol in Christian medieval Spain would evolve to meet the exigencies of the new situation.

Here, again, the role of religion and attitudes toward people of other faiths are determined by the needs and ambitions of the societies. In both cases, religious attitudes evolve to fulfill the role required of them by society. In this sense, even in such a religiously contentious context as Medieval Spain, the role of religion in civic life is much more a means to other ends than an end in itself.

1.4. Life and Legend of Fernán González

An analogous situation may be observed in the stories of two of the most famous Castilian warriors of the period: Count Fernán González and Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, the Cid. Both figures were perfectly happy to make alliances across religious boundaries and to take up arms against people of their own religion. Likewise, both men, whether consciously or unconsciously, were capable of wrapping their actions in the banner of religious piety when it served their interests to do so.

Especially in the case of Fernán González, this fact may not be readily apparent from a reading of the medieval Castilian epic that bears his name. Indeed, as Deyermond observes, religion is a central theme of the work from the beginning: as he puts it, “[s]e abre la narrativa con un breve compendio de la historia española, que acentúa los rasgos de tipo religioso” (Edad Media 76-77). This religious tone is by no means limited to the opening stanzas, as Juan Victorio shows in the introduction to his edition of the Poema de Fernán González. Victorio notes, for example, that some 40 of the 100 strophes of the work make reference to a Supreme Being (23). He also observes that some of the monarchs mentioned in the text of the poem “no se muestran suficientemente motivados por la causa religiosa, es decir, por la Cruzada,” and that “Fernán González se distingue y se aparta deliberadamente de ellos” (25). The religious nature of the work is further emphasized by the place of its composition, which, according to Deyermond, was the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza (Edad Media 74). More significantly, the very poetic form employed by the work’s author encourages a religious reading of the text. The cuaderna vía in which the poem was written is, as Juan Luis Alborg and many others have pointed out, one of the “rasgos esenciales” that defined the erudite, religious poetic creations of medieval Castile (112).

All of this would appear to contradict my thesis that religious fervor was less a motivating factor than a tool in the mind of Fernán González the man. It is crucial, however, to bear in mind three facts about the poem. In the first place, it is generally believed to have been composed in about the year 1250 (Deyermond Edad Media 75), or nearly three centuries after the Count’s death. Second, the crusading zeal of the poem clearly reflects the intentions of the poet rather than of his subject: Alborg cites John P.

Keller's declaration that the work is "probablemente la primera obra de la literatura española escrita con una intención claramente propagandística" (141). Finally, the Poema de Fernán González is the product of a different literary tradition than the Poema de mio Cid. In his study, Matthew Bailey demonstrates the "radically different modes of expression of the two poems" (8). More broadly, he emphasizes "the distinct natures of the juglaría and clerecía traditions" (8). It hardly seems surprising that a work of juglaría would, given its popular origins, better express one of the Spanish nation's guiding fictions.

The colorful, intrigue-filled events of Fernán González's life show a different emphasis. Unlike the poem, they are broadly supportive of my thesis, and they justify my viewing the legend of Fernán González as a guiding fiction. He was able, largely through a series of politically advantageous marriages for himself and his daughters, to become one of the most powerful men of his time and a key figure in the foundation of an independent Castile. During his youth in the 930s, the Peninsula's Christian rulers were alternately—and at times, it seems, simultaneously—engaged in hostilities with each other and with their neighbors to the south. In particular, King Ramiro II of León decided upon his coronation in 931 to attack the Muslims. Shortly thereafter, however, he was confronted by a rebellion among his Castilian subjects. The rebellion was promptly put down, and its leaders punished. Ramiro was apparently a rather merciful sort: he did not order them killed but only that they be disciplined by what Álvarez Palenzuela and Suárez Fernández call "la ceguera por deorbitación" (101). Fernán González first came to prominence by supporting Ramiro in this conflict, and in return, according to Jackson, received the title of Count of Castile (38). During the next few

years he would fall from the king's good graces and rebel against him. According to Jackson, however, he was back in favor by 947 (38). The following years were filled with assorted marriages of convenience and an ongoing conflict with queen Toda of Navarre. In 959, as Jackson writes, "he was simultaneously attacked by Cordoban troops from the south and Navarrese troops from the east" (39). Meanwhile, one of his sons-in-law was in Córdoba pleading with the caliph for aid to combat his Christian enemies. (It is, perhaps, amusing to note that a few years earlier, an aspiring heir to the throne of León had also traveled to Córdoba in search of help, this time in the form of medical treatment for extreme obesity.) (Jackson 40)

Thus the traditional founder of the kingdom that would eventually form the nucleus of a united Christian nation on the Iberian Peninsula spent more time and effort in combat with other Christian rulers than with the Muslim enemy. He, and those around him, were perfectly willing to seek assistance from Muslims in their struggles against other Christians. As Jackson puts it, "[f]rom the evidence of both intermarriage and diplomacy it would seem that religious antagonism played only the smallest role in political alignments" (41). This fact provides yet another example of my thesis: religion was in general not a primary cause of social, military, or political developments in medieval Hispania.

1.5. Between Vassal and Mercenary: Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar

I addressed the issue of religion in the Poema de mío Cid in a previous chapter, suggesting that it is less a motivating force for the Cid's actions than one might suppose.

Here I consider the Cid specifically as Castilian national hero.³ His actions are not lacking in self-interest, certainly: Crow writes that he seeks “[v]ictory for its own glorious sake, and for the additive of booty, slaves, and dominion” (91). The interest in material gain is obvious, but Crow neglects the other constant factor in the Cid’s decision: his unwavering devotion to Alfonso VI. As the above words of Deyermund suggest, the poem is clearly in large measure a lesson in personal honor and loyalty of a vassal toward his lord, even if that lord is not always worthy of such loyalty. It is important to note that the particular lord in question was King of Leon and Castile. I believe that this consistent loyalty and the importance it is accorded in the poem can be read as an act of personal fealty toward the leader of the Cid’s native land, but also, by extension, as evidence of the Cid’s loyalty toward that land itself. It is, of course, notoriously dangerous to speak of medieval Hispania as something even close to a modern nation-state, but in broader terms, I believe that the Cid’s loyalty—again, perhaps his defining characteristic—can reasonably be construed as a concern for the preservation and advancement of his native land.

Beyond the loyalty expressed toward Alfonso, one must admittedly look hard to find specific references in the poem to the Cid’s feeling for his homeland as such. There is some evidence, however, to support this argument. The pain he feels upon leaving for exile centers around his love for his wife and daughters; nonetheless, his suffering at the prospect of leaving Castile is patent in those scenes. Also, after his victory at Alcocer,

³ That the story of the Cid is one of Spain’s guiding fictions is made particularly clear by the degree to which the legend has been manipulated by Spanish politicians over the centuries. As Deyermund observed in an interview with a Spanish newspaper in 1999, “Los franquistas se apoderaron del Cid, haciendo de él la esencia de lo español. Pero también el pensamiento marxista . . .” (Iglesias 22).

the Cid makes an explicit comparison of his current habitat and his home: as Minaya Álbar Fáñez prepares to leave for Christian lands with news of their victory, the Cid refers longingly to his companion's upcoming return to "Castiella la gentil," and he laments their current circumstances, since "en esta tierra angosta / non podriemos bibir" (Smith 166). Also, the end of the poem is particularly instructive in this regard: the poet makes it clear that at his life's end, the Cid could count among his achievements not only that fact that "a todos alcança ondra," but also that "Oy los reyes d'España / sos parientes son" (3724). The Spain to which the author of the poem refers in this line has little in common with the state that was in the process of being established during the fifteenth century, but it is precisely such statements as these that would have facilitated the ultimate transformation of the Cid as described in the poem into a Spanish national hero.

Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, then, was not a Crusader for his religion. He was primarily motivated by personal honor, but also by a desire to occupy a place of honor among the heroes of his nascent homeland. In his case as well, a desire to contribute to the development of his "nation"—and to be recognized for his contributions—plays a more central role in deciding his actions than does the question of religion.

Three centuries would pass between the death of the Cid and Clavijo's departure from Spain toward the East. The Spain of Clavijo's time was in some respects very different from that of the Cid. I have described the most significant changes—in particular, the breakdown of convivencia culminating in the pogroms of 1391—in a previous chapter. Yet the pattern of religion in service of nationalism rather than vice versa remains constant. The above words about the Cid could apply equally to Clavijo. I consider Clavijo and his Embajada in this light in the following section.

2. Ruy González de Clavijo: Ambassador for Castile

Clavijo's voyage and work serve a clear national purpose in one very obvious respect: as I have described, he traveled at the behest of and as an emissary of Enrique III. In addition, his efforts were directed at least in part toward protecting his homeland diplomatically and militarily as Enrique explored the possibility of some form of cooperation with Timur against the Ottoman Turks. The text was written as a report of that effort. Even so, the Embajada is not imbued with an obvious, chauvinistic sense of national superiority. As I have also indicated, Clavijo is surprisingly open to and accepting of places, people, and ways of life that are profoundly different from his own. When Castile is mentioned, it is often in a comparison in which the "foreign" place is not perceived as obviously inferior. Clavijo offers no paeans to the glory of his patria. His historical and literary allusions typically refer to Christian and Roman themes rather than to the sorts of Castilian national myths that I have described in the first pages of this chapter.

For all that, a careful reading of the Embajada shows that Clavijo consistently showed an interest in several themes that would be of fundamental importance for the development of his nation and of his nation's notion of itself during subsequent centuries. Here I focus on three such issues. The first is that of the Castilian as mariner. One of the principal goals of this entire study has been to demonstrate the degree to which travelers and authors such as Clavijo and Tafur were important antecedents for the voyage and writings of Columbus. Though Columbus himself may have been Genoese, he was perhaps the greatest traveler in the history of the world, and he sailed under the flag of Fernando and Isabel. His voyage, apart from its enormous practical consequences for

everyone involved, became another of the “guiding fictions” of the Spanish nation. The fact that Clavijo dedicated a considerable part of his text to recording the maritime facets of his experience was not accidental.

The second issue considered here is that of language. That language can be a central part of cultural—and by extension, national—identity is beyond debate. It can be a powerful tool for empire, as demonstrated by the spread of Castilian to the New World in the years after Columbus’s arrival and by the spread of English in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It can also be a part of resistance to outside domination, as shown today in the post-colonial efforts of countries such as Algeria to replace the language of their French colonizers with Arabic as the language of commerce and education. Perhaps because Spanish colonization in the Americas was earlier and more profound than the French occupation of the Maghreb, there has not been a widespread backlash against the Spanish language in the former colonies of Spain. Instances of resistance have taken place, however. In his popular study of twentieth-century Mexican society, the journalist Alan Riding writes of having observed an advertisement protesting the encroachment of the English language in that country and promoting the use of Spanish. It had been defaced by protestors objecting to the displacement of Nahuatl by Spanish (19-20). In addition, many Spanish American writers—the Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, for instance—have been troubled by the fact that as they seek to establish their own personal, ethnic, cultural, and national identities, they have little choice but to do so in the language of the old Empire. In España: Poema en cuatro angustias y una esperanza, written in 1937, Guillén could rail against the former colonial power. Yet his protests are expressed in the language of that same colonial power:

¡Miradla, a España, rota!
Y pájaros volando sobre ruinas,
y el fachismo y su bota,
y faroles sin luz en las esquinas [. . .] (104)

Clavijo, of course, was not a colonizer, linguistic or otherwise. Even so, his voyage, being one of the most extensive undertaken by a Castilian up to that point in time, necessarily involved extensive contact between the Spanish language and a variety of others. In a previous chapter I considered the question of Mohamet Alcagi, the ambassadors' interpreter. Here I consider the issue of contact between languages—what Daly in her study calls “linguistic borders”—in more general terms.

