CONFESSION IN THE CÁNTIGAS DE SANTA MARÍA

This essay proposes to examine the work known as the Cántigas e Loores de Santa María in order to see what light it throws on attitudes to confession in thirteenth-century Castile.[1] The implications of such a study are wider than might be thought. First, as is well known, the political disasters of Alfonso X's reign must be balanced by those cultural achievements which earned him the epithet of el Sabio. Thus, if this Castilian king failed in his 'imperial' schemes, yet his cultural endeavours drew on a wide variety of European and Islamic sources which gave his works an 'international' or 'cosmopolitan' quality.[2] Secondly - as a result of this 'international' aspect - there arises the problem of the quality of the religious life of the Iberian peninsula. Spanish bishops attended the Fourth Lateran Council and like their European episcopal colleagues they must have returned with copies of the Lateran decrees. Yet, whereas elsewhere in Europe such decrees were promulgated at a local level by episcopal councils and diocesan synods, such institutions were rare in Castile; this implies that the business of reform was retarded in this Iberian kingdom. This at least is the picture which has emerged from recent studies by scholars such as Linehan and Lomax.[3] The lack of a hardy and independent conciliar structure has in part been attributed to the way in which ecclesiastical dignitaries (preoccupied with the problems of the reconquest) looked to the royal court for guidance in military and religious affairs. Consequently, since some of the innovations of the Fourth Lateran Council dealt with the sacrament of penance, and since Alfonso X is held to have derived inspiration from both Iberian and European cultural and religious developments, it might be supposed that changes in Iberian attitudes to confession might be the more easily detected in the works of the scholar-king. Like the churchmen of the thirteenth century we must look to the royal court for guidance.

Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, Omnis utriusque sexus, laid down the obligation of yearly confession and communion for every Christian of either sex who had reached the age of reason. Those who failed to carry out this duty were to be excommunicated and denied Christian burial. Moreover, the decretal was to be published frequently in churches so that none would sin through ignorance.[4] That this and other canons of the Fourth Lateran Council were known at the Castilian court is made abundantly clear by Alfonso X's great compilation of the Siete Partidas. Indeed law 34 of the fourth title of the first Partida follows the Council's decision faithfully:

> Christiano, nin Christiana, non puede ninguno complidamente ser, si despues que fuere de edad, é entendiere bien é mal, non se confessare á su Clérigo cada año una vegada á lo menos, diziendole verdaderamente todos sus pecados. E

> otrosi deue recebir el Cuerpo de nuestro Señor Jesu-Cristo, á lo menos una vegada en el año, por dia de Pascua mayor, que es la Resurreccion; fueras ende si lo dexasse por consejo de su Maestro de Penitencia. Onde qualquier que estas cosas non fiziere, asi como dicho es, deue ser echado de la Eglesia, que non oya las Oras con los otros Fieles Christianos de Dios: é quando muriere non le deuen soterrar ansi como a Christiano. E porque ninguno non se pueda excusar, diziendo que lo non sabia, fagangelo saber los Clérigos, que asi es establescido en Santa Eglesia ... [5]

Thus, if the Church in León and Castile lacked a tradition of episcopal councils and diocesan synods, the monarchy to whom churchmen looked for guidance and support was aware of the conciliar decrees and was willing to implement them. Since the first draft of the Partidas was begun in 1256 and finished in 1263 it might be thought that the reforms relating to confession were rapidly put into practice.

