

This text is a pre-print. Paging and layout may differ from the final published version. For the purpose of citation, please use the publisher's version: Julio Escalona, 'In the name of a distant king: representing royal authority in the county of Castile, c.900–1038', *Early Medieval Europe*, 24 (1):74-102.

In the name of a distant king: representing royal authority in the county of Castile, c.900–1038

JULIO ESCALONA

This article explores the representation of royal power in the tenth-century county of Castile by contrasting the low degrees of effective royal agency within the county with a dominant charter-writing tradition that coupled king and count in the synchronisms of the dating clauses. The components of the Castilian charter corpus are broken down and compared to other areas in northern Iberia, in order to suggest that, rather than a mere regional charter-writing tradition, this practice reflects a widespread political culture that sought to legitimize the counts' unitary leadership of Castile by reference to a prestigious, yet distant royal figure.

The relationship between the counts of Castile and the kings of León has been a favourite historiographical motif in Spain for centuries.¹ Having originated in the late eighth or

* This article was developed with support from the research projects HAR2010-21950-C03-01 (Plan Nacional de I+D+i) and HAR2013-47889-C3-2-P (Programa Estatal de Investigación Científica y Técnica de Excelencia), funded by the Spanish government. Preliminary seminar versions were presented at the University of St Andrews in 2010, at the Universidad de León in 2013 and at the Instituto de Historia-CSIC in 2013, and I am grateful to the attendants of those events for their invaluable feedback. I am likewise indebted to Isabel Alfonso, Cristina Jular, Carlos Estepa, Marta Herrero, José Antonio Fernández Flórez and Wendy Davies, as well as to *Early Medieval Europe's* two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions. None of them is responsible, however, for any of the shortcomings this paper may contain.

** References to charters are given by the abbreviated name of the edition, number in the edition, and year in brackets, e.g.: Cardeña, 1 (899). The list of abbreviations used is: Albelda: A. Ubieta Arteta (ed.), *Cartulario de Albelda* (Valencia, 1960); Cardeña: G.Martínez Díez (ed.), *Colección documental del monasterio de San Pedro de Cardeña* (Burgos, 1998); Dueñas: C. Reglero de la Fuente (ed.), *El monasterio de San Isidro de Dueñas en la Edad Media. Un priorato cluniacense hispano (911–1478). Estudio y colección documental* (León, 2005); San Millán: A. Ubieta Arteta (ed.), *Cartulario de San Millán de la Cogolla (759–1076)* (Valencia, 1976) and M.L. Ledesma Rubio (ed.), *Cartulario de*

early ninth century, Castile was ruled by a comital dynasty from the time of Count Fernán González (932–70) continuously until 1027; then in 1038, the last count of Castile, Fernando, became king of León after defeating Vermudo III. At least since the twelfth century a tradition drawn from more from legend than verified sources held that under Fernán González, Castile became formally independent from the kings of León and remained so until 1038. This idea gained strength during the 1157x1230 period in which the kingdoms of León and Castile were separated. Following re-unification, the need to legitimize Castile's hegemonic position within the new realm explains the way these legendary traditions blended into the Castilian-centric approach to the Iberian past that was a paramount feature of Spanish historical attitudes throughout the modern period and well into the twentieth century.² Repeated and amplified over and over, the uniqueness of Castile's independence and its heroic quasi-royal rulers were prominent in the national grand narrative, and as such they were taught in schools as an ideological dogma still cherished today by not a few.

Centuries of scholarship revolved around this tradition and the 'constitutional' problems it posed. However, while frequently subjected to scrutiny in its details, it was hardly ever questioned in its entirety.³ In Pérez de Úrbel's 1945 monograph⁴ – for decades the only synthesis available on the county of Castile – Count Fernán González was cast in the mould of the *caudillo*-like military leader that the author venerated, and his troubled relationship with the kings of León necessarily sounded unmistakable echoes in the Spain of the 1940s. Despite all the criticism triggered by Pérez de Úrbel's book,⁵ it was not until 2005 that a new synthesis was published by Gonzalo Martínez Díez, who rightly dispatches the whole notion of Castilian independence from León as created in the twelfth century and later. However, he replaces it with an opposite image of 'institutional normality': for all their political manoeuvres and the intrigues they gave themselves to, the Castilian counts remained the kings' (largely) loyal officers, subject to royal power and behaving no more independently than any other aristocrats in a similar

San Millán de la Cogolla (1076–1200) (Zaragoza, 1989); San Juan de la Peña: A. Ubieto Arteta (ed.), *Cartulario de San Juan de la Peña* (Valencia, 1962–3).

¹ F.J. Peña Pérez, *El surgimiento de una nación: Castilla en su historia y en sus mitos* (Barcelona, 2005).

² Peña Pérez, *El surgimiento de una nación*, pp. 45–50; G. Martin, 'Fondations monastiques et territorialité. Comment Rodrigue de Tolède a inventé la Castille', in P. Henriot (ed.), *A la recherche de légitimités chrétiennes. Représentations de l'espace et du temps dans l'Espagne médiévale (IX^e–XIII^e siècles)* (Lyon, 2003), pp. 243–61; P. Azcárate Aguilar-Amat, J. Escalona, C. Jular and M. Larrañaga, 'Volver a nacer: historia e identidad en los monasterios de Arlanza, San Millán y Silos en el siglo XIII', *Cahiers d'Études Hispaniques Médiévales (monográfico: Heusch, C. (ed.): Feindre, leurrer, fausser: fiction et falsification dans l'Espagne médiévale)* 29 (2006), pp. 359–94.

³ A paramount example: B. Montejo, 'Disertación sobre el principio de independencia de Castilla y soberanía de sus condes, desde el célebre Fernán González', *Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia* 3 (1799), pp. 245–316.

⁴ F.J. Pérez de Úrbel, *Historia del Condado de Castilla* (Madrid, 1945).

⁵ Starting with none other than C. Sánchez-Albornoz, 'Observaciones a la historia de Castilla de Pérez de Úrbel', *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 11 (1949), pp. 139–52.

context would.⁶ This hardly solves the problem. While the notion of Castile's formal independence must be fully rejected as an invention aimed to fill the default of historical legitimation of the twelfth-century Castilian kingdom,⁷ it remains obvious that the relationship between the counts of Castile and the kings of León entailed a high degree of practical autonomy that grew during the tenth century and reached its heyday in the time of Count Sancho García (995–1017), Fernán González's grandson. In this paper I aim to help redefine the relationship between royal and comital authority that operated in tenth-century Castile, by contrasting effective royal agency within the Castilian territory with working representations of political authority in the same period.

Sources are a major problem. Only four narrative texts are extant, of which three were written in the royal entourage, and therefore, represent a vision 'from outside' Castile. Moreover, the earliest two – the so-called *Chronicle of Alfonso III* and *Chronicle of Albelda* – were written in the 880s, so they pre-date the territorial expansion that created the 'extended' county of Castile.⁸ The third is the *Chronicle of Bishop Sampiro of Astorga*,⁹ arguably written c.1020, so, very near the end of Castile's comital age.¹⁰ An eyewitness to the events of the last third of the tenth century, its author strongly rejected the Castilian counts as rebellious, yet he made no reference to formal or informal independence. The fourth piece, and the only one produced within Castilian territory, c.940, is the so-called *First Castilian Annals* or *Annales Castellani Antiquiores*.¹¹ This is a two-fold text comprising a very dry list of political events followed by a lengthy account of the victory in the battle of Simancas in 939 against the army of the Caliphate.¹² It is of limited, but valuable use in defining Castilian notions of authority as seen 'from within'.

⁶ G. Martínez Díez, *El Condado de Castilla (711–1038). La Historia frente a la leyenda* (Valladolid, 2004) pp. 445–50; V.A. Álvarez Palenzuela, 'La nobleza del Reino de León en la Alta Edad Media', *El Reino de León en la Alta Edad Media* 7 (1995), pp. 149–329.

⁷ A. Garcia-Gallo, 'Las versiones medievales de la independencia de Castilla', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 54 (1984), pp. 253–94. See especially G. Martin, *Les juges de Castille. Mentalités et discours historique dans l'Espagne médiévale* (Paris, 1992).

⁸ Edited in J. Gil Fernandez, J.L. Moralejo and J.I. Ruiz de la Peña (eds), *Crónicas Asturianas* (Oviedo, 1985).