Finally, I consider Clavijo's portrayal of the two most important political figures with which he has contact: Enrique III, king of Castile and León, and Timur himself. Logically enough, Clavijo's references to Enrique are laudatory but usually perfunctory, typically consisting of little more than references to “el señor Rey” (154). This is not particularly surprising: Clavijo was in essence an employee of the king, and no doubt a sincere admirer. Obviously, however, the events recounted in the Embajada take place far away from Enrique's court at Alcalá de Henares.

I addressed some aspects of Clavijo's description of Timur, especially those relating to his lavish lifestyle and the harshness of his rule, earlier in this study. The focus here will be on Clavijo's description of Timur as military strategist and as political leader. While the Spaniard's attitude toward Timur's personal attributes was a mixture of amusement at the goings-on at his court and shock at the brutal punishments meted out, Clavijo demonstrates genuine respect for Timur the soldier and conqueror. The implied

contrast between Enrique and Timur is striking, even though it seems unlikely that it was intentional on Clavijo's part. As I have indicated, Enrique was not an unsuccessful monarch, but he was also not a particularly strong one. Also, as Hillgarth observes, the form of government that the early Trastámaras sought to establish was "institutional rather than personal" (385). Timur's rule was personal in the extreme: it was not a coincidence that his empire would fall into disarray after his death. It is interesting to note that on an imaginary continuum between institutional and personal rule, Fernando and Isabel, the architects of a unified Spain and the patrons of Columbus, would in some respects more resemble the approach adopted by Timur. Was Clavijo offering Timur as some sort of role model for future Spanish rulers? Certainly not. Was the portrait he painted of an emperor who led by a combination of sheer force of personality and intimidation—a portrait that would have been circulated widely in the Castilian court—in some more general sense a reflection of a society that was moving in that direction? Could it have in some ways influenced that movement? It is impossible to say with any certainty: for one thing, we have little specific knowledge of how widely disseminated Clavijo's text was. It does not, however, seem beyond the realm of possibility.

2.1. Clavijo as Seafarer

Clavijo was not himself a sailor. Nor was his a voyage of exploration: at least during the Mediterranean portion of his travels, he was traveling on merchant ships and following established trade routes. In addition, his experiences on that portion of the trip were not obviously germane to the stated purpose of the embassy, which was to establish contact with Timur. While his observations of life within Timur's domains even before he reached Samarkand would have certainly been of interest to Enrique III and his

lieutenants for the information they conveyed about Timur's people and his way of ruling, Clavijo's observations about life aboard ship and about the peoples and places he visited along the Mediterranean basin have little obvious relevance to the central issue that was of concern to the Castilian ruler.

Yet almost exactly one third of the Embajada is dedicated to the ambassadors' voyage from El Puerto de Santa María through the Mediterranean to their definitive point of landfall at Trebizond. This fact seems curious, and it cannot be explained simply by arguing that the traversal of the Mediterranean constituted a substantial portion of their trip (which it did: they left Spain in May of 1403 and arrived at Trebizond on April 11, 1404). The Embajada is not consistently a day-by-day accounting of the ambassadors' experiences. This fact is demonstrated most clearly by the fact that Clavijo makes a conscious decision to write little of the return journey, suggesting that to do so would be unnecessary given that "a la ida fize relación de todo largamente" (326). Clavijo could just as easily have chosen to abbreviate or even eliminate the Mediterranean portion of the narrative. The fact that he did not do so clearly suggests that he considered it important and that he felt it would be of interest to his readers. When they did finally arrive at Trabizond, the landing, like so much of their voyage at sea, was not easy:

E por quanto el viento era contrario, no se atrevieron esta noche ir a Traspisonda, comoquier que no avía más de doze millas. E esta noche estovieron allí, e el viento fue contrario, e tan rezio que alçaron las anclas e oviéranse esta noche de perder. (162)

Part of the explanation for Clavijo's decision to include the details of his time at sea in his narrative can be found precisely in passages such as this one. Travel by sea,

even over established routes, was dangerous. Those who undertook it were, by definition, brave individuals who were putting themselves in danger for the cause for which they traveled. In this case, that cause was to advance the interests of Enrique III and, by extension, of his nation. This part of the Embajada offers Clavijo the opportunity to describe a loyal Castilian courtier who is willing to risk his life in service to king and country. (Of course, the fact that the courtier in question was Clavijo himself means that a certain amount of self-promotion may also have been involved.) This impulse was not dissimilar to those that would motivate Columbus and subsequent travelers. In both cases—Clavijo and Columbus—I have no doubt that the desire to serve was sincere, even if it was not always disinterested.

A text such as this could also have been useful in promoting the idea of exploration, even if it was not itself a story of exploration of terra incognita. The fact that much of the travel was by sea could itself have been useful in this regard, since over the years of the fifteenth century, that mode of travel would increasingly be seen as noble, economically useful, and even vaguely romantic. In his biography of Columbus, Felipe Fernández-Armesto emphasizes this fact. As he observes, the military and the clergy were “the main channels of upward mobility in Columbus’s day” (3). He emphasizes, though, that by Columbus’s time, a career as a seafarer could also be a viable means of social and economic advancement. Of particular interest for the purposes of this study, he points out that the written word played a significant role in promoting maritime life as an appealing option. He mentions Tirant lo blanc, a chivalric romance written in Catalan at the end of the fifteenth century, “in which one of the characters is a ‘king of the Canary Islands’” (4). This work, according to Fernández-Armesto, was particularly popular in

Spain. He also makes reference to several other works of what he calls “chivalric literature of the sea” and points out that Columbus “moved in a world steeped in it” (4). These works had an undeniable effect on public perception of life at sea: to quote Fernández-Armesto once again, “[i]t was as if romance could be sensed amid the rats and hardtack of shipboard life, or the waves ridden like jennets” (4).

Clavijo, of course, was traveling and writing almost a century before the time of Columbus and Tirant lo blanc, and he certainly made no effort to romanticize life at sea. The sense of danger that he and his companions felt is a constant in the pages of the Embajada that are dedicated to this portion of his voyage. Clavijo and his men feared for their lives on numerous occasions, and he describes their experiences vividly. The passage through the Strait of Bonaficio (“Bocas de Bonifacio”) between Corsica and Sardinia is “derecho e peligroso” (85). Similarly, the passage through the islands of the Aeolian archipelago is a challenge for the ambassadors:

andudieron entre estas dichas islas, que no podían salir d’ellas por calma que fazía. E en la noche [. . .] fizo grand tormenta e ovieron grand viento contrario [. . .] A ora de mediodía, rompió las velas de la carraca e andudieron a árbol seco de una parte a otra, de manera que se vieron en grand peligro. (91)

The ambassadors’ fear that they might actually lose their lives at sea is a palpable constant throughout the text. One more particularly vivid example should suffice. In the port of Carpi (soon after their departure from Constantinople), a storm approaches, and the ambassadors decide that they would be safer at sea than in the port. The decision was unwise:

E cuando pensaron tornar al puerto do avían partido, no podieron. [. . .] E la tormenta crecía todavía, a tanto que las anclas echaron la galeota entre unas rocas. [. . .] E la tormenta creció tanto que era espanto; e todos se encomendavan a Dios, ca pensavan que nunca avían de escapar. (152)

These excerpts do not require extensive comment. They depict a group of men facing repeated mortal danger at sea while on a voyage in the service of their monarch. When they are in danger, they appeal to their God, and, of course, the party eventually reaches its destination and manages to return home. Perhaps more noteworthy than the exact content of these descriptions is their number. Certainly no one could accuse Clavijo of minimizing the dangers of travel by sea.

Yet to readers safe in their homes, tales such of these must have been exciting, and they may well have increased the appeal of the sea as a venue in which one could have adventure while serving one's country. It would certainly not be the first or the last time that stories of peril on the high seas would attract readers, whether factual or fictional. The Odyssey is a case in point.

To summarize: Clavijo's record of life at sea is extensive and detailed, and yet not obviously germane to his task of learning about and making contact with Timur and his empire. Other explanations must be sought for his inclusion of this information, and one of the most compelling is that he wrote these passages to stimulate interest among his readers in travel by sea and to show how such efforts could serve a patriotic purpose. This is one more way in which the author of the Embajada displays a desire to advance Castilian patriotic sentiment and to encourage his fellow citizens to act on such feelings.

Before moving on to the issue of language, one more aspect of Clavijo's record of his voyage through the Mediterranean is worth commenting on briefly: the nationalities of the ships' captains with whom he contracts his passage. On several occasions, he carefully notes their names and where they are from. He departs El Puerto de Santa María with "micer Julián Cinturio, patrón de la carraca en que avían de ir" (81). López Estrada cites J. M. Ochoa, who suggests that Centurio may have been a member of the Centurioni family, "una de las varias que se dedicaban al comercio y el transporte marítimo en Sevilla" (81n). The ambassadors leave Rhodes after contracting a "nave" whose captain was "un genués que avía nombre micer Lunardo Gentil" (101). Gentil takes them to Chios. From there, they continue in "una nabe pequeña castellana, de que era patrón un genués que avía nombre micer Loqueia Danintra" (104). They are obliged to spend a few days in Pera. The passage in which Clavijo describes their preparations for departing Pera is of interest because of the mention of the captain of the galley, but more than that, it is a richly detailed description of the issues that must be faced before undertaking a lengthy voyage by sea. It is worth considering in some detail:

Los dichos embaxadores estudiaron en esta ciudat de Pera desde el dicho día miércoles que allí llegaron, fasta el martes, treze días de nobiembre, que en este tiempo no pudieron fallar nao ni otro fuste en que pasasen en Trapisonda. E por quanto el invierno se llegava, e el Mar Mayor es peligroso de nabegar en el invierno, por se no detener, ovieron de afletar e tomar sobre sí una galeota de que era patrón un genobés que se llama micer Nicoloso Taco; e fiziéranla adobar de marineros e de las cosas que ovo menester. Este día martes tiraron la galeota afuera para fazer vela e

andar su viaje. E este día no pudieron partir por mengua de galeotes e de otras cosas que les fallescían. (149-50)

Here, as elsewhere, it is hard to see how the name of Nicoloso Taco could be of much practical relevance to the reader. One might suspect that it, along with the captain's nationality, was included in the text simply because it had been recorded in a logbook. Yet in the context of this passage, I believe that this sort of information does serve a purpose by adding specificity and immediacy to the narrative. I have pointed out already how tightly Clavijo manages to integrate the different sorts of information that comprise his work, and this is another example. The paragraph cited above includes specific dates, details not just about weather but about general climatological conditions that can have substantial impact on travel. This passage is also rich in nautical and related terminology ("nabegar," "nao," "fuste," "afletar," "galeota," "marineros," "fazer vela," "galeotes"). Furthermore, the difficulty of the ambassadors' voyage is constantly emphasized. In other passages I have cited, this difficulty takes the form of dangerous weather conditions. Here, the difficulty is of a more mundane sort—the difficulty of hiring a ship and crew in a timely manner. Yet a challenge of this type is nonetheless real, and threatens to cause a serious delay unless it is overcome. And the ambassadors are, at least temporarily, able to overcome it.