But the Partidas were more like a legal encyclopaedia than a law code, and in fact they were not accepted as part of the law of the land until Alfonso XI promulgated the Ordenamiento of Alcalá in 1348.[6] Moreover, if the Partidas can be regarded only as providing merely an unofficial contribution to the problem of attitudes to penance, equally the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council (which were by no means 'revolutionary') did not themselves bring to a close the whole series of disputes about the nature of confession.[7] Canon 21, of course, did not 'invent' the obligation of confession, but the yearly requirement was important in its implications because it emphasised the sacramental nature of penance and the role of the priest in pronouncing absolution. However, even after 1215 and the stipulation of annual confession to a priest, confession still prevailed as to the 'power' of the priestly absolution. Before St. Thomas Aquinas the prevailing opinion attributed the remission of guilt to contrition.[8] But this view, according to which the role of the priest was that of confirming that the guilt of the contrite penitent was forgiven, must be balanced by the problem of penance. As early as the fifth century the practice of deferring penance until a deathbed reconciliation had received a measure of cautious papal approval, and the practice continued to be of great significance down to the Reformation. Thus, in this way, the Christian 'received' penance rather than performing it, and in this way, too, the themes of 'confession' and 'death' often tended to be viewed as aspects of one and the same problem.[9]

Bearing this context in mind, therefore, both awareness of conciliar decrees and the relative failure to put them into practice becomes understandable. Moreover, although a proper study of manuals for confessors is still

awaited, the preoccupation with confession and death in late medieval Spanish literature is evidence enough that, in this respect at least, the peninsula was not a backwater. For example, Lomax has referred quite rightly to 'the training in confession' which forms the basis of such works as Pérez de Guzmán's Confesión rimada, López de Ayala's Rimado de Palacio, and Páez de Ribera's Dezir a manera de confesión.[10] Even more impressive, as Rita Hamilton has shown, is the way in which Juan Ruiz handled the sacrament of penance in the so-called 'digression on confession' in the Libro de Buen Amor. In fact, the Archpriest not only dwells on the ambiguities of the teaching of the Decretals on penance, but he introduces a friar to act as confessor to Don Carnal in order to drive home his point.[11] Thirteenth-century papal legislation, of course, had given the Franciscans and Dominicans the three specific privileges relating to preaching, hearing confessions and burying the dead. It is hardly surprising that the friars invariably appear in connection with the themes of 'confession' and 'death'. Indeed, it is precisely by conjuring up the figure of La Muerte that the friar in the Castilian Dance of Death, the Danza General, attempts to convince all to do good works and penance.[12]

If it is accepted that the movement of religious reform began to flourish from the last decade of the thirteenth century,[13] questions of chronology become important because all the works just cited date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Cántigas de Santa María on the other hand date from the period after the Fourth Lateran Council but before the reform movement began to 'flourish', and it is because of this dating that they afford an interesting insight into the prevailing attitudes to confession.

A precise dating of the Cántigas is impossible, but the evidence we have easily yields delimiting dates. Of the four surviving codices, the earliest must have been drawn up after 1255, and two others after 1279; in his last will of 1284 Alfonso X refers to the books of the Cantares de loor de Sancta Maria as if they were completed.[14] The Cántigas contain well over four hundred poems or songs - all of them written in Galician-Portuguese, and many of them composed in the popular zajal form developed in al-Andalus - in praise of the Virgin Mary and her miracles. Over one thousand miniatures illustrate these poems. In almost all cases six pictures give the visual rendering of the written poem-story of a Cántiga, and in turn each picture has an explanatory caption or titulus above it which relates, in an abbreviated form, what the story is about. Thus, the miniatures may be described as the thirteenth-century equivalent of our modern 'comic-strips'. This parallel (far-fetched though it may seem), is strengthened by the 'popular' nature of the Cántigas. For these, as Guerrero Lovillo has so aptly argued, constitute a lay vision which is far removed from the niceties of the theologians:

> Y he aquí, además, un arte que ni conoce las especulaciones de los teólogos y es absolutamente indiferente a las abstracciones de los místicos. Porque el arte de las Cántigas es un arte en el que no se encuentra la huella del monasterio y sí la de la ciudad ... Por eso, su arte es un arte estrictamente civil, pese a ser un Cancionero religioso.[15]