⁹ *Sampiro. Su crónica y la monarquía leonesa en el siglo X*, ed. F.J. Pérez de Úrbel (Madrid, 1952). Hereafter = Sampiro.

¹⁰ On the date, see A. Isla Frez, 'La monarquía leonesa según Sampiro', in M.I. Loring Garcia (ed.), *Historia social, pensamiento historiográfico y Edad Media. Homenaje al Prof. Abilio Barbero de Aguilera* (Madrid, 1997), pp. 33–57.

¹¹ I use the new edition by J.C. Martín, 'Los *Annales Castellani Antiquiores* y *Annales Castellani Recentiores*: edición y traducción anotada', *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder* 4 (2009), pp. 203–26. Another text, the so-called *Second Castilian Annals* or *Annales Castellani Recentiores* ('Los *Annales Castellani Antiquiores*', ed. Martín, pp. 215–225) includes an abbreviated version of the *First Castilian Annals*, followed by a continuation into the early twelfth century. J. C. Martín ('Los comienzos de las letras latinas en Castilla y León: de los Anales Castellanos Primeros a los Segundos', in M. Castillo Lluich and M. López Izquierdo (eds.) *Modelos latinos en la Castilla medieval*, (Madrid - Frankfurt: Iberoamericana - Vervuert, 2010), pp. 331–46) has argued that the first part of that continuation could have been written at the end of the comital period, under Sancho García (995–1017). However in my opinion a major reworking well after the period I am considering should not be ruled out.

¹² 'Los *Annales Castellani Antiquiores*', ed. Martín, s.a. 939.

In the absence of other narrative texts – and indeed of other sources such as inscriptions or coins – most of our information derives from charters, which are also not without problems. Considering the documents produced up to 1038 in all of the territory that was at any point controlled by the Castilian counts, the number of identifiable pieces is in the order of 700, of which around 7% are forgeries, leaving us with a corpus of around 650 usable documents.¹³ Moreover, the number of preserved originals or single-sheet pieces is negligible – no more than 3.5% – with the bulk of the material deriving from cartularies produced between the late eleventh and the eighteenth centuries. Those texts are therefore affected by the usual caveats that cartulary transmission entails. With all those considerations in mind, my analysis will focus on the political elements included in the dating clauses of the charters.

The counts of Castile

In the 880s, the chronicles of the so-called ‘Alfonso III cycle’ consistently present two territories on the eastern fringes of the Asturian kingdom: Álava and Castile. Álava came under Asturian influence at an uncertain point in the ninth century, but was slow to integrate, hence the references to its inhabitants as ‘rebellious’ in the Asturian chronicles.¹⁴ Castille, by contrast, does not bear the same negative mark, which probably indicates that by the late ninth century it had established tighter links with the kings of Oviedo. What is most peculiar of Castile’s case is its territorial expansion. By 912 it had grown from its original core – a small territory immediately south of the Cantabrian watershed – to comprise the lands from the Cantabrian Sea to the river Duero. Such an expansion could only have happened with the effective involvement of the sub-regional aristocracies and the local populations, both of which must have experienced profound changes along the way.¹⁵

A major aspect of the period of expansion seems to have been the need to redefine political authority within that territory. Arguably, the concept ‘Castile’ itself could have been at stake, since the core area formerly known by that name had little to do with the huge newly incorporated territory. There was the obvious possibility that ‘Castile’ should remain what it originally was and the new lands became a mosaic of territories controlled by different rulers, and this is precisely what seems to have happened for a period. From 899 charters show a number of counts established in different sees, who

¹³ J. Escalona, ‘La documentación de la Castilla condal: viejos problemas y nuevas perspectivas’, in B. Arízaga Bolumburu and J.Á. Solórzano (eds), *Mundos medievales. Espacios, sociedades y poder. Homenaje al Profesor José Ángel García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre* (Santander, 2012), pp. 473–88.

¹⁴ J.Á. García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre, ‘El espacio cántabro-castellano y alavés en la época de Alfonso II el Casto’, *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 74 (1997), pp. 101–20; J. Escalona, ‘Family Memories. Inventing Alfonso I of Asturias’, in I. Alfonso, H. Kennedy and J. Escalona (eds), *Building Legitimacy. Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimation in Medieval Societies* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 223–62, at pp. 244–6; J.J. Larrea and E. Pastor, ‘Alaba wa-l Qilā’: la frontera oriental en las fuentes escritas de los siglos VIII y IX’, in L. Caballero, P. Mateos and C. García de Castro (eds.), *Asturias entre visigodos y mozárabes (Visigodos y Omeyas VI, Madrid 2010)*. *Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 63 (Madrid: CSIC, 2012), pp. 307–29.

¹⁵ J. Escalona and F. Reyes Téllez, ‘Scale Change on the Border: The County of Castile in the Tenth Century’, in J. Escalona and A. Reynolds (eds), *Scale and Scale Change in the Early Middle Ages: Exploring Landscape, Local Society and the World Beyond* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 153–83.

are sometimes styled 'count of Castile', while at other times are named in relation to specific strongholds, such as Burgos, Lara or Lantarón.¹⁶ The title of count of Castile seemingly involved a certain degree of ambiguity in this period. It may have meant either specific rulership of the Castilian original core or, more likely, a claim to hegemony over the whole area and, consequently, to a privileged relationship with the Asturian kings. For all the efforts deployed by some historians to describe this period in terms of royal decisions (that is, kings deciding to appoint or dismiss one aristocrat or another as his officer in all Castile or in specific districts), the pattern makes much better sense when seen as a period of intense change that triggered competition among sub-regional aristocrats; a period, therefore, when options were open.¹⁷

This phase ended quite abruptly c.932, whereafter Fernán González, the son of Gonzalo Fernández, one of the competing counts of the previous generation, began to feature exclusively in charters as count of Castile. In the following years he also seems to have controlled relevant power centres such as Lantarón and, more importantly, Álava. Again, a classical 'institutionalist' view clings to a 'top-down' explanation: Ramiro II, a 'strong' king, put an end to the alternatives of the previous generation by appointing an able, charismatic leader as his officer in the expanded Castilian territory, thus confirming the creation of a mega-district on the kingdom's eastern side.¹⁸ However, such an abrupt transition to stability calls for deeper explanations. From 932 on, charters project an image of stable comital rulership, that turned dynastic when Fernán González was succeeded by his son in 970 and then on and on, down to his great-grandson García (d. 1027). There is hardly any trace of internal tension between the count and the Castilian aristocrats, who, interestingly, virtually disappear from the records until the last years of the tenth century. The process is reminiscent – on a much smaller scale – of the way in which the emergence of Carolingian power turned a period of inter-aristocratic relationships organized around conflict into one presided over by a general consensus about supremacy, but one that also demanded permanent vigilance and a steady flow of legitimating strategies and discourses.¹⁹

¹⁶ On this complicated political phase, see C. Estepa Díez, 'La Castilla primitiva (750–931): condes, territorios y villas', in F.J. Fernández Conde and C. García de Castro Valdés (eds), *Poder y Simbología en Europa, siglos VIII–X (Actas del Symposium Internacional, Oviedo, 22–27 de septiembre del 2008)* (Oviedo, 2009), pp. 261–78. On Lantarón, I. Martín Viso, 'Poder político y estructura social en la Castilla altomedieval: el condado de Lantarón (siglos VIII–XI)', in J.I. De la Iglesia Duarte (ed.), *Los espacios de poder en la España medieval* (Logroño, 2002), pp. 533–52.

¹⁷ The situation regarding royal power at this time was also pretty unstable, so the monarchs would hardly be in a position to act capriciously regarding comital appointments. See A. Isla Frez, *Realezas hispánicas del año mil* (Sada, 1999), pp. 13–27.

¹⁸ Martínez Díez, *El Condado de Castilla*, pp. 307–10; likewise, Álvarez Palenzuela, 'La nobleza del Reino de León', pp. 191–5; cf. J.J. García González, *Castilla en tiempos de Fernán González* (Burgos, 2008), pp. 303–7.

¹⁹ P. Fouracre, 'Conflict, Power and Legitimation in Francia in the Late Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in I. Alfonso Anton, H. Kennedy and J. Escalona (eds), *Building Legitimacy. Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimation in Medieval Societies* (Leiden and Boston, 2004), pp. 3–26.