The party finally leaves Trebizond on the following day. They are eventually forced to return to Pera, however, where they spend the winter of 1404. In March of the following year, they contracted "una galeota de diez e nueve bancos; e fiziéronla armar, que les costó asaz dinero. La cual galeota fue armada e presta para en el mes de março; e era patrón d'ella micer Nicola Pisano e micer Lorenzo, venecianos" (157). Even in such

an uncomplicated statement as this one, Clavijo manages to include details about the ship and to emphasize the difficulty—in this case the simple fact that traveling is expensive—of their voyage.

These references (and others like them) are worthy of note for two other, more general, reasons. In the first place, the constant references to types of ships (“carraca,” “galeota”) serve to emphasize Clavijo’s interest in the practical aspects of travel by sea. In his most recent edition of the Embajada, López Estrada includes drawings and descriptions of the three most-frequently mentioned types of vessels. (A carack is a relative large commercial ship. A galley is a smaller warship, and a fusta is a smaller version of the galley.) (op. p. 187). As I have suggested, this description of seafaring life is clearly designed both to inform the public and to stimulate interest in it. Both of these objectives would be of obvious significance in the subsequent development of Spanish maritime prowess.

The second reason that these references are of interest is that Clavijo is careful to mention the nationality of the ships and their captains. Venetians and especially Genoese predominate, which is not surprising, given the influence of these two city-states over Mediterranean shipping and commerce at the time. According to Fernández-Armesto, Genoese dominance in the eastern Mediterranean was a consequence of economic necessity: in his words, “[a]ll the industries served by Genoese trade implied geographical specialization, which in turn implied long-range commerce” (10). This would lead to a diaspora of Genoese individuals and families all along the Mediterranean coast, including Spain: Fernández-Armesto goes so far as to speak of “her sketchy but far-flung ‘empire’ of merchant colonies along the Iberian and Maghribi sea-routes to the

Atlantic and her hugely disproportionate stake in Mediterranean-Atlantic trade” (7). This point, obviously, is made in the context of Columbus’s Genoese heritage. It is relevant here as well, though, because Genoese dominance of Mediterranean shipping has so clearly caught the notice of Clavijo. Julián Centurio, even if his home was Sevilla, and regardless of what specific family he belonged to, was almost certainly part of the Genoese colony in that city. To quote Fernández-Armesto again, “the most important of [Genoa’s] merchant settlements were those in Castile and, particularly, Andalusia. For technical and geographical reasons, Cadiz and Seville and their regions were Genoese merchants’ most substantial bases in Spain” (12). Even the small Castilian ship that takes the party from Chios to Pera is captained by a Geneose.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of naval and commercial control of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastline for the economic and military development of Western nations. In the preface to a collection of his articles on the subject, David Abulafia points out that trade and conquest were closely linked. He argues, moreover, that the two activities were so intertwined that to argue about whether trade followed the flag or vice versa is essentially meaningless: in his words, “in most respects the distinction is a false one” (ix). Clavijo would have been acutely aware of the economic and military importance of the Mediterranean. Therefore, it seems entirely plausible to me that he may have been pointing out the dominance of Genoese, Catalan, and other non-Castilian ships and seamen precisely because he wanted to emphasize that Castile was so clearly not at that point the primary naval or commercial power in the Mediterranean. Perhaps the careful inclusion of the nationalities of the sailors he meets could even have been a subtle criticism of Castile’s lack of progress in that area. I have

suggested that he hoped, with his vivid descriptions of peril (and adventure) on the high seas, to create a generalized feeling of enthusiasm for travel in general and for travel by sea in particular. In a similar way, I suspect that with these regular references to ships owned (and captained) by other Europeans, Clavijo may have been subtly encouraging Enrique and his lieutenants to consider more carefully the potential economic and political risks of failing to establish a stronger presence in the Mediterranean.⁴ Even if he did not include this information with that specific intention, it is safe to say that the text of the Embajada promoted those ideas, both within Enrique's court and among a wider readership. As is so often the case with this work, it helped to lay the groundwork, intellectually and practically, for both the voyage of Columbus in 1492 and for the development of a broader consciousness of Spain as a nation. Clavijo's treatment of issues related to language offers parallels to this process.

2.2. Clavijo the Linguist

Que después que vuestra Alteza metiesse debaxo de su iugo muchos pueblos bárbaros y naciones de peregrinas lenguas: y con el vencimiento aquellos ternían necesidad de recibir las leies: quel vencedor pone al vencido y con ellas nuestra lengua: entonces por esta mi Arte podrían venir en el conocimiento della como agora nos otros dependemos el Arte de la Gramática latina para deprender el latín. (Nebrija)

The year 1492 is a famous one in Spanish history because of the completion of the Reconquest and because of Columbus's first voyage to the Americas. The

⁴ In fact, this situation did change somewhat over the following years: O'Callaghan points out that "Castilian and Portuguese overseas commerce expanded rapidly in the fifteenth century" (620).

appearance that year of the first grammar of a romance language, the Gramática castellana by Antonio de Nebrija, sometimes receives less attention. Yet as the above quotation demonstrates, language, like military and commercial sea power, is a fundamental tool of imperial conquest. Nebrija's purpose in writing his Gramática was to facilitate the colonization of other peoples: as Menéndez Pidal writes in his study of Columbus's language, the work "fue escrita en esperanza cierta del Nuevo Mundo, aunque aún no se había navegado para descubrirlo" (Lengua 49). Language can also be fundamental to the development of national identity. Moreover, the lack of linguistic unity can be—although it is certainly not in all cases—a serious impediment to the establishment of a cohesive concept of nationhood.⁵ Certainly this has been the case in Spain: even today, non-Castilian Spaniards derive their cultural identity in no small measure from their languages, whether Catalan, Basque, or Galician. And Francisco Franco, who was undoubtedly seen by members of linguistic minority groups as a sort of imperialist, famously sought to repress other languages. The relationship between language and nation can be seen today even in the mass media: during the last years of the twentieth century, Radio Exterior de España regularly stated in its overseas service that it was broadcasting in "la lengua milenaria del Cid," thus associating the language with one of the "guiding fictions" that I explored in the first pages of this chapter. Of course, the language of the conquerors can over time come to be viewed by the

⁵ I am certainly not suggesting that a single language is necessary for the formation of a unified nation. Examples to the contrary abound. Even less am I implying that those who would seek to enhance national unity should attempt to impose a language on members of minority groups. Nonetheless, in countless cases the notion of language is inextricably bound up with the idea of nationhood, and under the right circumstances a common language can undeniably serve as a unifying force.

conquered as their own, and can become a defense against new potential imperial invaders. The Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, perhaps forgetting that the Spanish language and Christianity were imposed—often harshly—upon his own homeland, wrote a famous poem protesting U.S. influence in Latin America in which he defended “la América [. . .] que aún reza a Jesucristo y aún habla en español” (48). With these words, however odd they may sound to a present-day reader who is likely to be more conscious of the more negative aspects of the Spanish Conquest, Darío is equating language with religion in terms of its significance as a source of cultural and national identity.

Clavijo, of course, did not seek to impose his language upon anyone. Nor was his voyage by any means one of conquest. Yet in the Embajada he devotes considerable attention to the issue of language and language difference. As López Estrada observes, “[e]n algunas ocasiones el relator de le Embajada emplea una palabra que entiende que es extraña a los oyentes o lectores, y entonces la define por la o las castellanas que las traducen empleando el giro aproximado ‘ . . . que quiere decir . . . ’” (361). As an appendix to his most recent edition of the Embajada, López Estrada includes a list of more than 50 such terms (361-63). For the purposes of this study, the specific words he defines are of less interest than the simple fact that Clavijo devotes considerable effort and space to the task of ensuring that his readers understand the foreign words that he employs. Few if any of the terms are of romance origin: as Daly points out, “[t]his linguistic consciousness on the part of Clavijo is not awakened until the embassy’s arrival in Constantinople (the easternmost limit of Europe), and becomes fully evident only during the travel episodes in the Orient [. . .]” (63). Daly is correct in the observation.

She also cites Dolores Corbella, who suggests that language in the Embajada serves “as simultaneously an element of cultural identity and as an indicator of differentiation between people, as is race and religion” (63). Significantly, though, language is an indicator that is independent of religion. Several terms defined by Clavijo, such as “santa Sufía,” (the name of an Orthodox church in Constantinople) are Greek, and Clavijo observes as much: “E santa Sufía quiere dezir en lenguaje griego tanto como vera Sapiencia, que es el fijo de Dios” (128). Greek, after all, is a language with strong associations to Christianity. Daly implies, but does not state explicitly, that Clavijo establishes what she describes as “linguistic borders” based not so much on geographical or religious boundaries as on the relative mutual intelligibility of the local languages and Clavijo’s native Castilian.

More typically, the words that Clavijo defines explicitly are of Turkic origin, and they are related to the Asian portion of the ambassadors’ journey. Two examples are sufficient here. The first, chosen for the simple reason that its origin was a surprise to me, is the word “caxix,” and its related forms (as recorded in the appendix prepared by López Estrada) “cahite, chaites, caxistres, etc.” (361). This term is typical of the sorts of words that Clavijo chooses to define: as Daly points out, he tends to be interested above all in terms referring to “political position and titles” (67). As I suggest in the following section, Clavijo has good reason to explain such terms, since one of his principal objectives in writing the Embajada was to demonstrate to his readers the impressive scope of Timur’s conquests. Upon encountering the term “caxix” for the first time, the casual reader might assume that it is related to the modern Spanish “cacique,” which the Real Academia Española de la Lengua defines in its Diccionario as “Señor de vasallos o

superior en alguna provincia o pueblo de indios.” In fact, the Real Academia points out that “cacique” is a word of Caribbean origin. Clavijo’s “caxix,” according to López Estrada, means “ermitaño, santón, descendiente de Mahoma, prelado mahometano” (361). Again, the term itself is of less importance than the fact that Clavijo uses it in a political context and takes the trouble to define it.