Not surprisingly, the Virgin herself is frequently presented in the Cántigas as a woman of flesh and blood, who is prone to the usual human emotions of love, jealousy, tolerance and anger; at times she displays a startling ability to 'bend' the rules and laws of the Church and its theologians.[16] Of course, in many ways the Cántigas were not unique since the cult of the Virgin at this time was enjoying unprecedented popularity. Indeed, the extent to which Alfonso X 'borrowed' some of his material from other sources demonstrates that the legends and miracles were part of a large body of popular didactic literature. Thus, the Cántigas drew freely from such 'foreign' sources as the Speculum historiale of Vincent of Beauvais and the Miracles de la Sainte Vierge of Gautier de Coincy; closer to home, Alfonso X could hardly have been unaware of the Milagros de Nuestra Señora by Gonzalo de Berceo, and he certainly used the Liber Mariae by the Franciscan Juan Gil de Zamora.[17]

What, then, do the Cántigas tell us about confession? From the religious point of view, the universe of the Cántigas is one in which the forces of good and evil wage endless wars and fight innumerable battles in order to win control, not of mankind as a whole, but of individual men and women. The all-important 'prize' in these confrontations, of course, is the soul of an individual. All these elements, which appear specific enough in the Cántigas themselves, acquire concrete forms in the miniatures. Devils are generally easily identifiable: they are black, have small and ugly, bat-type wings, taloned feet, fur covering the body from the hips to the knees, tails, and frequently horns. Angels have long and shapely white wings, elegant robes; the familiar halo-disc denotes their status. Occasionally, devils manage to pull off a kind of reversal of role in order to lead mere mortals astray, but even in such cases the artists insert the all-important clues. For example, a devil appears disguised as St. James in Cant. xxvi: b, and as an ordinary mortal in Cant. lxvii: c, but in both cases the fiend is identifiable by the ugly black face which is still visible on the reverse side of the disguised head.

The souls of individuals, as they appear in the miniatures (and, indeed, in other similar European illustrations of the period), are best described as very small, plastic babies of indeterminate sex. In all cases the appearance of a soul only takes place after the death of the body which has housed it; its

'birth', so to speak, is through the mouth of the dead person and may even mark the moment of expiration. Thus, whereas a devil hovers over the mouth of a monk and takes his soul after death (Cant. xiv: a) and two more appear to be actually pulling a soul clear from the mouth of a dead knight (Cant. xlv: f), in Cántiga lxxv: j and k a gruesome collection of devils actually congregates round the head of a dying man, urging the soul to come forth. It is at this point, of course, that the all-important decisions and battles take place, and throughout the miniatures souls can be seen in a variety of comfortable or uncomfortable positions - held upside down, perhaps by devils (Cant. xi: c), or kneeling in rather smug positions of prayer inside 'towels' held by angels (Cant. cxix: f). More frequently, however, they are being pulled apart by devils and angels who are struggling for possession - as in Cántiga xxv: d where St. James engages in a tug-of-war over the soul of a dead pilgrim.

It might be thought that the miniatures in some way simplify the texts of the Cántigas, but this is not always the case. Some of the poems appear to have a greater visual and dramatic sense than the illustrations. In Cántiga 45, for example, the devils are just about to disappear with the soul of a sinful knight when the brigade of angels arrives in the nick of time and interferes: 'Estad', estade! / Ca non quer Santa Maria que a vos assi levedes'. To this the devils quite reasonably counter that, given the knight's misdeeds, the soul belongs to them and the angels should look elsewhere: 'Mais vos, que razon avedes / d' ave-la? Ca senpr' est' ome fezo mal, como sabedes, /por que est' alma é nossa, e allur outra buscade.' Thus, while the angels, for their part, are adamant, the devils refuse to let go of the soul because they are in the right and actually assert that God is on their side 'ca Deus é mui justiceiro', and in the end both sides agree to a kind of cease-fire while one of the angels goes up to heaven to find out what is to be done (Cant. 45: 44-64). In other words, the tugs-of-war between angels and devils over the souls of deceased men and women are an important element of 'reality' in both the texts and the miniatures of the Cántigas.

The object of the devils is straightforward. If they can obtain possession of a soul stained with sin, they can consign it into those black, boiling, wells of torment which appear here and there throughout the miniatures. Naturally, they do everything in their power to ensure their objective. When a devil appears to a pilgrim in the guise of St. James, for example, he persuades the hapless man to cut off his penis and then to slit his own throat (Cant. xxvi: b, c). The result, of course, is that the devils pounce on the man's soul: 'por que somos ben certãos / que non dev' entrar / ante Deus, pois con sas mãos / se foi desperentar' (Cant. 26: 78-81).