Royal agency in Castile

Being the largest administrative district in the kingdom, Castile is remarkable for having witnessed a minimum of direct royal agency during the tenth century. In other areas, charters and inscriptions show the kings presiding over judicial courts,²⁰ founding monasteries, making donations to churches or bishoprics,²¹ or holding meetings, whether in rural *palatia* or in *sedes regiae* such as Oviedo or León;²² they and their relatives can be recognized as great landowners, although charter coverage leaves many gaps, whether through shortage of evidence or because of an effective lack of royal estates in specific areas.²³ And, of course, kings feature repeatedly in our texts as military leaders, operating as need be within the kingdom's borders and beyond.

Castile is far removed from this general picture. To start with, there is not a single monastic foundation by any king in tenth-century Castile. That seems to stop on the western border, with San Isidoro de Dueñas as the easternmost royal foundation and Sahagún as the most important house in the area.²⁴ East from that, all known cases are either private or comital foundations. Moreover, in the extant charters the kings are never seen presiding over judicial courts or holding political meetings (although the latter may well have occurred in the event of military campaigns) and, importantly, there are no traces of royal estates in the pre-AD 1000 Castilian charters. In fact, the only two charters issued by kings of León rather confirm this lack of royal patrimonial land in the county. By the first, Alfonso IV confirmed to the monastery of San Pedro de Cardeña the boundaries of the village of Villafría, which Cardeña had long possessed.²⁵ By the second, Ramiro II gave Cardeña an apple orchard recently confiscated from the count of Castile, on which see below.²⁶

This is not to say that royal authority was absolutely absent from Castile, and two specific situations may shed light on this aspect. First, there is warfare. Kings are known to have occasionally commanded military campaigns within Castilian territory. Both the ninth-century royal chronicles and the eleventh-century chronicle of Sampiro describe warfare against Muslim opponents, normally presented as led by the kings, with or without mention of lesser-rank collaborators.²⁷ A different view is provided by the *First*

²⁰ On which see W. Davies, 'Judges and Judging: Truth and Justice in Northern Iberia on the Eve of the Millennium', *Journal of Medieval History* 36 (2010), pp. 193–203.

²¹ W. Davies, *Acts of Giving. Individual, Community and Church in Tenth-Century Christian Spain* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 93–5.

²² J. Escalona and I. Martín Viso, 'Los *palatia*, puntos de centralización de rentas en la Meseta del Duero (siglos IX–XI)', in A. Vigil-Escalera, G. Bianchi and J.A. Quirós (eds), *Horrea, Barns and Silos. Storage and Incomes in Early Medieval Europe* (Bilbao, 2013), pp. 103–26.

²³ Á. Carvajal Castro, *La construcción de la monarquía asturleonense en la meseta del Duero. Estudio de los procesos de integración territorial (s. IX–XI)*, Ph.D. thesis, Universidad de Salamanca (2013), pp. 29–65.

²⁴ Dueñas, 1 (911).

²⁵ Cardeña, 20 (931).

²⁶ Cardeña, 46 (944).

²⁷ A notable exception is the final addition to the *Albeldensis* narrating the events of 882–3, in which the count of Saldaña and the count of Álava are given credit for their defence of the eastern border: Chronicle of Albelda XV.13; *Crónicas Asturianas*, ed. Gil Fernandez, Moralejo and Ruiz de la Peña, pp. 178–81.

Castilian Annals, which seem to cast a sketchy glimpse of two phases in the development of Castilian political identity: up to 912, there are entries about royal events (mainly obits and accessions) but the kings do not operate in Castile and the counts seem to act on their own accord. After 912, Castilian events are connected to royal figures, as:

In the era 958 (AD 920) the Cordobans plundered the town of Burgos with their most iniquitous king Abd Al-Rahman, in the times of King Ordonius;²⁸

and, more importantly, the counts' deeds are performed *cum iussionem regis*, as in:

In the era 984 (AD 946) Fernán González populated the town called Sepúlveda with God's help and the orders of Prince Ramiro.²⁹

The figure of King Ramiro II – reigning when the last phase of the *Annals* was composed – becomes aggrandized by the use of expressions like *rex noster* or *princeps*.³⁰ This leads to a final narrative climax (with all probability a later addition), in which an astronomic prodigy – a solar eclipse – precedes a major Muslim attack that is victoriously resisted by the king with explicit collaboration of Counts Fernán González of Castile and Assur Fernández of Monzón. The final sentence describes how 'the Christians returned in joy with a plentiful booty, and celebrated their plunder and enriched were Galicia and Castile and Álava and Pamplona, with their king García Sánchez', revealing the previously omitted participation of the king of Pamplona.³¹

All this has led Francisco Bautista to suggest that the *Annals'* latter section must have been written in León.³² However, I hope to demonstrate that this discourse of subjection is not at odds with the general ideological atmosphere in Castile after 932.³³

²⁸ *S.a.* 920: 'In era dcccclviii. sic fregerunt cortobesses c[iuitat]em Burgus cum illorum nefandissimum regem Abderaheman tempore Ordoni princeps.' All English translations from the Castilian Annals are my own.

²⁹ *S.a.* 946: 'In era dcccclxxxiii. populauit Fredenando Gundesalbiç civitatem que dicitur Septepublica cum [Dei] [a]luxili[o] et iussionem principem Ranemirus.'

³⁰ W. Davies, 'The Incidence of *princeps* in the Ninth- and Tenth-Century Charters from Northern Spain', in H. Oudart, J.-M. Picard and J. Quaghebeur (eds), *Le prince, son peuple et le bien commun: De l'antiquité tardive à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Rennes, 2013), pp. 217–32.

³¹ *S.a.* 939: '. . . xpistiani . . . reuersi sunt [cum] multa munera, et letati sunt super illorum spoliis et repleta est Galletia et Castella et Alaba, et Pampilonia cum illorum regem Garsea Santio'.

³² F. Bautista, 'Breve historiografía: Listas regias y Anales en la Península Ibérica (Siglos VII–XII)', *Talia Dixit* 4 (2009), pp. 113–90, p. 151. His analysis is by far the most detailed available on this source; however, in this paper I will dissent from significant points of his interpretation. J.C. Martín, while noticing the language of submission to King Ramiro, also considers the *First Annals* to have been written in Castile, although he does not elaborate on the ideological implications ('Los comienzos de las letras latinas', at pp. 331–32).

³³ Tellingly, the so-called *Second Castilian Annals* reinterpreted the older material by eliminating those expressions that suggested subordination to the king of León. See the text in 'Los *Annales Castellani Antiquiores*', ed. Martín, pp. 215–18. Whether this change was effected in San Pedro de Cardeña c.1072, in San Salvador de Oña c.1110, or elsewhere is a matter of debate that I shall leave aside here (see Bautista, 'Breve historiografía', pp. 151–2 and Martín, 'Los comienzos de las letras latinas').

By the early 940s, with Ramiro II and Fernán González in office, a discourse of formal subordination to royal power and leadership was dominant in Castile. The kings of León did occasionally make themselves visible in the region as military leaders and such presence was not just accepted, but proactively assumed in the entourage of the Castilian counts.

Besides military leadership, another reason for the kings of León to show up in Castile was political conflict. Throughout the tenth century there were several episodes in which the Castilian counts – like every other aristocrat in the kingdom – intervened in disputes about royal succession in favour of one candidate or another. When facing hostility from his aristocrats, occasionally the king would feel strong enough to retaliate.³⁴ Imprisonment, exile or death could await or not the fallen magnate, but confiscation of all or part of his landed property was a likely prospect.³⁵ This is precisely what happened in Castile in 944, when King Ramiro II seized Count Fernán González and kept him in prison.³⁶ For reasons not yet clear, the count was replaced by the king's young son Sancho, who established himself in Burgos with the assistance of Count Assur Fernández of Mozón, an all-time rival of Fernán González and arguably the one to exercise effective power. That very year a charter illustrates how, in the presence of the assembly of the town of Burgos, King Ramiro II donated to San Pedro de Cardeña –the county's most important monastery and closely linked to comital power – 'the land that was formerly called the Count's apple orchard' ('ipsa terra qui condan extitit pumare de comite').³⁷ In the absence of any indication of larger-scale confiscation, this must be read as the symbolic enactment of the fact that the fallen count's power was no longer effective and the king was in control.