A second example, this one worth noting because it refers to Timur himself, is the Mongol leader’s popular name. Although modern scholars prefer the name “Timur,” he was traditionally known in English as Tamerlane, and was referred to as such by English-language writers of the stature of Christopher Marlowe. According to Forbes Manz, the name “Tamerlane” comes from “Timur-il-Lenk,” and means “Timur the Lame.” The various related terms in Spanish, such as the modern “Tamorlán” or “Tamerlán” have the same origin. In the following passage, which is also quoted by Daly in her study, Clavijo notices this inconsistency, and explains it to the reader:

E otrosí el Temurbeque es su nombre propio este e no Taborlam, como le nós llamamos, ca Tamurbeque quiere dezir en su lenguaje tanto como señor de fierro, ca por señor dizen ellos veque, e por fierro, tamur. E Taborlán es bien contrario de su nombre, ca es nombre que se llaman en denuesto por Taborlán, que quiere dezir tollido, así como lo era del anca derecha e de los dos dedos pequeños de la mano derecha, de feridas que le fueron dadas rovando carneros una noche” (186).

As López Estrada observes, the ambassadors “lo llaman casi siempre con el nombre más honroso de Tamurbeque” (186n). The fact that Clavijo chose to use the non-pejorative version of the name is significant. His rather positive portrayal of Timur’s talents as a

military and political leader, as well as the significance of such a portrayal in the context of the Castilian political scene of Clavijo's time, are the subject of the following section of this study.

2.3. Timur as Political Model

Timur was by all accounts a vicious and cruel human being, and Clavijo does not gloss over this fact. I have already cited passages in which the Castilian records his shock at the brutality of the punishments meted out at Timur's court. Even in the above explanation of how Timur acquired his popular name, Clavijo notes that the injuries which led to the Mongol conqueror's being described as "tollido" had their origins in a criminal act. I have also described in some detail the enthusiastic manner in which Clavijo describes the alcohol-soaked banquets and celebrations that occurred with such frequency at Timur's court. At first glance, Clavijo's portrait of Timur in the *Embajada* would appear to be that of a man who was at once a drunken buffoon and a bloodthirsty tyrant.

Certainly those passages are among the most memorable of the entire text, and it would be absurd to suggest that Clavijo's description of Timur is in the main positive. Yet a closer reading of the work shows that Clavijo's portrayal of him is a good deal more nuanced than one might expect. Clavijo's admiration for Timur's territorial conquests is evident from the opening passage of the *Embajada*:

El grand emperador e señor Tamurbeque, aviendo muerto el emperador de Samarcante e tomándole el imperio, onde comenzó la su señoría, segund adelante oiredes, e aviendo después conquistado toda la tierra de Mogalia que se contiene con este dicho imperio e con loa tierra de la India Menor; e otrosí conquistada

toda la tierra e imperio de Horaçania, que es un grand señoría; e aviendo otrosí conquistado e metido so su señoría tierra de Tugiquinia, con tierra e señoría que es llamada Rey, e aviendo otrosí conquistado e puesto so su señoría toda la Persia e Media, con el imperio de Turiz e de Soltania; e otrosí aviendo conquistada tierra e señoría de Guilan, con tierra de Darbanten; e conquistada otrosí tierra de Armenia la Mayor e tierra de Arzinga e de Azeron e de Aunique; e puesto so su señoría el imperio de Merdin e tierra de Carchestant que se contiene con la dicha Armenia; e otrosí aviendo vencido en batalla al señor de la India Menor e tomádole grand partida de sus tierras; e aviendo otrosí destruido la ciudad de Damasco, e tomadas e puestas so su señoría las ciudades de Halap e de Babilonio e de Baldat; e aviendo destruido otras muchas tierras e señorías e vencido otras muchas batallas e fechas otras muchas conquistas, veno sobre el turco Aldaire Basica, que era uno de los grandes presentes señores que en'l mundo se savía, a la su tierra de la Turquía. (77-78)

This passage deserves careful attention for several reasons. In the first place, it begins the narrative. In the second place, as López Estrada points out, it situates Timur geographically: “señala los nombres de lugar fundamentales para la orientación geográfica del relato” (“Introducción y notas” 77n). In the third place, this sentence—and this seemingly-endless series of absolute participle clauses is in fact a single 244-word sentence—is stylistically very unlike the rest of the work, which is in general very readable.⁶ Part of the explanation may well be that Clavijo composed his text to be read

⁶ Even with López Estrada’s punctuation, this sentence is intimidating. One wonders how many casual readers have picked up a copy of one edition or another of the

aloud: López Estrada asserts that “[e]l relator escribe dirigiéndose a un público que oye el contenido del texto” (“Introducción y notas” 77n). Yet this explanation, while no doubt accurate, fails to explain the fact that Clavijo chose to open his story with such an atypical sentence. He was a careful writer: it does not stand to reason that he would have done so by chance.

I believe that Clavijo introduces the most important historical personage in the work in this way because he sought to emphasize the magnitude of Timur’s military and political achievements. The verbs and verbal adjectives that he employs are striking for their violent, military tone: the term “conquistado” in one form or another no less than seven times in this one sentence. The references to “señorío” are similarly frequent. Furthermore, the structure of the sentence itself is significant. Stephen E. Lucas, in his stylistic analysis of another, much later political document, refers to “what the eighteenth century called Style Periodique, in which, as Hugh Blair explained in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, ‘the sentences are composed of several members linked together, and hanging upon one another, so that the sense of the whole is not brought out till the close.’” (29). This description fits Clavijo’s opening sentence perfectly: the sentence only really begins to make sense to readers once they reach the independent clause at the very end of it. Lucas continues to quote Blair, who asserts that this style is “‘the most pompous, musical, and oratorical manner of composing’ and ‘gives an air of gravity and dignity to composition’” (29).

Of course, one must be careful about applying terms and judgments from one historical to texts from another. Yet I believe that Lucas’s description is very applicable

Embajada, looked at the first sentence, and promptly set it down again.

to this sentence, and it leads me to conclude that Clavijo opens his text in this way precisely because he wants to impress upon the reader the greatness of Timur's exploits. In addition, Lucas's words are fitting because he originally wrote them in reference to another text that, while very different in scope and purpose, was also essentially political in nature and whose intent was also to persuade: the opening words of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

Whom the authors of the Declaration sought to persuade, and of what, is obvious. Clavijo's purposes in opening his work with such a breathless description of Timur's prowess is less clear. In part, of course, he would have wanted to emphasize Timur's stature as a means of demonstrating the importance of the ambassadors' journey and of his own record of it. Yet this explanation seems incomplete: the single most important member of Clavijo's reading/listening public, Enrique II, was already well aware of Timur, as evidenced by the simple fact that he commissioned Clavijo and his men to undertake the embassy in the first place. For a broader public, interest in Clavijo's journey would not have been exclusively—or, it seems to me, even primarily—contingent upon Timur's importance. After all, most of the work, including many of the most appealing passages, deals with the journey itself rather than with Timur as an individual. So why did Clavijo paint such a dramatic picture of Timur?

I believe that he did so at least in part out of a desire to emphasize the Timur's more admirable qualities to his Castilian patron. And Clavijo did undeniably admire certain specific aspects of Timur's rule. In this study I have emphasized the passages in which Clavijo described Timur as, in essence, a brute and a drunk. Certainly those are the passages which occur most frequently. Yet Clavijo's account opens with the passage

quoted above, and other admiring references to Timur's administration of the territories he had conquered appear from time to time in the text. One of Timur's accomplishments was the establishment of an elaborate system of roads and relay systems. Clavijo and his men take advantage of this system as they approach Samarkand: "ca desde aquí adelante tenía el Señor puestos cavallos en paradas para que los que a él fuesen, cavalgasen en ellos e andudiesen de día e de noche, d'ellos a media jornada e d'ellos, a una [. . .] e así tenía los caminos ordenados fasta la ciudat de Samaricante" (202).

In Clavijo's mind, then, Timur was not only a great conqueror. He also possessed at least a modicum of administrative talent. In Spain, Enrique was a much less imposing figure as monarch. Was Clavijo, consciously or not, pointing out certain aspects of Timur's rule as a model for Enrique and future Castilian kings to follow? I believe, based on the passages I have quoted, that this may very well have been the case. Certainly one must be cautious here: Clavijo was certainly not suggesting that what his homeland needed was a Castilian Timur. Yet the fact that he emphasized the fact that Timur was a strong, decisive leader, willing and able to conquer foreign lands and then to govern them, seems too relevant to the political situation of Castile at the time to have been simply a coincidence. Moreover, attempts by authors, whether explicit or implicit, to influence the thinking of those in power were a well-established tradition in Castile long before the time of Clavijo. In her study of the Poema de mío Cid, Lacarra takes issue with the idea, long supported by Menéndez Pidal and others, that the work is in large measure intended as a criticism of Alfonso VI. She argues that many scholars, confusing the historical Alfonso with the literary one, "proyectan sobre el PMC una serie de prejuicios contra el rey, ausentes en el texto" (119). Lacarra may well be correct in

her analysis, but even scholars who write from very different ideological points of view coincide in the idea that the Poema is a social and political commentary, and that the author or authors of the work sought to influence the social structure of twelfth-century Castile. Likewise, Juan Manuel's political commentary in El conde Lucanor is self-evident.

To me it seems unreasonable to exclude the possibility that Clavijo may have been writing, at least to a degree, within that tradition. Also, even if Clavijo was not writing with the explicit intention of influencing the behavior of Enrique, his portrayal of an aggressive leader who sought to built and sustain an empire could hardly have passed unnoticed at Enrique's court. Long periods of time can pass between the moment when novel ideas about politics and society are first expressed and the point where such ideas come to gain wider acceptance and begin to be put into practice. I believe that Clavijo's portrayal of such an emperor as Timur may have provided support to the incipient feeling among the ruling class of Castile that a strong, imperially expansive leadership could under the right circumstances be a very desirable thing. Such a notion would undeniably come to fruition with the reign of the Catholic Monarchs and with the imperial expansion that began under their rule. Fernando and Isabel were not European equivalents of Timur by any means. But they did share an ambition to expand their domain, and neither hesitated to use harsh measures in an effort to do so. Today we apply the term "Machiavellian" to a leader who seeks to expand his or her power while worrying little about the moral justification of the means employed to that end. Such a description could easily be applied to Timur. It could also be used as a description of the tactics of the Catholic Monarchs. In fact, Fernando himself was held up as an effective ruler by none

other than Machiavelli himself. A principal aim of this study is to help to explain how Spain transformed itself from a divided, conflicted land at the beginning of the fourteenth century into an imperial power by early in the fifteenth. Clavijo, with his description and promotion of the mechanics of empire in the form of travel by sea, with his firsthand observations about linguistic contact, and, finally, with his description of a ruler with clear ambitions and few scruples about how to achieve them, certainly helped set the stage for the momentous events of the following century.

3. Pero Tafur: Nobleman as Traveler and as Merchant

Tafur, unlike Clavijo, was not commissioned by his king (or anyone else) either to undertake his voyages or to write about them. Not surprisingly, then, a consistent desire to aid in the development and expansion of the Spanish nation is less evident in his work than in the Embajada. Furthermore, Merschel has undertaken a careful study of the social and political objectives behind Andanças, and while my conclusions differ somewhat from hers, her dissertation nonetheless raises many of the salient points with regard to this issue.