The object of the heavenly forces is to help individuals so that, after

death, their souls enjoy the sight of God, and it is for this reason that the sacrament of confession appears in the Cántigas and their illustrations as an important 'mechanism' of salvation. In fact, however much the rules can be bent, there is one absolute law which the Cántigas uphold - the soul of an unconfessed person cannot enjoy the sight of God. Even the Virgin Mary and Christ himself are powerless to dispense with, or suspend, this law. One of the clearest statements of this position comes when God (in the corresponding miniature it is Christ) rejects the attempted intercession by St. Peter on behalf of a monk who has died unconfessed:

> Pois que San Pedr' esto disse a Deus, respos-ll' el assi:
> "Non sabes la profecia que diss' o bon rei Davi,
> que o ome con mazela de peccado ante mi
> non verrá, nen de mia casa nunca será compannon?"
>
> (Cant. 14: 26-29)

Now, this being the case, it is hardly surprising that the Cántigas give the very strong impression that the crucial point of time in a person's life is the period immediately preceding death. Nor is there any question here, as in the early centuries of the medieval Church, of deferring confession to the last possible moment because of the severity of penance and a corresponding 'utilitarian calculation' on the part of the faithful. Quite simply the Cántigas on the whole do not relate the practice of confession to anything else except death.

There are, of course, exceptions to this connection between death and confession. In a Becket-type story three knights kill a man at the altar of the church in which he has sought asylum. For this particularly heinous sin, not unnaturally, the knights soon after seek confession, and the case is reserved to un santo bispo who imposes a pretty severe penance on them (Cant. 19). Similarly, the Cántigas link confession and pilgrimage together, the performance of the former being a precondition for embarking on the latter. Cántiga 26, for example, which contains an amusing play of meanings involving albergar,[18] makes it clear that the unconfessed pilgrim was an easy prey for devils:

> Este romeu con bõa voontade
> ya a Santiago de verdade;
> pero desto fez maldade
> que ant' albergar
> foi con moller sen bondade
> sen con ela casar.

Pois esto fez, meteu-ss' ao camỹo,
e non sse mãefestou o mesquỹo;
e o demo mui festỹo
se le foi mostrar
mais branco que un armỹo
polo tost' enganar.

(Cant. 26: 20-32)

It is this connection between confession and pilgrimage that explains Cántiga 98, which is the only poem that might be thought to be approximate in spirit to canon 21 or the corresponding 'law' in the Partidas. The story tells how, although others freely entered, the doors of the church of Santa María de Valverde (Vauvert, near Montpellier) remained shut on an unconfessed woman. That the whole point of the Cántiga is to stress the connection between confession and 'participation' is made clear by the title: 'Como hũa moller quis entrar en Santa María de Valverde e non pude abrir as portas atêen que sse mãefestou'. Moreover, the very words of the poem contain a suggestive echo of the Partidas. In the latter the unconfessed Christian 'deue ser echado de la Eglesia, que non oya las Oras con los otros Fieles Christianos de Dios'.[19] In the poem the woman pleads with the Virgin to be allowed to enter and hear the oras:

Diziendo: "Sante Maria, tu, Madre de Deus,
mui mais son as tas mercees que peccados meus;
e fas-me, Sennor, que seja en dos servos teus
e que entre na eigreja tas oras oyr".

(Cant. 98: 25-28)

These apparent similarities, however, are misleading. There is, for example, absolutely no mention of Easter or yearly confession in this Cántiga (or in any of the other Cántigas), and the suspicion that this is merely another 'confession-pilgrimage' story becomes a certainty when the corresponding miniatures are examined. For, in effect, the titulus of the first illustration to this Cántiga unambiguously states: 'Como huna dona foi en romaria a Santa Maria de Val Verde' (Cant. xcviii: a).