No doubt Fernán González was brought to dire straits and the king kept a close watch over Castilian affairs until at least 950. However, the count was not blinded, maimed or killed, his patrimonial estates were not wholly confiscated, and soon enough he was back in his former shape. His imprisonment was terminated, according to Sampiro, by an agreement to marry his daughter Urraca to Ramiro's son Ordoño.³⁸ Intervention there clearly was, but the sequence reads more like a particularly harsh negotiation of the respective positions. Conceivably, Fernán González – and his underlying aristocratic network – was too significant to be simply eliminated, even if the king managed to get hold of him physically.

So far I have argued that, throughout the period, the Asturian-Leonese kings enjoyed formal recognition in Castile, but the power they exercised there was basically mediated by the regional aristocrats. The kings lacked the basis for direct political governance, mainly extensive landed estates like the ones they had in the León area.

³⁴ The intricacies of these episodes are presented in detail in Martínez Díez, *El Condado de Castilla, passim*; J. Rodríguez Fernández, 'La Monarquía Leonesa. De García I a Vermudo III', in *El Reino de León en la Alta Edad media, III: La Monarquía Astur-Leonesa de Pelayo a Alfonso III* (León, 1995), pp. 129–413, at pp. 185–6.

³⁵ On the significance of royal confiscations in tenth-century León see Carvajal, 'La construcción de la monarquía', pp. 178–188.

³⁶ Rodríguez Fernández, 'La Monarquía Leonesa', pp. 383–95; Álvarez Palenzuela, 'La nobleza del Reino de León', pp. 202–4.

³⁷ Cardeña, 46 (944).

³⁸ Sampiro, 23.

Leaving aside specific situations, like military stress or the 940s conflict, the king was hardly ever seen in Castile. Effective governance and political power belonged to the counts. However, I have also pointed out the existence in Castile of a political discourse of formal subjection to royal power. This can be explored in greater depth by systematic analysis of the charters.

King and count in dating clauses: a north Iberia survey

In most charter-writing traditions across early medieval Europe, it was normal procedure to include a dating clause, which could be shaped in a number of ways. Absolute dates could be based upon one or more of the time-reckoning systems in use, and/or upon 'political' computing systems like the regnal years of emperors, kings or popes. Likewise, relative systems could also be used – normally in combination with absolute ones – by adding 'synchronisms', that is, mentions of rulers, officials, bishops or abbots, who were in charge at the time when the document was produced. Carolingian royal diplomas often contained elaborate dating clauses using multiple systems and references, as well as ideologically charged titles for rulers, while private documents tended to be much more sober. Historians have been long aware of the relevance of such 'political' elements inserted in the dating clauses of medieval documents, not only because they help reconstruct who was in office at any given time and place, but also for their capacity to channel discourses of legitimation and expressions of allegiance, recognition, or rejection.³⁹

The most remarkable peculiarity in the Iberian charter-writing tradition is the use of the so-called 'Hispanic era', a reckoning system starting in the year 38 BC. The very limited surviving evidence from the Visigothic period proves the application of the era dating, often combined with other methods, like regnal years.⁴⁰ Thereafter, the era dating remained standard practice across northern Iberia, with the only exception being Catalonia, where the regnal years of the Carolingian or post-Carolingian monarchs was the norm.⁴¹ In the rest of the territory, charters were normally dated in eras and regnal years were seldom used, whereas 'political' references normally occurred as synchronisms, or *regnante* clauses, as they are frequently called. However, a brief inspection of charter collections up to AD 1000 reveals great variations.⁴² In this survey, the comprehensive

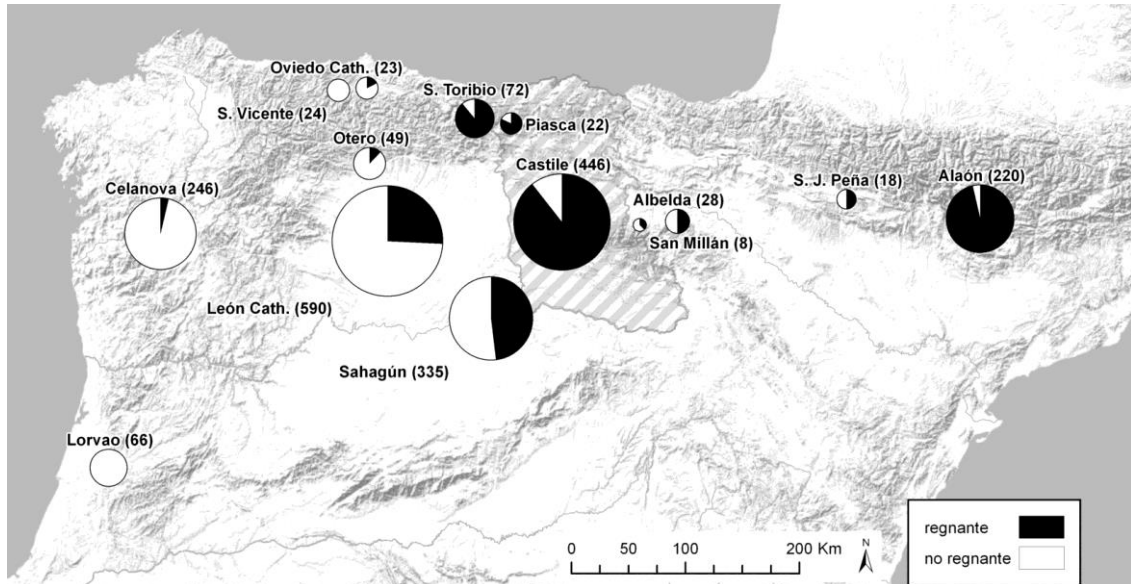
³⁹ The classical study is H. Fichtenau, "'Politische" datierung des frühen Mittelalters', in H. Wolfram (ed.), *Intitulatio II. Lateinische Herrscher- und Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert* (Vienna, Cologne and Graz, 1973), pp. 453–548. See also M. Zimmermann, 'La datation des documents catalans du IXe au XII siècle: un itinéraire politique', *Annales du Midi* 93 (1981), pp. 345–75; H. Wolfram, 'Political Theory and Narrative in Charters', *Viator* 26 (1995), pp. 39–51; and more generally I.H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority in the Carolingian World (c.751–877)* (Leiden, 2008).

⁴⁰ All texts can be found in Á. Canellas López, *Diplomática hispano-visigoda* (Zaragoza, 1979). On the political significance of era dating in the Visigothic period, see M. Handley, 'Tiempo e identidad: la datación por la era en las inscripciones de la España tardorromana y visigoda', *Iberia* (1999), pp. 191–210.

⁴¹ M. Zimmermann, *Écrire et lire en Catalogne (IXe–XIIe siècle)* (Madrid, 2003) pp. 332–5.

⁴² AD 1000 seems a convenient limit for this comparison in order to avoid the distortions caused by the expansion of Navarran hegemony under King Sancho III (1004–35), which triggered significant changes in charter-writing practice.

Castilian charter corpus will be compared to other selected collections from northern Iberia (Map 1). Despite the great differences in the numbers of preserved charters, the overall trends can be easily recognized. Obvious forgeries and documents that are preserved in such a fragmentary state that it is impossible to determine whether they originally had a *regnante* clause or not have been excluded.



Map 1: *Regnante* clauses in selected collections from north-west Iberia, up to ad 1000. Alaón charters all dated by regnal years of the Frankish kings. San Millán chart excludes all documents of Castilian provenance, which are counted into the Castile chart. Chart sizes proportional to numbers of charters. Source: author

Castile, the main focus of this inquiry, shows quite a consistent pattern. Of a total corpus of 428 usable pieces, 386 (90%) have a *regnante* clause, sometimes including only the king (12%), sometimes only the count of Castile (5%),⁴³ but the vast majority (73%) consistently citing both king and count. Now, can the Castilian pattern be considered as representative of north Iberian practice? Hardly, as comparison with other collections will reveal. My survey will proceed from the east, with Aragón and Pamplona, to the kingdom of León in the west.

On the easternmost side of my enquiry, the tiny county of Ribagorza keeps consistently to the usage in nearby Catalonia and Aquitaine: 96% of the 220 pre-AD 1000 charters from the monastery of Santa María de Alaón⁴⁴ are dated exclusively by the regnal years of the Frankish kings, never mentioning a count or bishop as a synchronism, and never using the era dating.

The picture changes dramatically in Aragón and Pamplona, where the era is the dominant dating system and the proportions of charters with a *regnante* clause tends to be over 50%. Another interesting feature of this region is the trend to mention a variety

⁴³ The count's title normally mentions just Castile, but sometimes includes other territories, like Álava or Lantarón. Mentions of different rulers, like the counts of Monzón, are exceptional. In ten cases the rulers are connected to Burgos, instead of Castile.