My discussion of the sense of national purpose in Tafur's text, therefore, will be somewhat briefer than in the case of Clavijo's, and much of it is a sort of dialog with Merschel's study and her conclusions. I focus on three aspects of Andanças. The first is that of Tafur's consciousness of himself as a Spaniard, and how that identity manifests itself in his interactions with people he meets during his travels and in his narrative. The second is the issue of Tafur's background and his desire to advance socially. This, of course, is the central theme of Merschel's study, and most of my analysis in this section follows her work closely. In the final section of this study, however, I address an aspect

of Tafur's work that, although I have already considered it briefly in a different context, is of particular relevance here, and which has not received much attention from critics other than Letts: the question of Tafur as a student of merchant shipping and of commerce in general.

3.1. Tafur the Spaniard

One of the titles under which Tafur's work has been published is Andanças é viajes de un hidalgo español. The title, of course, is not Tafur's own. Yet it does demonstrate that readers over the centuries have perceived that his being Spanish was a significant feature of Tafur's identity as revealed in the text. Tafur was a Spaniard. He identified himself as such regularly. In addition, he felt a special affinity with other individuals from his homeland when he encountered them abroad. All of this is evident in his words. Finally, even though he traveled on his own account, Tafur regularly sought to establish his patriotic bona fides by emphasizing his service to and loyalty toward his king.

It is, admittedly, difficult to define exactly what Tafur meant, or to what entity he was referring, when he makes references to "España" or identifies himself as "español." Certainly he is not referring to all the Christian kingdoms of the Peninsula: he mentions, for instance, "una nao de Galliçia" (3) and writes of sailing past "Cataluña" (6). He speaks of "los catalanes" and "los ginoveses" in the same sentence (6). Such references as these make it appear that in Tafur's mind, Galicia, Cataluña, and Genoa all belong to the same category of political entities, and that Galicia and Cataluña are no more part of his homeland than Genoa. Tafur clearly feels his homeland to that region ruled over by Juan II of Castile, and he regularly uses the term "castellano" rather than "español." But

he uses the latter term also, and with no apparent difference in meaning, as when he introduces himself to an Italian count as “un pobre onbre que venía de Roma é yva á Ierusalem” (38). The count wants to know where Tafur is from: “é el conde apartóse conmigo, é á lo primero me preguntó, que dónde era: dixé que despaña” (38). At the very least, Castile and Spain are names for a defined place to which he feels allegiance.

Further, I believe that the two terms are essentially synonyms for Tafur. José Antonio Maravall cautions against interpreting the juxtaposition of geographical names as proof that they refer to separate entities: “Las conocidas expresiones del tipo de ‘normandos y franceses’ o ‘catalanes y españoles’, indican que hay varios grupos, dentro del de [sic] ámbito más general, que son distintos, pero ello no rompe la común pertenencia a ese grupo más amplio” (78). This is no doubt wise advice, but I nonetheless feel that in Tafur’s mind, Castile and Spain are one entity to which such regions as Cataluña do not belong.⁷ This belief is strongly supported by the fact that Juan II of Castile is referred to on at least one occasion in the text as “rey de España” (277).

The question to be addressed here is how strongly Tafur felt allegiance to that entity, and how that consciousness manifests itself in Andanças. My answer, succinctly stated, is that his awareness of his Castilian/Spanish identity was well-developed, and being away from his homeland made him feel this identity even more acutely. His

⁷ Maravall also objects strongly to the use of the terms “nation” and “nationality” in reference to any historical period before the French Revolution. In his words, “No hay absurdo mayor que hablar de nacionalidades, no ya solamente en los siglos de la alta Edad Media, sino en los primeros siglos de la Edad Moderna” (476). I disagree, obviously, and have used “nation” and related terms throughout this study. While I fully recognize the differences between fifteenth-century Castile and the modern nation-state, the simple fact is that Castile was at that time a geographically and culturally defined entity under one central government to which its citizens (another anachronistic term) could and did feel loyalty. Therefore, I am perfectly comfortable in calling it a “nation.”

conversation with the Italian count, cited above, is not the only occasion in which he is at pains to identify his origin. Even on one occasion in which he decides to lie about his nationality, he ultimately reveals the truth, and in so doing implicitly recognizes the importance of where one is from. When he first meets the famous traveler Niccolo di Conti, the Italian begins to interrogate Tafur: “é él, como me vido, llegóse á mí é preguntóme quién era, é que fazía allí, é qué arte era la mía; é yo le dixé, como era de Italia é me avía criado con el rey de Chypre, é que avía venido á Babylonia por su mandado al Soldan [. . .]” (95). Tafur then tells di Conti of his plans to continue onward to India, but the Italian advises him against it. Tafur persists: “É yo todavía porfiando de yr allá, él me dixo é conjuró que le dixese quién yo era” (95). Apparently di Conti suspected that something was amiss in Tafur’s initial reply to his question.⁸ The Castilian realizes that his deception has failed to convince. As Letts puts it, “De’ Conti quite obviously did not believe him” (8-9). Judging that his interlocutor is trustworthy, he decides to tell the truth: “É yo, mirando como era persona grave é discreta é de buen gesto, díxele como yo era fidalgo é cavallero natural d’España” (96). At first glance, this passage may appear to undermine my argument that Tafur was intensely conscious of his national identity, since he showed no hesitation to attempt to disguise it when he perceived that doing so would further his interests. Reading more carefully, however, one can easily see that it in fact suggests just the opposite. Tafur recognizes here that one’s national origin is a matter of sufficient importance that it is likely to affect how an

⁸ This exchange also begs the question of how a Spaniard such as Tafur, who had not spent an extended period of time in Italy, could possibly have hoped to pass as a native speaker of Italian. This passage suggests, perhaps, that Tafur was not always as sophisticated in his interpersonal dealings as he liked to imagine himself to be.

individual is received by others. Even though di Conti responds warmly when Tafur tells him the truth—“mostró aver avido grant plaçer” (96)—Tafur’s initial expectation is that an Italian stranger will be likely to be more forthcoming and more helpful when dealing with another Italian than with a “foreigner.”

Tafur’s national sentiment is also evident when he hears the story of an illustrious compatriot. After returning to Babylon (Cairo) from the Red Sea, di Conti, Tafur, and, significantly, the sultan’s “trujaman, mi huesped castellano” (112), pass their days exploring the city. One day they visit a church “do está enterrado un cuerpo santo de un castellano que llaman Pedro de la Randa” (111). The story of de la Randa would fit nicely in an anthology of hagiographic writings. The trujaman (interpreter) tells Tafur of “un caso que acaesçió al Soldan su señor, que entonçe era muerto, con un castellano, aquel que dizen Pedro de la Randa” (112). (It is worth noting that de la Randa is introduced not once but twice as a castellano.) He was a corsair, and was captured by the Moors, and when his captors are defeated by a Catalan corsair, he found himself in the custody of the Catalan, who proposes a bargain. Since the Castilian “era onbre tan famoso” (112), the Catalan offered, in essence, to make him a partner. De la Randa agrees, but imposes a condition: “que siempre la guerra se fiziese á los moros é nunca á los xpianos, por quél lo teníe jurado” (112-13). Together Castilian and Catalan proceed to make war against the Moors, but they are captured again when de la Randa attempts to come to the rescue of his benefactor. They are taken before the Sultan, who asks de la Randa why he chose to make war against the Muslims. The Castilian promptly replies “que porque eran enigos de la fé, é que si á ellos non, que si le paresçía que era mejor fazella á los xpianos” (114). The Sultan offers to spare their lives if they renounce their

faith. De la Randa refuses, but the Catalan agrees. The Castilian, saddened at the Catalan's weakness, takes the Sultan aside and tells him, "señor, yo me tornaré moro, si tú me vengas en fazer matar á este mi compañero" (112). De la Randa then tells the Catalan (incorrectly) that they are both to be killed in any case. The Catalan accepts this martyrdom. De la Randa then tells the Sultan that "yo non le fize sinon á fin de salvar el ánima de mi compañero, que sentía en él tanta flaqueza, que por miedo se quería renegar, agora faz de mí lo que por bien tovieres" (115). The Sultan pardons him and makes him governor of the Christians who live under the Sultan's rule. He would eventually be killed by the Sultan's successor (116).

This rather convoluted story has several features that are of interest here. In the first place, de la Randa's relationship with the Catalan corsair is not particularly warm, and the Castilian is recaptured while attempting to save the Catalan, who turns out to be neither as brave nor as committed to his faith as de la Randa. De la Randa has to intervene to prevent the Catalan's abjuring his Christian faith (and thereby, presumably, condemning himself to eternal damnation). Overall, the Catalan is portrayed as inferior in every way to the Castilian. I am not suggesting that this passage should be read as an implicit attack on Cataluña by a group of Castilians, but the fact that the contrast is drawn so sharply, and that the two protagonists' nationalities are so heavily emphasized, hardly seems accidental.

Nor is religion an absolute divider of people. De la Randa, while clearly presented as a Christian hero (and eventually martyr), is nonetheless perfectly willing to enter the Sultan's service with the sole condition that such service not involve making war on other Christians. While this is a stricter standard than, for example, that followed

by the Cid, it does not seem a particularly exacting one. And while de la Randa is willing to accept martyrdom rather than converting to Islam, the fact that by his ruse he is able to send the Catalan to a Christian death while saving himself for the time being by agreeing to serve the Sultan is clearly presented as a positive, and even admirable, outcome. This Castilian is intelligent, brave, and religious. The first two qualities, along with the fact of his nationality, are emphasized in Tafur's retelling of the tale.

Finally, if it seems that I am exaggerating the centrality of the fact that de la Randa was a Castilian, the following passage should be taken into consideration. At the end of his story, the Sultan's interpreter explains why he has recounted it: "Esto me contó el Trujaman que lo avía visto, por magnificar á su señor el Soldan, é por me fazer plaçer en dezir bien de castellano, pues qué! lo era tambien" (115). The trujaman, whom Tafur clearly finds to be a congenial companion in his explorations of the city, is himself a Castilian. The fact that he is in the service of the Sultan appears to trouble Tafur not at all. Nor does it make Tafur less willing to consider him a fellow Castilian. In addition, the trujaman is sufficiently proud of his own homeland to want to share a story in which a compatriot is portrayed heroically, and he assumes (correctly) that as a fellow Castilian, Tafur will enjoy hearing the story. In sum, this passage is thoroughly imbued with feeling of pride in and loyalty to Castile.

3.2. Andanças As a Tool for Social Advancement

Merschel's dissertation is an especially interesting study because it focuses specifically on Andanças and on proving a particular point about Tafur's motivation for writing the work. As she puts it, her work "seeks to show that Pero Tafur's Andanças é viajes, far from being a mere geographical and historical compendium, the aspect most

emphasized by his prior critics, is, in fact, the record of a man pointedly seeking greater recognition and social standing through his travels” (iii). More specifically, Merschel argues that Tafur’s motive for writing was to solidify his standing as a member of the Castilian “nobleza media,” or, to use her preferred term, “nobleza urbana” (19), and to increase his chances of being named regidor in Córdoba (19). As she notes, Tafur did in fact serve as regidor, a post which Merschel describes as essentially “a member of the city council” (19), so if her thesis is correct and Tafur’s work is essentially part of a campaign for public office, it was successful.