Apart from these exceptions, then, the Cántigas assume a natural relationship between the onset of death and the performance of confession: frequency of confession is not mentioned, but the 'law' that 'ome con mazela de peccado ante mi non verrá, nen de mia casa nunca será compannon' (Cant. 14: 28-29) receives great emphasis. As we have seen, even Christ and the Virgin observe this law, but since the Virgin is presented in the Cántigas as capable of performing prodigious miracles, it is only to be expected that this

law, too, will prove to be no insuperable obstacle. How, then, does the Virgin cope with the problem of the Christian who is in danger of dying, or who actually does die, unconfessed?

Perhaps the most obvious solution is that provided by Cántiga 119. In this story an unworthy judge (sobrejoyz) is captured by a crowd of devils, but the Virgin intervenes to tell him that he has one more day to live and that he should seek confession. The judge, of course, does as the Virgin commands: 'enviou polo guardiãa e fillou del pẽedenca dos erros sabudos' (Cant. 119: 68-69). Consequently, in both the poem and the miniatures, the angels take his soul when he dies (Cant. cxix: f). In other words, confession is performed because the sinner is warned of his or her impending death.

On the other hand, the Virgin intervenes in another episode to render the act of 'killing' impossible prior to confession. A good man, falsely accused, is being stoned to death, but he prays to the Virgin asking her not to let him die without confession, and from this point on the story follows its own logic: when the stones fail, the crowd try lance-thrusts and even slitting the man's throat, but until confession has been performed there is no way in which the unfortunate creature can be killed (Cant. cxxiv: a-f).

In Cántiga 96, however, a killing has already taken place before the Virgin intervenes. A young man is travelling over a lonely mountain when a band of robbers capture him, take him off the road, and behead him. Clearly, therefore, this is a case of an unconfessed death for which there is no solution? Quite the contrary. Four days later two friars who pass by hear ghoulish voices emanating from the spot and discover a 'dead' and dismembered body which asks to be confessed. When they have recovered from their first terrified reaction, all is explained to them by the 'head' of the dead man:

> ... E contou como o mataran
> e come diabres 'alma cuidaran
> levar que sen confisson le acharan.
> "Mas non quis a Virgen, das outras mellor,
>
> Que per nulla ren o demo levasse
> mia alma, mais que a testa tornasse
> a meu corpo, e que me confessasse ..."
>
> (Cant. 96: 51-58)

Of course it need hardly be added that the friars confessed the man - and did so in the presence of a large number of people.

From the data given in Cántiga 96 it is not quite clear whether, at the time of confession, the beheaded youth is meant to be 'fully alive', alive but without the soul, or merely temporarily joined together again for the purposes of confession. The solution, indeed, is complicated when compared to the more straightforward miracles in which the Virgin simply brings the dead person back to life. We have seen how, in Cántiga 14, St. Peter failed in his attempt to intercede for the soul of the unconfessed monk. But whereas it would be impossible in these circumstances to let the soul into the presence of God, bringing the monk alive again is a relatively simple matter. In this way the soul is back inside its living body and the person in question gets, so to speak, another chance to die 'properly'. This is how matters are arranged for both the monk in Cántiga 14 and the unfortunate pilgrim who is induced to commit suicide in Cántiga 26.