⁴⁴ *Cartulario de Alaón (Huesca)*, ed. J.L. Corral Lafuente (Zaragoza, 1984). I exclude from my reckoning two fragmentary pieces.

of characters as synchronisms. For example, 50% of the San Juan de la Peña charters⁴⁵ cite the king, often along with counts, bishops and abbots;⁴⁶ moreover in two cases the Asturian-Leonese kings are also mentioned, under the title of kings of *Gallecia*.⁴⁷ The pattern repeats itself in the Rioja region, where 58% of the charters from Albelda⁴⁸ have a *regnante* clause mentioning always the king of Pamplona, sometimes also the queen, and often aristocrats who controlled major strongholds like Nájera, Viguera or Deyo.⁴⁹ In addition, three Albelda charters also name the Asturian-Leonese kings (one by regnal year⁵⁰) and the counts of Castile and Álava are cited twice each.⁵¹ In nearby San Millán de la Cogolla,⁵² only three charters feature a *regnante* clause citing the king, sometimes with other royal characters,⁵³ but six pieces were issued directly in favour of San Millán by people from Castile or with Castilian interests, and those keep tightly to Castilian usage: the king of León and the count of Castile. The general impression is that in Aragón and Pamplona adding ‘political’ synchronisms to dating clauses was a frequent option, but never a hard rule, and even then, they were not limited to the king of Pamplona, but could include relevant figures from neighbouring areas. There seems to be a modest Astur-Leonese /Castilian influence over those areas, the reverse of which cannot be

⁴⁵ *San Juan de la Peña*, ed. Ubieto Arteta.

⁴⁶ For example, SJPeña, 8 (900): ‘facta carta regnante Fortunio Garsee in Pampilona et Asnario comite in Aragone et abba Galindo in Fonte Frida’.

⁴⁷ SJPeña, 7 (893) and 18 (948). The first is remarkable for its far-reaching political scope: ‘facta carta in era DCCCC. XXX.ª I.ª regnante rege Fortunio Garcianes in Pampilona et comite Galindo Asnar in Aragon, Adifonsus in Gallecia, Garcia Sanz in Gallias, Raimundus in Paliates, pagani veru Mohomat Ebenlupu in Balleterra, et Mohomat Atauel in Osca, abbas domnus Banzius in cenobio sanctorum Iuliani et Basilisse de Labasal’.

⁴⁸ *Cartulario de Albelda*, ed. Ubieto Arteta.

⁴⁹ An eloquent example is Albelda, 8 (941): ‘ego Garsea Sancio qui hanc fieri iussi manu mea roboravi et sub me Flain Bermudez in Vegera et Mango Asinari in Iubera’.

⁵⁰ Albelda, 1 (921): ‘. . . anno feliciter regni gloriosi Ordonii principis VII’.

⁵¹ Albelda, 1 (921), 6 (931), 21 (955), 22 (956).

⁵² It is advisable to contrast the editions cited in n. 1 above with the new edition of the San Millán cartulary: *El Becerro Galicano de San Millán de la Cogolla. Edición y Estudio*, ed. F. García Andreva (Logroño, 2010), and the online edition: *Becerro Galicano Digital* <<http://www.ehu.es/galicano/>> [accessed 30 October 2013]. My San Millán group excludes the many charters of Castilian provenance that were incorporated into the San Millán collection long after AD 1000. For the purposes of analysis, these are considered as part of the Castilian corpus. The early charters of San Millán also include a large number of forgeries, most of which have only recently been properly identified as such; see G. Martínez Díez, ‘El monasterio de San Millán y sus monasterios filiales. Documentación emilianense y diplomas apócrifos’, *Brocar* 21 (1997), pp. 7–53; D. Peterson, ‘Cambios y precisiones de fecha de la documentación emilianense’, *Berceo* 154 (2008), pp. 77–96; and D. Peterson, ‘Mentiras piadosas. Falsificaciones e interpolaciones en la diplomática de San Millán de la Cogolla’, in A. García Leal (ed.), *Las Donaciones Piadosas en el Mundo Medieval* (Oviedo, 2012), pp. 295–314. See also the critical comments to the individual pieces in *Becerro Galicano Digital*.

⁵³ SMillán, 108 (992) only mentions King Sancho reigning in Pamplona. San Millán, 110 (996) and 111 (997) show a very specific usage: ‘Garsea rege sub imperio Dei in Pampilona, una cum coniuge mea Eximina regina, et regnantibus matre mea Urraca regina et fratre meo Gonzalvo in Aragone’. In one further case the king’s name is omitted and two counts are cited, but the text’s transmission seems scarcely reliable: SMillán, 66 (933).

detected in Castilian charters before the very end of the tenth century, in the build-up of Navarran influence.

The picture changes dramatically as we turn west towards the Astur-Leonese kingdom. In this vast area, I have selected several collections that are representative of both the kingdom's cores (Oviedo and León) and its peripheries. To start with the west, in San Salvador de Celanova,⁵⁴ in Galicia, the vast majority of charters are dated by the era, with no accompanying *regnante* clause, except for nine charters that cite the king; there is also one mention of a bishop, but none of a count. Further south, the monastery of San Mamés de Lorvão,⁵⁵ near Coimbra, is an extreme case, as none of its sixty-six charters mentions a *regnante*. In the royal see of Oviedo the situation is only slightly different: none of the San Vicente charters⁵⁶ has a *regnante* clause and only two out of twenty-four sound documents from the Cathedral have it.⁵⁷ Now, if there is an area that can be considered central to the kingdom, and where a stronger ideological impact from the royal entourage can be expected, it is the León region, where, furthermore, the number of preserved charters is much higher. This, however, does not seem to be reflected in the dating clauses. In the monastery of Otero de las Dueñas very few charters have a *regnante* clause citing the king and, in two instances, the bishop of León.⁵⁸ The figure for the Cathedral of León⁵⁹ is somewhat higher: 25.7% of its 590 charters have a *regnante* clause, with the bishop sparingly mentioned along with the king, but they only become more numerous from the 980s. Before then, they are exceptional.

Both in the western areas and in the kingdom's core the standard practice seems to have been for charters not to have a *regnante* clause, but the pattern begins to change as we move eastwards. In an intermediate position between León and Castile –but firmly within the area of Leonese political influence – the monastery of Sahagún⁶⁰ represents a middling situation, with 48% of its 335 charters having a *regnante* clause. This proportion is much higher than that from the León collection, and in Sahagún the increase in the

⁵⁴ Colección Diplomática del Monasterio de Celanova (842–1230). 1 (842–942), ed. E. Sáez and C. Sáez (Alcalá de Henares, 1996); Colección Diplomática del Monasterio de Celanova (842–1230). 2 (943–998), ed. E. Sáez and C. Sáez (Alcalá de Henares, 2000); Colección Diplomática del Monasterio de Celanova (842–1230). 3 (989–1006), ed. E. Sáez and C. Sáez (Alcalá de Henares, 2006).

⁵⁵ *Liber testamentorum coenobii laurbanensis*, ed. J.M. Fernández Catón and A. Nascimento (León, 2008).

⁵⁶ Colección Diplomática del monasterio de San Vicente de Oviedo, ed. P. Floriano Llorente (Oviedo, 1968).

⁵⁷ Colección de documentos de la catedral de Oviedo, ed. S. García Larragueta (Oviedo, 1962); *El Liber Testamentorum de la catedral de Oviedo*, ed. M.J. Sanz Fuentes (Barcelona, 1995).

⁵⁸ Colección documental del monasterio de Santa María de Otero de las Dueñas. I (854–1108), ed. J.A. Fernández Flórez and M. Herrero de la Fuente (León, 1999).

⁵⁹ Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León (775–1230), vol. 1 (775–952), ed. E. Sáez (León, 1987); Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León (775–1230), vol. 2 (953–985), ed. E. Sáez and C. Sáez (León, 1990); Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León (775–1230), vol. 3 (986–1031), ed. J.M. Ruiz Asencio (León, 1987). Four further charters, all of them royal, use the era and regnal years, with the expression *anno feliciter regni nostri*.