Merschel also points out that the issue of social standing and membership in the nobility would have been an important topic for Tafur: in her words, “Tafur’s contemporaries were consumed with the topic” (20). She cites in particular Fernán Pérez de Guzmán’s Generaciones y semblanzas, in which he “reflects on the nature of true nobility, which he characterizes as loyalty and sacrifice for the good of the ‘respublica’” (20).

In a subsequent chapter, Merschel provides what is by far the most careful and detailed study of Tafur’s family origins and life that has been undertaken to date. She acknowledges the difficulty of her task, observing that “little about him is known except for the evidence we find in Andanças” (25). She finds evidence of his ancestry, including a Pero Ruiz Tafur, who, she writes, “took part in the reconquest of Seville and to whom our traveler claims to be related” (26). She also describes his active role in the civic and commercial life of Córdoba during the years after his return.

Merschel also studies two particularly interesting questions related to the ancestry of Tafur. The first is his claim in Andanças to be related to the royal house of

Byzantium. In his discussions with the current emperor, he learns the details, as Merschel puts it, of how one of his ancestors abandoned Constantinople and “arrived in Castile to aid King Alfonso VI’s conquest of Toledo in 1085” (39). Merschel remains agnostic as far as the veracity of both Tafur’s version of his origins and of his purported conversations with the Byzantine emperor. Even so, as she notes, the fact that Tafur included this information is significant for her central argument because it reflects his “preoccupations with the nobles’ primacy” (44) and with his desire to strengthen his own membership in that social group.

The second question considered by Merschel in this part of her study is the interesting history of Tafur’s surname. It was long-established in Castile, but, citing other scholars, Merschel suggests that it may have been of Arabic origin (48). It was also probably related to the widely-used medieval Spanish term tafur (or tahúr), meaning “trickster, prankster, a thief, or a person how is skilled at dice, cards, and games in general—clearly a derogatory term” (49). Merschel speculates that having such a surname may have provided additional motivation for the author of Andanças to emphasize the illustriousness of his background.

Much of the remainder of Merschel’s dissertation is an analysis of those parts of the text which describe Tafur’s visits to different cities and in particular to Venice, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Jericho (90). Here Merschel emphasizes the degree to which Tafur is concerned with the noble classes of these cities, both in his descriptions of the societies and in his own contacts with local residents. In her words, Tafur “takes pains to associate himself with this class at every turn” (iv).

I have provided this fairly detailed summary of Merschel's study because it is the most impressive that has been carried out to date on the sociopolitical aspects of Tafur's work. As such, it is of fundamental interest to my own study. In broad terms I agree with most of Merschel's conclusions, and her attention to detail has served as a model to me. In addition, her conclusions are in general supportive of my own thesis. Even so, I do have some doubts about certain aspects of Merschel's work, which deserve to be mentioned here. It is not my intention to cast doubt on the validity of her work—most of my issues are an inevitable consequence of the fact that it is usually almost impossible to reach many absolute conclusions about authors and texts from this period, given that in so many cases there is little documentary evidence about authors other than the texts themselves. Nonetheless, I suspect that Merschel may be overstating the case somewhat when she asserts that Tafur's purpose in writing was explicitly political. Speculating on why a certain author wrote a certain text is a legitimate activity in my view, but it can be problematic. Certainly in general terms Merschel is right that Tafur must have written at least in part to increase his own prestige among his fellows. I am less sure that this was his primary objective, or that he wrote with the specific objective of attaining political office. It seems to me that Tafur's own declaration that he wrote to encourage other young nobles to "visitar tierras extrañas" (1) might be more sincere, and thus more central to his motivation for writing, than Merschel acknowledges.

In any case, Merschel demonstrates beyond any doubt that Tafur's text, far from being a simple record of a memorable period from the author's youth, was written with a broader purpose in mind. Further, whether that purpose was specifically to enhance his own standing or to guide the behavior of the nobility in general, a clear ideal of service to

his homeland was certainly uppermost in Tafur's mind. Pérez de Guzmán's words about the need to serve the "respublica" are especially important in this context. By becoming a noble, or by using the opportunities presented by one's status as a noble, one could more effectively serve society. The history of the European Middle Ages is often written as an ongoing power struggle between the monarchy and the nobility, but the truth, of course, is that the two groups needed each other. And if the rule of the Catholic Monarchs at the end of the fifteenth century represented in some respects a triumph of the monarchy, the events of the following century would clearly demonstrate that intelligent, adventurous members of society, curious about the world beyond their borders and not afraid of physical danger, were as necessary to Spain's imperial expansion as a strong monarchy. If Clavijo emphasized service to his king, Tafur emphasized service to his homeland more broadly, and perhaps, as Merschel suggests, a greater degree of self-interest. Both kinds of contributions would be necessary for the emergence of a figure such as Columbus half a century later.

3.3. Tafur the Merchant

Clavijo traveled as a diplomat, Tafur as a private individual. The latter's main interest (other than intellectual curiosity) lay in commerce. Although not himself a merchant, he betrays wide knowledge of the trading practices of his day in his text. This fact does not escape Lett's notice: in fact, he views this aspect of Tafur's text as one of the most significant: "What are the main features which stand out from this really extraordinary narrative? Chiefly, I think, the commercial instincts of the traveler, his businesslike methods, and his vivid and intimate descriptions of the great trading centres of Europe and the Near East" (16). Letts directly contradicts Merschel's thesis,

suggesting that “Tafur, for all his claims to Imperial descent and his views on the obligations of his rank, was more interested in trade than in anything else” (16). In addition, Tafur’s knowledge was practical and specific. To cite Letts once again, “[o]ne feels that our hidalgo could have written an excellent treatise on bills of exchange” (17).

Letts exaggerates the centrality of this issue in Andanças. Many issues were clearly more important to him than that of trade, and Merschel is correct that the role of the nobility is one of them. Yet even if one acknowledges this point, the number of offhand references to money and trade in Tafur’s text is striking, and these references have received relatively little attention from scholars other than Letts. Even if this is not Tafur’s most important preoccupation, it is a significant interest of his, and it is worthwhile to consider why this is the case. I believe there are three principal reasons. The first two are rather mundane, relating to Tafur’s status as a young, independent traveler. The third is of broader import. I consider each of these proposed explanations in the following paragraphs.

One of the reasons for Tafur’s interest in financial matters was probably that he was not immune to the concerns about money and spending that afflict so many travelers, whether during the Middle Ages or today. The image of the present-day American traveler, recently returned from Europe (perhaps for the first time), who expends more effort telling friends about the various expenses incurred than about anything else may be a stereotype, but few would deny that it is a common phenomenon. In this respect, perhaps the twenty-something Tafur was not so different from his twenty-first century

counterparts.⁹ This aspect of Tafur's interest in money is especially apparent in his frequent references to the subject at many of the more dramatic points in his narrative. I have already cited the passage in which he informs the reader that the price of the final leg of his trip to Jerusalem is "dos ducados," and that it is non-negotiable: "non se puede crescer nin menguar más el precio" (51). It is also worth remembering that the conflict between Tafur's guide and the caretaker of the church where Lazarus was reportedly brought back to life, which would lead to the imposition of the death penalty for the offending party, had its origins in money (62). Similarly, when Tafur recounts his visit to the Mosque of Umar, in which he would risk life and limb, he does not fail to mention that the renegade Moor whose clothes he borrows only agrees to Tafur's proposal when the traveler informs him that "le daría dos ducados" in exchange for his cooperation (63). In passages such as these, the mention of prices for services, it must be said, adds little to the narrative and clearly are lacking in broader significance.

Some of Tafur's references to the merchants with whom he has contacts are of more interest because of what they demonstrate about the range of his commercial contacts in the Mediterranean region. They also allow him to emphasize his own stature, as the following description of a transaction in Genoa demonstrates: "estuve aquí çiertos días pleyteando con unos mercaderes, que non me acudíen con el cambio que en ellos tenía; pero el Duçe é muchos de los señores de la tierra me onrraron é favoreçieron mucho, é me fizieron pagar todo lo mio con la costa doblada que allí avía fecho" (12).

⁹ I should note again that such comparisons as these are in no way meant to trivialize Tafur's voyage or his text. If anything, they serve to highlight one of the more appealing features of the Andanças: the work's deeply personal quality.

In other cases, Tafur's mercantile contacts are of use to him because the merchants provide him with practical and cultural information about the places he visits. Shortly before his arrival in Pera, he sends an advance party to "fazer saber como yo venía á un patron de una nao que llamavan Juan Caro, natural de Sevilla, que era mucho mi amigo é sabía yo que estava allí. É él con sus amigos en sus barcas saliéronme á resçebir" (137-38). In addition to receiving him as he approaches shore, Juan Caro also helps Tafur find lodging and presents him to the local authorities, who inform him that "toda cosa que oviese menester lo fallaría bien presto" (138). Passages such as these allow Tafur to demonstrate to the reader that familiarity with the world of commerce can be useful, and that this knowledge can be advantageous in areas that go beyond the merely commercial.

These examples of Tafur's interest in money and commerce, in addition to reflecting his own obvious knowledge of the subject, lead to the broader point that I wish to make in this section of my study. Very broadly stated, trade and the mechanics of it are, in Tafur's mind, important. Moreover, concern about these issues is by no means beneath the dignity of a nobleman. Nor does Tafur consider that writing at some length about these matters take away from his broader objective to confirm and advance his own social standing. Throughout the text, Tafur makes this point emphatically if implicitly. Why does he do so?

Perhaps the answer is that he realizes that his homeland, for which, as I have shown, he demonstrates consistent and evident pride and enthusiasm, needed better to take into account this issue if it was to prosper in subsequent decades. Clavijo attempts to fuel his compatriots' enthusiasm for sea travel (which is itself of fundamental

importance for establishing and maintaining foreign trade links). Tafur, I believe, hopes to foment interest in commerce and awareness of its potential importance for the continued development and expansion of his homeland. He even finds a way to combine his mercantile knowledge with his sense of national pride. When di Conti asks him where he could best sell some pearls and other objects of value, Tafur explains:

el Emperador tenía grant guerra con el rey de Poloña [. . .], é mucho menos en França, por la antigua guerra que tenía, é que en Italia ya él mejor la conosçía que yo, que ellos compran para revender, é que en España me paresçía que avría buen lugar [. . .] por la grandeza é riqueza de nuestro Rey. (106)

I feel sure that any contemporary who was exposed to Tafur's narrative would come away from the experience with an enhanced appreciation of the role of commerce in the life of a nation. It may seem strange to make this assertion in the context of a chapter dedicated to the centrality of the desire to serve Castile in these works. After all, the traditional view of medieval Spain has been that such mundane activities as producing goods and selling them was not regarded as a particularly important endeavor. Crow's history of Spain, whatever its shortcomings, consistently reflects a traditional understanding of the nation's past. In it, he points out that both the cross and the sword were traditionally regarded as the preferred means of individual and collective advancement. In his words, "Who would soil his hands with menial labor when marching off to war offered a greater and far nobler reward?" (79). The formulation of this question is simplistic, but not entirely unfair. For whatever reason, medieval Castilians expended far more energy in the conquest of territory than in commerce. In his

Manual de historia económica de España, Vicens Vives acknowledges this fact when he writes of different “sentidos de riqueza” (Manual 31-32). The third of these, “el del comerciante,” is defined as “el que une el individuo a la empresa, la continuidad a la ilusión; el ahorro a la inversión; la ambición de poder a la necesidad social de este poder; el individuo a la colectividad” (Manual 32). Vicens Vives cites the modern nations of Great Britain, the U.S., France, and Germany as places where this conception of wealth dominates. In Spain, he writes, “se ha dado muy pocas veces” (Manual 32).