Without actually violating the 'law' about unconfessed souls, then, the Virgin's miraculous power to arrange alternative 'scenarios' makes it possible for Christians to escape the consequences of their own folly. But this immediately raises the question of why the Virgin does intervene on behalf of selected individuals. Of course, in a very general sense, it is the duty of saints to look after their own special groups: it is because the monk had belonged to the monastery of San Pedro that St. Peter tries to rescue his soul (Cántiga 14), and St. James fights the devils for the soul of the pilgrim because the latter had been on the way to Santiago de Compostela (Cántiga 26). But, although in some episodes the Virgin acts in a similar fashion (for example, where churches named Santa María are involved), it is obvious that in her case the intervention is far more wide-ranging and powerful. In fact, at times, individuals who appear to be scandalous sinners are helped for what might be thought to be the flimsiest of pretexts: for example, a thief who commends himself to the Virgin every time he goes out to rob is saved from hanging (Cántiga 13). This capriciousness which characterises the Virgin's miracles has frequently been commented upon, but what is of relevance here is that sins condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council are easily overlooked by the Virgin in the Cántigas so long as the sinners are devoted to her. In particular, it is devotion to the Virgin which explains her intervention on behalf of the unconfessed. A good example of this occurs in Cántiga 24. A young priest (crérigo) is presented to us (both in the poem and the miniatures) as a gambler and thief (tafur e ladron), and when he dies unconfessed he is buried outside consecrated ground (fora de sagrado). These elements of the story are unexceptional: after all, canon 16 of the Fourth Lateran Council forbids priests from entering taverns and from gambling, and the withholding of a Christian burial is one of the penalties included in canon 21. Nevertheless, since (as this Cántiga tells us) the priest in question always prayed to Santa María whenever he happened to see an 'image' of her, the Virgin herself appears in a vision to another priest, and she makes the clergy dig up

the body and rebury it in consecrated ground. As far as Christian burial is concerned, devotion to the Virgin is seen to be a factor which can perhaps be substituted for a sinful life and an unconfessed death. In the other Cántigas, it is true, the Virgin cannot send the souls of the unconfessed straight into the sight of God but, as has been seen, she does 'arrange' matters so that particular individuals are given the opportunity to die 'properly', and the reasons for her intervention similarly relate to the extent of the devotion to her. In the case of the beheaded corpse which was confessed by the friars, one of the stanzas in the poem actually contrasts the youth's devotion to the Virgin with his unwillingness to seek confession:

> Esto foi dun ome que feit' ouvera
> prazer aa Virgen quant' el podera;
> mais pẽedenca prender non quisiera
> per conssello do demo enganador.
>
> (Cant. 96: 16-19)

As a result of these interventions by the Virgin in helping the unconfessed the Cántigas produce an extraordinarily ambiguous view on what constituted the essence of the sacrament of penance. On the one hand, they encourage the belief that forgiveness may in some way be gained outside the confessional by devotion to the Virgin: thus not only is there a notable absence of any exhortation to a frequent recourse to the sacrament of penance, but the impression is clearly given that the unconfessed devotee will be helped at the last moment by Santa María's 'magico-religious' powers. On the other hand, as we have seen, these powers are exercised in order to make confession possible, and there are even passages which, by implication, throw some light on the role of contrition in the sacrament. In Cántiga 98, for example, the references to confession are such as to imply that contrition is the efficient cause of forgiveness and that the sacrament produces grace from the attitude of the penitent (that is, ex opere operantis). In this respect, however, Cántiga 98 would appear to be exceptional because it is the actual performance of the sacrament by the priest that is stressed (that is, ex opere operato): the proper attitude of the penitent, of course, is still presumably important, but it is the automatic and 'medicinal' power of the absolution that is emphasised. Indeed, when the Cántigas combine confession with the intervention of the Virgin some very potent 'medicine' indeed can be seen at work. In Cántiga 126 all attempts to wrench an arrow from a wounded Christian's face fail; but after he has been taken to St. Mary's church and confessed, the Virgin herself removes the arrow. More striking, however, is the direct comparison between confession and 'ordinary' medicine which is made in the story where the worldly monk 'por se guardar de mal / beveu hũa meezỹa, e morreu sen confisson' (Cant. 14: 18-19). It is for this reason that the corresponding miniature has a devil taking the monk's soul - despite appearances this is not

a 'correct' death because the chalice has contained 'ordinary' medicine (Cant. xiv: a).[20]

These ambiguities, however, add to, rather than detract from, the value and charm of the Cántigas for the work has little to do with the niceties of theologians. The prevailing impression which is conveyed is that there was an overwhelming tendency to accept the necessity of confession at death and the causal role of the priest, but at the same time to believe that, providing 'good' persons were involved, the unconfessed would be helped by emergency measures of some sort. These ambiguities, indeed, are all to be found in one story which centres round the problem of whether a poor old woman, who has sent for the priest, will be confessed before she dies. Will one of the two priests, who are at the deathbed of a rich usurer, attend the old woman? If not, we are made to feel that the Virgin will respond to the old woman's plea:

> "Santa Maria Virgen, de Deus Madr' e Filla,
> ven por mi' alm' e non pares mentes a mia pecadilla,
> ca non ey quen me comungue e sõo desamparada."
>
> (Cant. 75: 69-71)

Happily one of the priests realises that Christ will hold them accountable for the old lady's soul if they fail in their duty and, hurrying off, he arrives just in time to find that the Virgin is already there. After confession and communion the old woman dies 'properly' and the Virgin takes care of her soul. Meanwhile, however, the devils are shouting down the throat of the unconfessed usurer, urging his soul to come out:

> "Sal acá, alma, ca ja tenpo é e ora
> que polo mal que feziste sejas senpr' atormentada."
>
> (Cant. 75: 155-156)

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NOTES

1. Quotations from the texts of the poems are from Alfonso X, O Sabio, Cantigas de Santa María, ed., Walter Mettmann, Coimbra, 1959-72, 4 vols.; references in the body of the article to Cántigas and their lines are in arabic numerals. The miniatures and their captions are reproduced in J. Guerrero Lovillo, Las Cántigas. Estudio arqueológico de sus miniaturas, Madrid, 1949; references in roman numerals and an alphabetical sequence are to the Cántigas and their corresponding illustrations.

2. On Alfonso X and his reign generally, see A. Ballesteros Beretta, Alfonso X, El Sabio, Barcelona, 1963; E.S. Proctor, Alfonso X of Castile, Oxford, 1951; J.E. Keller, Alfonso X, El Sabio, New York, 1967.

3. P. Linehan, The Spanish Church and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century, Cambridge, 1971; D. Lomax, 'The Lateran Reforms and Spanish Literature', Ibero-Romania, I, 1969, 299-313.

4. For the text of Omnis utriusque sexus, see O.D. Watkins, A History of Penance, London, 1920, 2 vols., Vol.II, 733-4, 748-9.

5. The first Partida in general was heavily dependent on canon law. For the law cited see Siete Partidas, Part I, Tit. IV, Ley XXXIV, in Los códigos españoles concordados y anotados, Madrid, 1872-3, 12 vols., Vol.II, 51.

6. A. MacKay, Spain in the Middle Ages, London, 1977, pp.99-100.

7. See T.N. Tentler, Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation, Princeton, 1977, pp.16-22.

8. Ibid., p.23.

9. Ibid., pp.6-12.

10. Lomax, art.cit., 306.

11. Rita Hamilton, 'The Digression on Confession in the Libro de buen amor' in 'Libro de Buen Amor' Studies, ed., G.B. Gybbon-Monypenny, London, 1970, pp.149-57.

12. For the full text, see Joël Saugnieux, Les Danses macabres de France et d'Espagne et leurs prolongements litteraires, Paris, 1972, pp.165-82. The 'bueno e sano consejo' at the start of the Danza is given by a preacher, but as soon as La Muerte appears she refers to the fact that 'ya el frayre bos ha pedricado que todos bayaes a faser penitençia'. This connection between confession and death is one of the outstanding features of the Cántiga.

13. Lomax, art.cit., 302.

14. Guerrero Lovillo, op.cit., pp.19-21.

15. Ibid., p.25.

16. Lomax, art.cit., 306, refers to 'her rather capricious intervention'.

17. For example, some fifty of the legends in Gil de Zamora are to be found in the Cántigas: A. Rey, 'Correspondence of the Spanish Miracles of the Virgin', Romanic Review, 19, 1978, 151-3. Although the 'internationalism' of some of the miracles cannot be studied in this short article, a comparison of almost identical legends would certainly throw up interesting similarities and variants. For a case in point see the English version of the miracle in Cántiga 26 which is discussed in Marina Warner, Alone of All Her Sex. The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary, London, 1976, pp.234 and 393, note 17.