⁶⁰ Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún (857–1230), vol. 1 (siglos IX y X), ed. J.M. Mínguez Fernández (León, 1976) and Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún (857–1230), vol. 2 (1000–1073), ed. M. Herrero de la Fuente (León, 1988).

use of *regnante* dating is steady from the 940s. More strikingly, the majority of charters from Santa María de Piasca⁶¹ and Santo Toribio,⁶² the two main monasteries from the Liébana region, show the reverse pattern from León's: over 80% of their charters feature a *regnante* clause mentioning the king, either alone or with the counts of Castile or Liébana, although in Santo Toribio mentions of the king alone are the most frequent. Conversely, the very few mentions of regnal years of the Astur-Leonese kings (24 cases) tend to occur mainly in royal charters (58%), usually under the formula *anno feliciter regni nostri*.⁶³ Maybe for the same reason, in the Castilian corpus, documents issued by the counts of Castile also tended not to have a *regnante* clause.

This geographical survey yields a picture that is worth considering. The western areas show relatively little interest in *regnante* clauses, situations ranging from the total disengagement of Lorvão or Celanova to the 25% proportion of the León Cathedral, to the near 50% of Sahagún, the latter bordering the Castilian territory. Clearly, *regnante* clauses increase in the late tenth century. By contrast, in the eastern regions it was much more frequent to incorporate these kinds of political synchronisms. The trend is clear throughout, but it peaks dramatically in Castile and Liébana. In general, it cannot be considered as a straightforward mark of Astur-Leonese allegiance, because while the kings of Oviedo/León get mentioned in Liébana and Castile, it is the Pamplona monarchs that get preferentially cited in Navarra, Rioja and Aragón. It rather seems that to include *regnante* clauses was a standard charter-writing option, which scribes may or may not have employed depending on the specific political subjection implied. Thus a wide region of hybrid diplomatic culture emerges that cuts across political boundaries where different influences seem to overlap. The use of *regnante* clauses is relatively more abundant – allowing comparison with contemporary practices in the Catalan counties and in the Frankish kingdom – but absolute dates are normally consigned according to the era system, as usual in the Leonese west. Nevertheless, Castile stands out in this survey. It is not just that most Castilian charters had a *regnante* clause, with figures only paralleled by the neighbouring Liébana region. What really defines Castile is the dominant practice of mentioning together the king and the count of Castile, with expressions like *Facta est scriptio traditionis notum die X kalendas februarias, era T^a I^a, regnante rex Sancio in Legione et comite Fernando Gundisalbiz in Castella* (Cardena, 108). As we have seen, adding other political figures, clerical or secular, to the king's name happens in many surveyed collections, but never as abundantly and consistently as in Castile, and it has little to do with centre-driven policies, as it was virtually unheard of in León and in other western areas like Galicia, Portugal, or Oviedo. To explain this away as a mere imitation of eastern usages makes similarly little sense, as Castile is much more consistent in this than its neighbours.

A preliminary check on dated codices

Clearly Castile demands closer inspection and to do this we must start by questioning the evidence. As one paramount feature of the Castilian corpus is the almost total lack

⁶¹ Colección diplomática de Santa María de Piasca (857–1252), ed. J. Montenegro Valentín (Santander, 1991).

⁶² *Cartulario de Santo Toribio de Liébana*, ed. L. Sánchez Belda (Madrid, 1948).

⁶³ See for example Albelda, 2 (924) and 3 (925).

of originals, and a second is the great weight of cartularies in the transmission of the preserved documents, we may well wonder if the observed pattern does not derive from much later manipulation. In the central Middle Ages it was much more frequent to include *regnante* clauses in charters, and besides in twelfth-century Castile there was a strong revival of the legendary comital period and its key political figures. Could this homogeneous image be really due to the makers of the cartularies? For some western collections like the León Cathedral, Otero de las Dueñas or Sahagún, which have important numbers of single sheets and originals preserved, it is easy to demonstrate that the proportions do not derive from cartulary interpolations. In Castile however, there are few such originals to contrast with, but we can turn instead to a different kind of source and one that is rarely taken into account in this respect: dated codices.⁶⁴

As usual across early medieval Europe, high-quality codices sometimes included information about their scribes, as well as where and when they worked. Less frequently, some monastic codices bear mentions of the abbot governing the house, and even about the persons who paid for or donated the work, or those for whom it was ultimately intended. This information may occur in different parts of the codex, in opening pages like prologues, or dedications, in the form of plain text or verses, often in elaborate ornaments, like acrostic verses or labyrinths, but most especially in colophons. An overview of 'political synchronisms' in dated codices from north-western Iberia yields a striking result (Table 1).

None of the preserved codices produced in the western Leonese area include any political synchronisms. However, on the eastern side, three out of eight dated Riojan manuscripts mention the king of León, one of them along with the count of Castile. All three occur in the period 946x954, that is, in the heyday of Fernán González, but thereafter they fade out and the last case is unmistakably Pamplonese. By contrast, in Castile six out of eight dated codices include political references, and of those six, one cites only the king of León while five mention both king and the count of Castile. In the three areas the pattern matches nicely the one observed in charters. In León there is seemingly no special interest in mentioning figures of authority, which is in line with the charters from this region. In the Rioja, half of the dated codices include them, and there is a thread of western influence in the three cases with Leonese/Castilian references; the same hybrid pattern is detected in the charters from this region. Finally, Castile presents a solid image with five out of six codices rendering the kings and the count's names,⁶⁵ as

⁶⁴ There is no comprehensive corpus of early medieval Iberian colophons or dated codices. My list derives from A. Millares Carlo, M.C. Díaz y Díaz, A.M. Mundó, J.M. Ruiz Asencio, B. Casado Quintanilla and E. Lecuona Ribot, *Corpus de Códices Visigóticos* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1999); M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Códices visigóticos en la Monarquía leonesa* (León, 1983); and C. García Turza (ed.) *Los manuscritos visigóticos: estudio paleográfico y codicológico. I. Códices riojanos datados* (Logroño, 2002). I have also used A. Pérez, 'El Esmaragdo de Valvanera (a. 954)', *Berceo* 5 (1947), pp. 549–72; G. Martínez Díez, 'Códices visigóticos del monasterio de Cardaña', *Boletín de la Institución Fernán González* 218 (1999), pp. 33–48; and J.A. Fernández Flórez, 'Algunas huellas del "Proyecto de una diplomática española" en el siglo del Padre Flórez', in C. Borreguero Beltrán (ed.), *El padre Flórez, tres siglos después: actas del Congreso Internacional. Burgos, 23 al 26 de septiembre de 2002* (Burgos, 2006), pp. 229–52.

⁶⁵ Maybe even more, as the one case where the king is cited alone, Florentius of Valeránica's 953 copy of Cassiodore's Commentaries to the Psalms, is a now-lost codex whose colophon is transmitted fragmentarily, so it could well have included the count too, as is Florentius's usual

is also the dominant pattern of the charters. There are, therefore, good reasons for thinking that, despite the lack of originals, the inclusion of 'political synchronisms' in charters reflects an actual Castilian tenth-century practice, not the manipulations of later copyists. With this conclusion, it is now possible to deconstruct the Castilian corpus.

Table 1 Political synchronisms in tenth-century dated codices from north-western Iberia					
Provenance			Date and Synchronisms		
Region	Scriptorium	Scribe	Date	Synchronisms	Section
León ?		Teodemirus	915		
León	San Vicente?	Baltarius	951		
León	San Miguel de Escalada?	Magius	962		
León	Tábara	Magius / Emeterius	970		
Rioja	?	?	917		
Rioja	San Millán	Scemenus	932		
Rioja	San Millán	Scemenus	946	King of León King of Pamplona Abbot of San Millán	Colophon
Rioja	Albelda	Gomesanus	951	King of León	Prologue
Rioja	Valvanera?	?	954	King of León Count of Castile	Colophon
Rioja	San Millán	?	964		
Rioja	Albelda	Ennecus Garseani	976		
Rioja	Albelda	Vigila / Sarracinus	976	King of Pamplona Queen of Pamplona King of Viguera	Acrostic verses
Castile	Cardeña	Gomesanus	914		
Castile	Valeránica	Florentius	943	King of León Count of Castile	Colophon
Castile	Valeránica	Florentius	945	King of León Count of Castile	Colophon
Castile	?	Juan	945	King of León Count of Castile	Colophon
Castile	Cardeña	Endura / Sebastianus	949	King of León Count of Castile	Prologue
Castile	Valeránica	Florentius	953	King of León	Colophon
Castile	Cardeña	Endura / Didacus	954		
Castile	Valeránica	Santius	960	King of León Count of Castile	Colophon

procedure; see E. García Molinos, 'Florencio de Valeránica, calígrafo y notario del siglo X', in Fernández Catón (ed.), *El Reino de León en la Edad Media*, XL (León, 2004), pp. 241–429, at pp. 355–9.