It is important not to exaggerate. Vicens Vives is right to object to those who make claims to the effect that “el genio de España es antieconómico” (Manual 32). But there is an undeniable element of truth to the idea that Spaniards have regularly looked toward means other than trade for national and personal advancement. Certainly this was the case during the period studied here. More broadly, Spain has rarely been what Napoleon derisively called Great Britain: “un pays de marchands.”

Yet an interest in trade (and, obviously, of the economic exploitation of the conquered) is clearly one of the most important factors that drive nations to expand beyond their borders and to establish empires. (This fact was not lost, obviously, on the Britain of Napoleon’s day.) And, of course, commerce was one of the principal reasons for the voyage of Columbus: it is easy to forget that he set sail in 1492 seeking not an unknown continent but a better trade route to the Indies. To the extent that Tafur’s attention to commerce in the Andanças served to link the idea of travel with that of economic opportunity among his fellow Castilians, he certainly must have helped literate Castilians to be more receptive to the notion of exploration. He shared this goal with Clavijo, and, to judge by events a half century later, both were successful.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

As I have indicated on more than one occasion, this study has had as its goal to demonstrate how the works of Clavijo and Tafur at once reflected and sought to influence the public and political discourse of fifteenth-century Castile. By basing their writings on experiences that were at the same time intensely personal in nature and intimately connected with the wider world, they emphasized the importance of individual human experience. They also highlighted the fact that a strong authorial voice—whether in the first person or not—could establish their own authority and lend credence to their texts. In the public sphere, the two texts make evident the degree to which Castilians of the later Middle Ages were still capable of displaying surprisingly tolerant attitudes toward religious and cultural Others, and least as long as those Others posed no immediate or obvious threat. Finally, I have shown the degree to which both authors wished to encourage the economic, social, and political development of Castile.

It would be an exaggeration to say that either of these men stood at the very pinnacle of political or artistic influence in their society. Yet their influence was considerable, and lasting: as Daly observes in the conclusion to her own study of the two texts, “the production of works such as Celestina, Lazarillo de Tormes, Columbus’s Diario de la primera navegación or Cortés’s Cartas de relación and other New World narratives would have been inconceivable without the earlier works that they respond to or model themselves upon” (235). My own conclusions are not in the main unlike those of Daly: certainly these narratives help one to understand the evolution of thinking over the fifteenth century that would make possible the later voyages of discovery and conquest. As Harney points out, Columbus, though his objectives were different from

those of the travelers studied here, “worked for years in a literary and cultural environment in which travel narratives contributed prominently to the formulation of geographical thought” (365).

I do, however, differ with Daly in one substantial way. She emphasizes the differences between these works and the later chronicles of discovery. In her words, “the New World travel books differ substantially from the Embajada and the Andanças in that they reflect the imperialistic intentions of Castile towards the newly discovered territory” (242). Daly is certainly correct in this observation, but I have sought to point out that the works of Clavijo and Tafur respond to many of the same concerns and desires—in particular, that of a prosperous, secure, and powerful Castile—that would occupy such later figures as Columbus. In this conclusion I briefly address the continued evolution of these questions in the decades following the composition of Andanças. It should, of course, be borne in mind that the topic of this study is the two earlier works, and these concluding observations are inevitably tentative and incomplete in nature.

First, though, it is useful to review the chronology once again, as it is easy to forget that the timeframe under study—roughly, from 1403, when Clavijo set sail, until the end of the century—is not an extremely long one. Indeed, it covers little more than the lifetime of one man. We do not know when Clavijo was born, but as López Estrada notes, by the time of the embassy he seems to have been a “persona de edad madura” (“Introducción y notas” 30). He returned from his journey in March of 1406 and presumably composed his work shortly thereafter. He died in 1412 (Estudio lxxviii). Tafur was probably born in 1410 (Letts 2). He traveled from 1436 through 1439, wrote during the 1450s, and died around 1484 (Merschel 1). The two men, then, were not

contemporaries in any meaningful sense, but even so, it is worth noting that their lives did overlap. Tafur's own life overlapped that by Columbus by many more years: the Genoese explorer was born, according to his biographer Samuel Eliot Morison, "sometime between August 25 and the end of October, 1451" (7).¹

1. The Role of the Individual

It may well be that too many simplistic summaries have been written over the years of the differences between the mindset of a typical medieval European and that of a "Renaissance man." Certainly the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance was a process rather than an event, and it is not in the least surprising that a Castilian at the end of the fifteenth century would share many attitudes and values with one from a century before. Even so, the fact that the progression from supposed "medieval" values to those of the Renaissance was real is undeniable, and it was not linear. Something clearly changed, and changed relatively quickly, during this period. One manifestation of this evolution, of course, was a renewed enthusiasm for the art and literature of Ancient Greece and Rome. This rebirth of interest would, of course, give the Renaissance its name. It is also traditional to speak of a change in people's conception of themselves and of their place in the world and before God. Alborg, who is a serious and thoughtful scholar by any standard, summarizes this new attitude:

Mientras el hombre de la Edad Media había situado a Dios en el centro de su Universo y considerado la existencia terrena como una estación de paso

¹ A few other dates may also be helpful in situating these works in their context. Enrique III died in 1406 and was succeeded by Juan II (1406-1454). Juan's sister Isabel, in turn, succeeded him in 1474. Her husband Fernando ascended the throne of Aragon in 1479 (Jackson 204-05).

para conquistar la vida eterna, el hombre del Renacimiento trastrueca los valores y se coloca en el centro de un mundo que considera digno de ser vivido por sí mismo. La tierra ya no es el valle de lágrimas del hombre cristiano-medieval, sino un lugar de goce; la inteligencia no es una débil lucecilla que nada vale sin la Revelación, sino faro potente que puede descubrir todos los arcanos [. . . .] (618)

In her study of Andanças, Merschel depicts Tafur as an essentially medieval figure. Certainly he was in some ways, especially if one accepts Merschel's argument that he traveled and wrote largely to advance as a member of the nobility. But in a broader sense, I view both Clavijo and Tafur as important transitional figures. In particular, their views on the role of the individual correspond more closely to those ascribed by Alborg to the Renaissance. Both men share an evident enthusiasm for the Ancient World; Tafur at times seems almost to prefer it to his own. More broadly, both men demonstrate in their travels and their writings a powerful belief in the importance of their experiences. Likewise, neither is averse to enjoying (and reporting on) sensual pleasures of one sort or another.

I have alluded to the parallels between this faith in the individual and the shift away from a distributed political hierarchy that is represented in Spain by the consolidation of authority under the Catholic Monarchs. Daly writes of a transformation "into a strong, unified kingdom, with power clearly centralized in the hands of the Reyes Católicos, Isabel and Fernando" (242). Daly finds such sentiment lacking in these works. I would argue that it is present, at least in nascent form, in the way that both Clavijo and Tafur consistently privilege the individual over the collective in their narratives.

Similar attitudes, and, more specifically, a desire to achieve great things as an individual and then to record one's accomplishments, were obviously shared between Clavijo, Tafur, and Columbus. The Genoese explorer apparently read neither the Embajada nor the Andanças, but one suspects that if he had, he would have enjoyed them and would have felt a considerable measure of identification with their authors. Fernández-Armesto mentions four books that Columbus did study carefully during the years preceding his first Atlantic crossing. Three of them, Ptolemy's Geography, Pierre d'Ailly's Imago Mundi, and Pius II's Historia Rerum ubique Gestarum, deal explicitly with questions of cosmography and geography (35-41). The fourth is The Book of Marco Polo. Certainly Columbus's interest in this work was largely practical, and Morison emphasizes the geographical "data" that Columbus would have gleaned from the book, since "the Venetian traveler had added some 30° of longitude to the eastern-most point of China as described by Ptolemy" (64).

But at the same time, Columbus seems to have found a certain measure of inspiration in Marco Polo's writings. Fernández-Armesto writes that "Columbus's interest in the Venetian traveler was, at best, impurely scientific. He was drawn by the exoticism and extravagance of the wonders of the East" (38). It is not my intention to suggest that Columbus was at heart merely a seeker of adventure. Whatever his intellectual and personal shortcomings, he was a serious student of geography and an exceptionally brave mariner. Still, the fact that a work such as Marco Polo's was apparently able to attract him on a more personal level is significant. He seems to have shared Clavijo's sense of purpose and Tafur's desire to see and experience the unknown. The fact that Columbus probably was not familiar with the two Castilian works does not

detract from my argument. Rather, his enthusiasm for a better-known work of the same genre suggests the degree to which Clavijo and Tafur reflected what were surely interests and concerns of their time and of the following decades.

2. Religion and Nation

One of the central theses of this study has been that Clavijo and Tafur were far more accepting of religious difference than might be expected, especially if one considers that the tradition of convivencia was under severe strain by the time that they traveled and wrote. I have suggested that this was the case at least in part because the Muslims with which they came in contact were generally not perceived as a threat to their homeland. At first glance, it might appear that Castilian Christian attitudes had changed dramatically by the time that Spain was unified under the Catholic Monarchs. In some respects they had indeed done so, but it seems to me that the rather pragmatic attitude toward religious diversity did not change so much as the historical circumstances. The Muslims with whom Clavijo and Tafur dealt were not a danger to Castile. The Muslims who lived in the Peninsula in the time of Fernando and Isabel, on the other hand, had indeed begun to constitute a threat to national unity, not because of any particular change in their own behavior but because of the exigencies, real and perceived, of the Catholic Monarchs' nation-building project.

Isabel was crowned Queen of Castile in an elaborate ceremony in 1474. Some five years previous, she had married her cousin Fernando of Aragon, who would ascend that kingdom's throne in 1479, by which time Isabella was firmly entrenched in her new role. The pieces were in place for a unified kingdom to be established which would include all of Christian Spain. To help insure that their newly-united land would remain

Christian, a new institution was established shortly thereafter: the first inquisitors were named, according to Kamen, on September 27, 1480 (45). Though nominally only Christians were subject to the Inquisition, Kamen correctly points out that “Jews quickly realized that they too were in the line of fire”(17) . This process would culminate in the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. Also during that fateful year, the last remnants of Muslim Spain would come once again under Christian control: Granada fell to the forces of Fernando and Isabel on January 2.