18. Albergar means 'to spend the night' or 'to put someone up for the night' (for example, in an inn). It is, of course, a verb that is often associated with pilgrimages. However, albergar con is also a euphemism for sexual intercourse.

19. See above, p.72.

20. To some extent this Cántiga could be interpreted as an illustration of canon 22 of the Conciliar Decrees, which laid down that doctors should summon the 'physicians of the soul' before administering their own medicine. The conception of the sacrament of penance as medicine for the soul had, of course, a well-established tradition. See, for example, John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, Medieval Handbooks of Penance, New York, 1938, pp.44-6; John T. McNeill, 'Medicine for Sin as Prescribed in the Penitentials', Church History, I, 1932, 14-26.

Cant. xxvi: b. The devil appears to a pilgrim disguised as St. James.

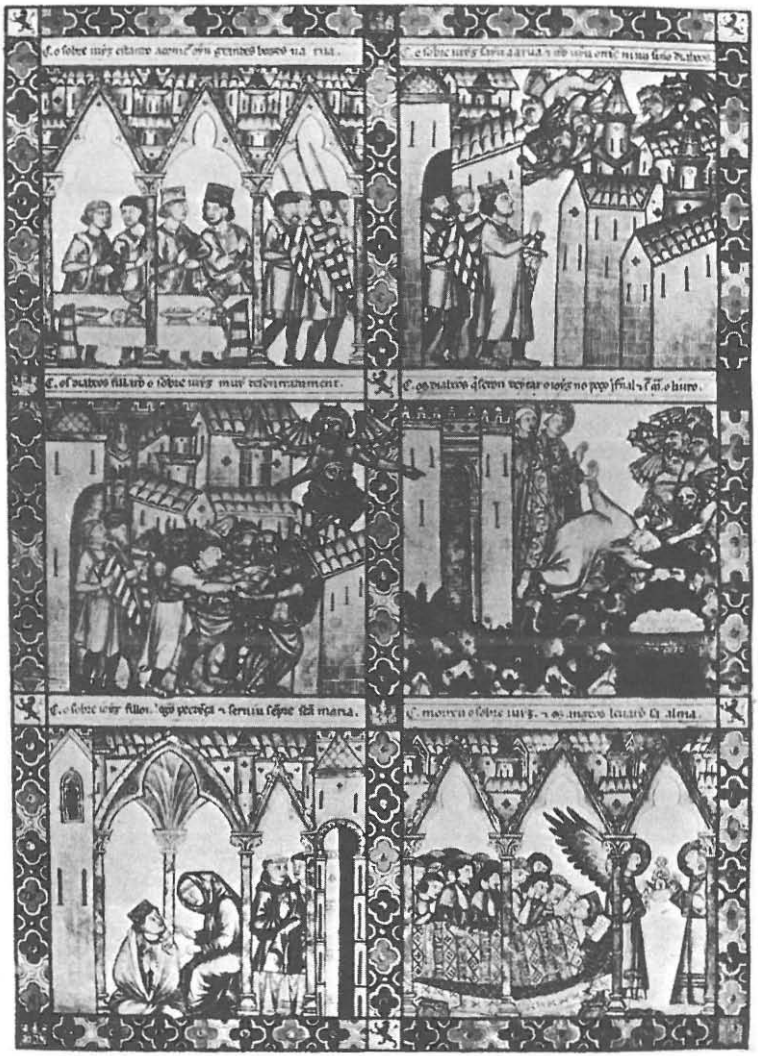
Cant. xiv: a. A monk of San Pedro dies without confession and the devil takes his soul.

Cant. xi: c. Devils, angels, and a soul being held upside down.

Cant. xxvi: d. St. James and the devil battle for the soul of a pilgrim.

Cant. cxix: f. The angels take the soul of the judge.

Cant. xxvi: e. A pilgrim slits his throat on the advice of a devil disguised as St. James.



Cant. cxix: a-f. The unworthy judge.

Cant. cxxiv: a-f. A man who cannot be killed until he has confessed.