King and count in Castilian dating clauses

This enquiry is based upon a comprehensive charter database derived from several monastic collections – most notably Cardeña, San Millán, Valpuesta and Oña – that were mostly dismantled, and partially lost in the nineteenth century. Those collections resulted themselves from the absorption of almost one hundred smaller houses by a few dominant monasteries in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. In other words, many more *scriptoria* were active in the tenth century than the later collections would have us think. Importantly, around a tenth of the documents record transactions between private individuals, with no obvious direct involvement from any monastery,⁶⁶ which surely implies an even more diverse practice pattern.⁶⁷ The reasons why those pieces survived may vary. Sometimes we may suspect that small sets of private archives became embedded in the monastic collections,⁶⁸ but more often they were kept as records of the previous history of properties that ultimately were acquired by the monastic houses. Nevertheless, most such documents were created independently from immediate monastic interests, and in theory they may be less prone to reflect monastic scribal diplomatic practice than other charters.⁶⁹

The fact that there is so much ground for diversity within the Castilian corpus makes it even more striking how homogeneous this material seems in terms of the representation of political authority. The distinctive dominance of *regnante* clauses citing both king and count occurs throughout the Castilian corpus (Table 2). In San Pedro de Cardeña, by far the most important and influential monastery in the county, 90% of all charters up to AD 1038 mention 'king+count'. As Cardeña represents 40% of the corpus, this clearly colours the grand totals, but even if we leave aside Cardeña, the trend to mention 'king+count' is dominant in most major collections:

San Miguel de Froncea	100%
San Pedro de Cardeña	90%
San Cosme y San Damián de Covarrubias	78%
Santa María de Valpuesta	78%
San Salvador de Oña	72%
San Pedro de Arlanza	63%
San Millán de la Cogolla	57.5%
Santillana del Mar	50%

Changes in time are equally important. The numbers of extant charters vary dramatically in the period 900x1038, both because of changes in charter production and differential

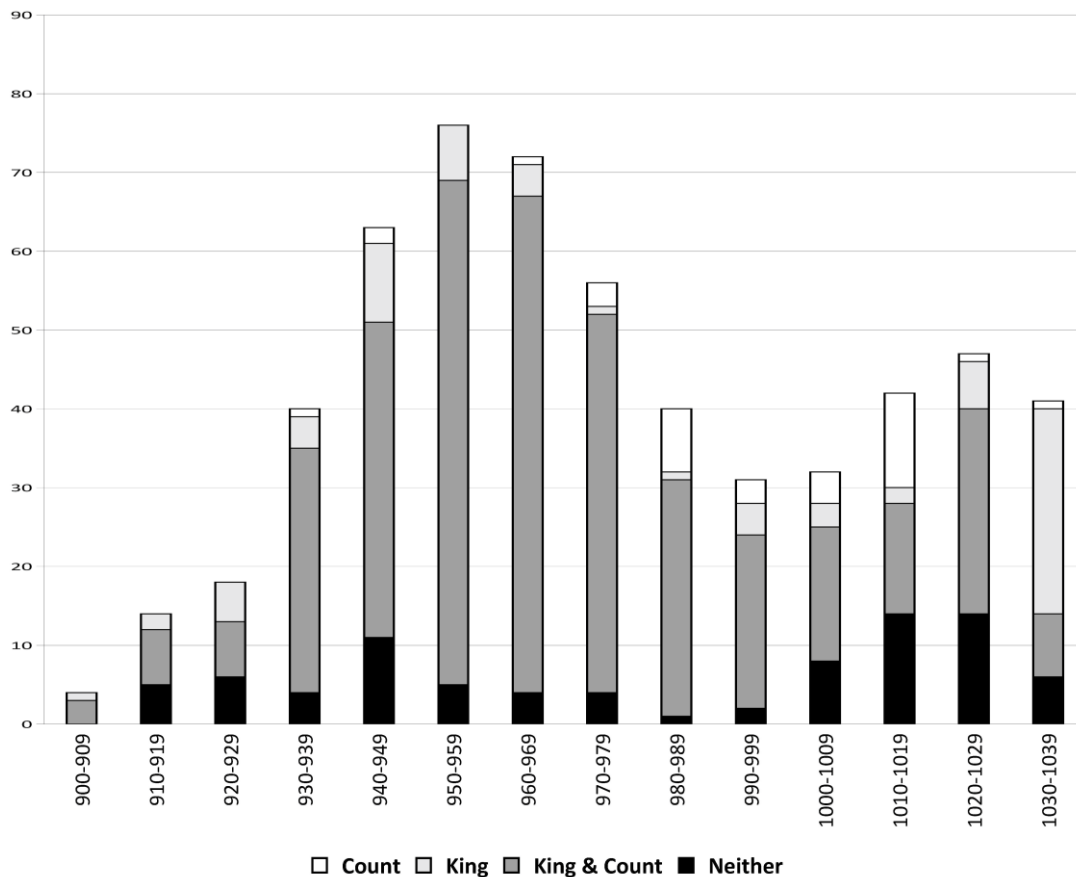
⁶⁶ This is a different category from the standard diplomatic authorial classification, in which the class 'private' includes all documents issued by people other than royal or ecclesiastical. The key here is that both parties are 'private'.

⁶⁷ See a more detailed discussion in Escalona, 'La documentación de la Castilla condal'.

⁶⁸ A. Kosto, 'Sicut mos esse solet: Documentary Practices in Christian Iberia, c. 700–1000', in W. Brown, M. Costambeys, M. Innes and A. Kosto (eds.), *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 259–82.

⁶⁹ W. Davies, 'Local Priests and the Writing of Charters in Northern Iberia in the Tenth Century', in J. Escalona and H. Sirantoine (eds), *Chartes et cartulaires comme instruments de pouvoir. Espagne et Occident chrétien (VIIIe–XIIIe siècles)* (Toulouse, 2013), pp. 29–43.

survival rates (Graph 1). The number of ninth-century charters preserved is so low that it rules out quantitative approaches. Only from the 930s does the material become more abundant, although there is a significant decrease in the two decades before and after 1000. Mentions of 'king+count' are rare in the ninth century, but they begin to increase in the 890s and become clearly dominant around 932, when Fernán González reached power. Mentions of the count alone are exceptional throughout, but become relatively more abundant in the periods 980–99 (20%) and 1010–19 (27%). Finally, mentions of the king alone are rare all the time, except in the 1030s, with the end of the comital dynasty and the takeover of Sancho of Navarre and his son Fernando I.



Graph 1 Regnante clauses in Castilian charters, 900–1038. Source: author

Because of its high relative impact, it is interesting to analyse the Cardeña collection in greater detail. In Table 3 the Cardeña charters are arranged by provenance. Besides the 141 charters addressed to Cardeña, the collection also comprises 46 charters originally given to fourteen monasteries, mainly situated in the central areas of the county, around Burgos. The second largest subset is San Julián de Villagonzalo, with thirteen charters, but most are represented only by three or fewer, which is not numerically significant if taken one by one. Documents between private individuals, though, represent a substantial block of thirty-two items.

Graph 2 summarizes the behaviour of those three subsets before, during, and after the period of Fernán González's rulership (932x970). For the sake of clarity I have limited the final phase to the death of Count García Sánchez (1027), to avoid the disturbance caused by the takeover of the Navarran monarchy. In the period before

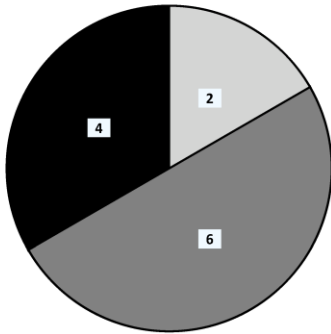
Fernán González, the Cardeña collection contains just one charter from other monasteries, so it has not been graphed. There are only six private documents, again too few to handle quantitatively, but they are remarkably consistent in always mentioning 'king+count'. As for Cardeña charters, this is clearly the least coherent period, but it already shows a clear dominance of 'king+count', although the low numbers call for a prudent handling of the data. Thereafter, the 'king+count' formula becomes absolutely dominant, although in the later phase charters mentioning only the count of Castile begin to be more noticeable. However, the most outstanding fact in this sequence is the extreme coherence between all three groups. It seems that, in the Castilian central territories around Burgos from where the bulk of the Cardeña charters come, the political dimensions of charter-writing procedures were basically the same whether at the Cardeña *scriptorium*, at those of lesser houses, or even for the scribes that could be employed by private individuals to record their transactions. This seems to indicate a widespread political culture shared among great and lesser clerics and the laity in this region, more than a normalized scribal practice in a few high-status centres.