Jackson attributes this upswing in religious persecution in part to the fact that Isabel “was indeed a bigot who included the notion of racial purity among her reasons” (194). Certainly religious zeal was one of the motivations for Isabel’s actions. On the other hand, these two rulers managed to lay the groundwork for what would be Europe’s preeminent imperial and cultural power during the following century. In order for this to happen, Spain clearly needed to be a single nation under a strong ruler rather than a patchwork of independent entities. Given the Peninsula’s history and the myriad competing economic and social groups inhabiting its borders, achieving such unity could not have been an easy task. At the very end of his study of medieval Spain, Jackson makes the point that it probably could have been realized “only on the basis of strict religious unity” (197). While Jackson does not consider the issue at length, this fact is, I believe, enormously significant. Religion under Fernando and Isabel was certainly important in itself. It appears to me to have been even more important, however, as an instrument for forging out of the diverse and often quarrelsome inhabitants of the Peninsula a single people and nation. One admirer of Fernando, Machiavelli, observes how strong the force of religion can be in this respect: he writes, in a tone that his

translator and biographer Robert M. Adams describes as “bitter” (Machiavelli 33n), that such states are “sustained by the ancient principles of religion, which are so powerful and of such authority that they keep their princes in power whatever they do, however they live” (33). It is not my intention to suggest that the Spain of Fernando and Isabel was an ecclesiastical state in Machiavelli’s terms, but the fact that they both recognized the importance of religious underpinnings for the establishment of a nation is undeniable. The religious diversity encountered by Clavijo and Tafur could be tolerated at the time and in the context of their travels. Religious diversity within the newly-united Spain of the late fifteenth century was another matter. It posed a threat, real or imagined, to the political objectives of the monarchy. Consequently, it was brutally suppressed.

In the same way, the more directly relevant case of Columbus reveals that religion may have played a less central role in his actions than has been traditionally supposed. A serious examination of his attitudes toward and use of religion is far beyond the scope of this study, but even a cursory review of the literature reveals that his own religious zeal probably was a consequence, at least in part, of his other objectives. In his biography, Morison emphasizes Columbus’s piety, asserting that “there can be no doubt that the faith of Columbus was genuine and sincere, and that his frequent communion with forces unseen was a vital element in his achievement” (47). Yet for all the strength of his personal religious faith, Columbus, too, was perfectly capable of using that faith to further other, more mundane objectives. He was also willing, in some cases, to use the evangelizing mission as a justification for his voyages when other objectives failed to be met. In a telling passage in his own biography of Columbus, Fernández-Armesto writes of a time during the first Atlantic crossing when he “began to despair of finding anything

commercially useful,” and consequently “extolled the prospects of profit for the soul” (91). Fernández-Armesto also notes that despite Columbus’s religious enthusiasm late in life, “he is not known to have evinced any similar vocation when young” (3). It seems fair to say that religious fervor and a desire to further the Church’s evangelizing mission, while they may have been genuine components of Columbus’s personality, were not the exclusive or even primary reasons for his decision to risk his life in the search for a new route to the Orient. Indeed, it is interesting to note that Columbus’s famous visit to La Rábida monastery in 1491 is remembered not for any particular spiritual significance but because, as Fernández-Armesto observes, he used his time there to consult with “a local physician and astronomer, García Fernández, with the shipowner who was to provide the means of Columbus’s voyage, Martín Alonso Pinzón, and perhaps with a seaman, usually called Pedro Vasques” (60). The fact that these very practical discussions took place in a monastery seems to have been almost incidental. Columbus was, as least in some ways, an eminently practical man.

The coat of arms of the King of Spain, as described in a royal decree in 1977, includes a shield representing the nation’s different regions. The shield is topped by a crown. Above the crown, in turn, there is a small cross: “una cruz sobre un globo, que es la Real de España,” in the words of a 1977 Royal Decree. The symbolism is obvious: it suggests that the traditional role of Spain and of its rulers was to support and glorify the Christian faith. To varying degrees, the cases of Clavijo, Tafur, Columbus, and, more generally, Fernando and Isabel, show that the reality was often in some sense reversed. The cross was a tool in the service of the crown rather than vice versa.

3. Universal Questions

In one way, this study is a rather narrow one, concentrating as it does on two texts of the same genre, written in the same language and during the same century. In another sense, though, my focus has been very broad indeed: I have sought to examine the works for evidence of how individual humans related to other humans, to their religion, to other religions, and to their God, at a particularly crucial moment in history. Many of my conclusions are specific to that time period, but I believe that at least one may be of much more general relevance. The importance of religion in human affairs both private and public is universally acknowledged. The centrality of national sentiment² to any explanation of societal organization and conflict has not always received the same degree of emphasis. This is especially the case in studies of time periods before the emergence of the modern nation-state. Certainly I do not think the importance of this issue for Clavijo and Tafur has been examined in as much detail as it deserves. This study is an attempt to correct that deficiency.

This issue is of particular relevance today. I have generally avoided references to present-day politics, since such references would be out of place in a study of medieval literature. In addition, while drawing parallels with the past can no doubt be a useful activity under certain circumstances, as an analytical and rhetorical technique it is much abused, and my knowledge of current events is that of an informed (and concerned) citizen rather than as a scholar. Despite all of this, it seems only reasonable to acknowledge that I am writing at a time in which relations between the West and Islam

² I have carefully avoided the term “nationalism” in this study because of its negative implications, and, as indicated previously, I use the term “nation” in its broadest sense.

are strained at best and in which the issues of national sentiment and religion are particularly critical. By no means do I suggest that this study offers answers to the questions raised by the current state of affairs, from the events of September 11, 2001 to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Yet these deeply troubling twenty-first century events also serve to show how complex the interplay between national sentiment and religion can be. I would speculate, moreover, that the former is more important than the latter in these more recent events as well. In any case, I would like to think that as an examination of how these issues played out on an individual level at a long-ago moment of less conflictive contact between the two cultures, this study might contribute in some modest and indirect way to a better understanding of these matters. That is, at any rate, my hope.

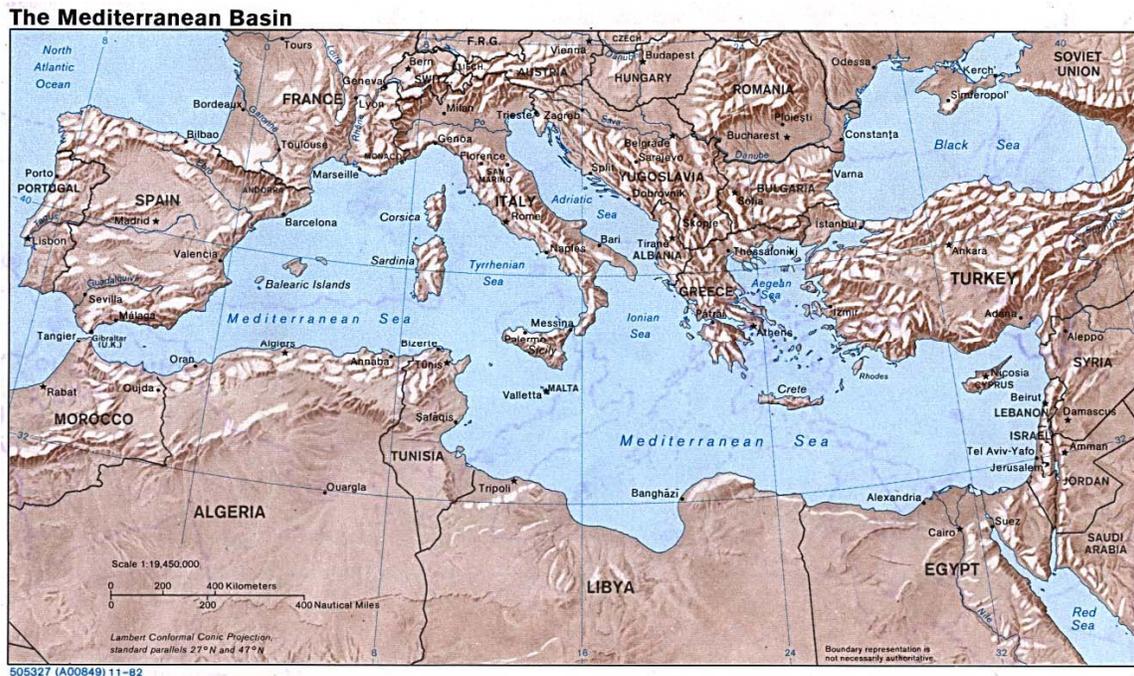
Nor is it accidental that these issues should make themselves manifest in travel narratives such as those studied here. One rarely is so acutely conscious of one's own nationality—in both positive and negative ways—as when traveling in a foreign land. Scholars such as Said can, with some justification, question whether travel leads necessarily to a deeper understanding of the places visited. Even so, there can be no doubt that the experience of travel can have a profound impact on an individual, at least if the traveler is a thoughtful observer of people and places, as both Clavijo and Tafur undeniably were. I have already cited Tafur's words suggesting that travel was a useful educational activity for young people who sought more effectively to serve Castile and its king. Other testimony to the transformative effects of travel are abundant. Some five hundred years after Tafur set his experiences to paper, a young man on another continent would begin a long-distance voyage. He left his native Argentina at about the same age as Tafur was when he left Spain on the first of his voyages. His, like Tafur's, was not a

voyage of exploration as such, but even so, he felt that the experience was of sufficient importance to be written down and shared. Apart from that, he had little in common with Clavijo or Tafur other than the language in which he wrote. Yet he, too, would be led by the experience of travel both to reflect the public discourse of his time and to seek to influence it. Neither Clavijo nor Tafur was transformed by travel in the way that this twentieth-century writer would be, but all three were acutely aware of the importance of their experiences for themselves and for society. Early in his narrative, the young Argentine wrote the following words, which were subsequently included as the epigraph to a popular film about his voyage, and which Clavijo, Tafur, and Columbus would surely have understood and appreciated:

El personaje que escribió estas notas murió al pisar de nuevo tierra Argentina, el que las ordena y pule, 'yo', no soy yo; por lo menos no soy el mismo yo interior. Ese vagar sin rumbo [. . .] me ha cambiado más de lo que creí." (Guevara 25-26)

Appendix: Maps

The following maps are from the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection of the University of Texas at Austin (<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>), and are in the public domain.



The Caucasus and Central Asia



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VITA

Jeffrey M. Evatt was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 8, 1965, the son of Valeria M. Evatt and B. H. Evatt. He was graduated from Carthage High School, Carthage, Texas, in 1983. In August of that year he entered The University of Texas at Austin. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with High Honors in December, 1986, with a major in Computer Sciences. From 1987 until 1989 he was employed as a software engineer by Hewlett-Packard Company. He entered The Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin in August, 1990, and received the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Hispanic Literature in May, 1993.

Permanent Address: 7131 Wood Hollow Dr., Apt. 177, Austin, TX 78731

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