San Pedro de Cardeña	142
San Julián de Villagonzalo	13
Santa Eugenia y Santa Marina	8
San Martín de Villabáscos	7
San Andrés de Villalbilla	5
Private individuals	32

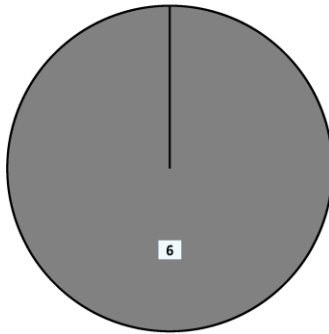
Now, to what extent is Cardeña representative of the situation across Castile? A comparison with other major documentary subsets, like San Millán, Arlanza and Valpuesta, reveals some interesting differences (Graph 3). The charters of Castilian provenance within the San Millán collection show no recognizable pattern, with great variations in numbers of preserved pieces and in proportions of synchronisms, although there is a tendency at the end of the period to cite neither king nor count. The Arlanza collection is very small, but it shows some tendency to cite preferentially 'king+count' in the middle tenth century.

Comparing Cardeña and Valpuesta is more interesting. Despite size differences, both collections present a similar dominance of 'king+count' datings starting in the generation before Fernán González's accession (932), although Valpuesta's later phase shows no trace of dating by count only, as Cardeña does. Such a connection is quite remarkable in the two houses that were most closely linked to territorial rulership (Cardeña in Castile and Valpuesta in Álava). In Valpuesta (Graph 4), the charters dating to the periods before and after Fernán González are too few to include – although 'king+count' predominates – but in the central period the pattern observed in Valpuesta and in lesser monasteries (most importantly San Pedro de Buezo) is similar, with the only exception being that in Valpuesta there are relatively more pieces without a *regnante* clause. Private documents are too few to graph (five cases), but all of them cite 'king+count'. In Valpuesta, as in Cardeña, opting for a 'king+count' dating clause seems to have been part of a political culture shared among a number of different actors.

900-931 - San Pedro de Cardeña

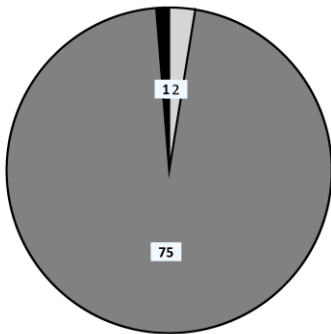


900-931 - private

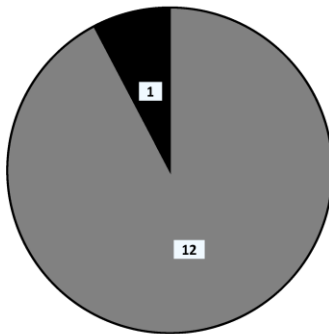


900-931 - other mons.

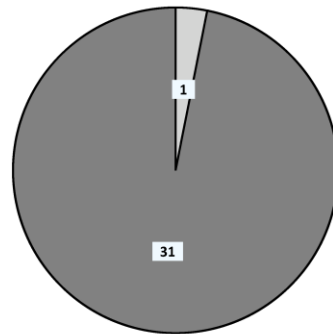
932-970 - San Pedro de Cardeña



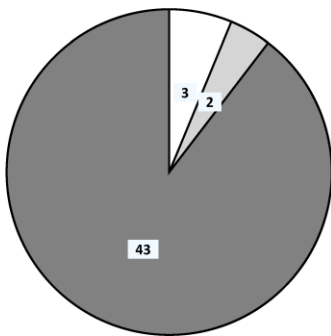
932-970 - private



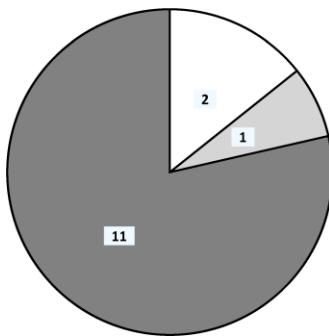
932-970 - other mons.



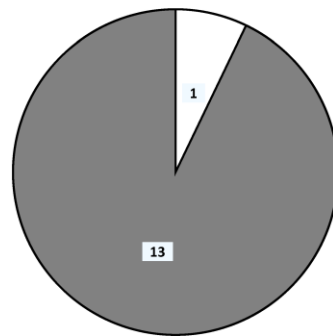
971-1027 - San Pedro de Cardeña



971-1027 - private

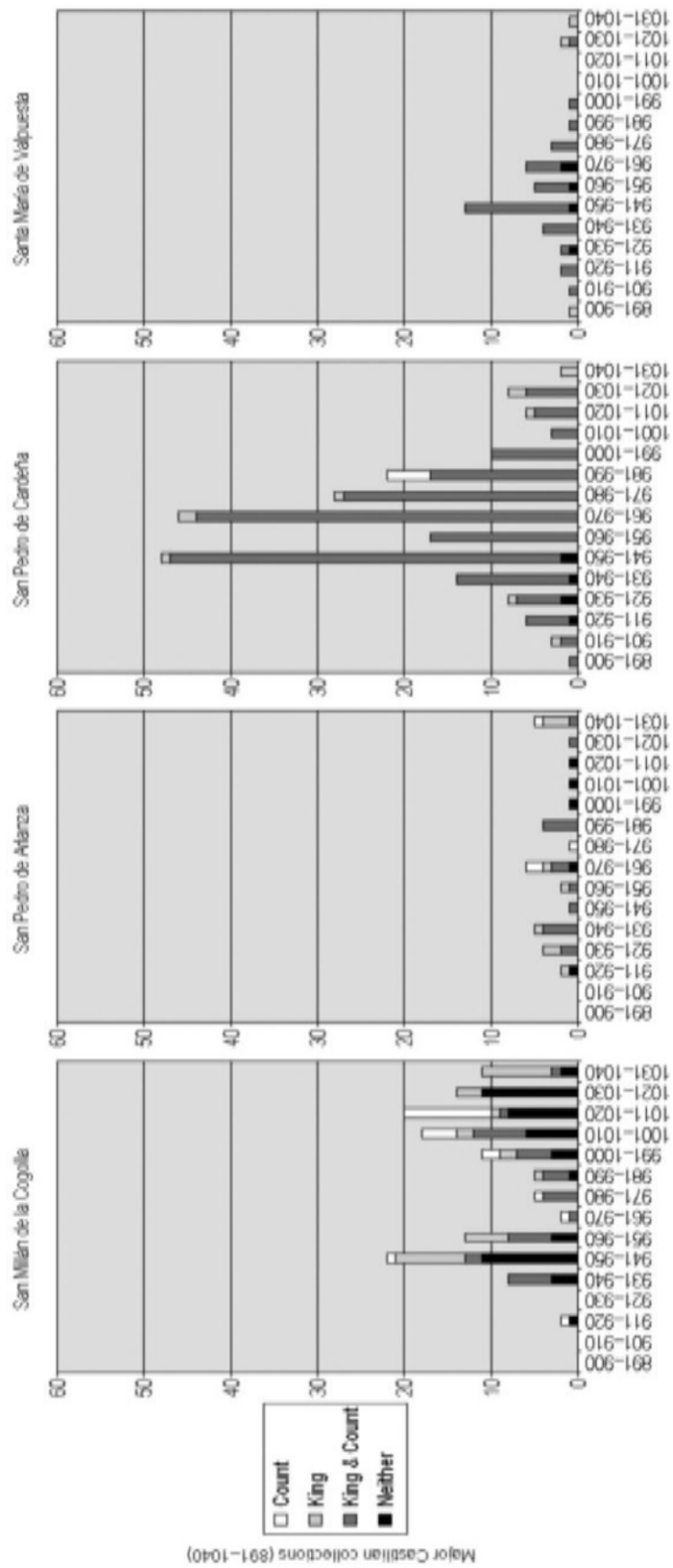


971-1027 - other mons.

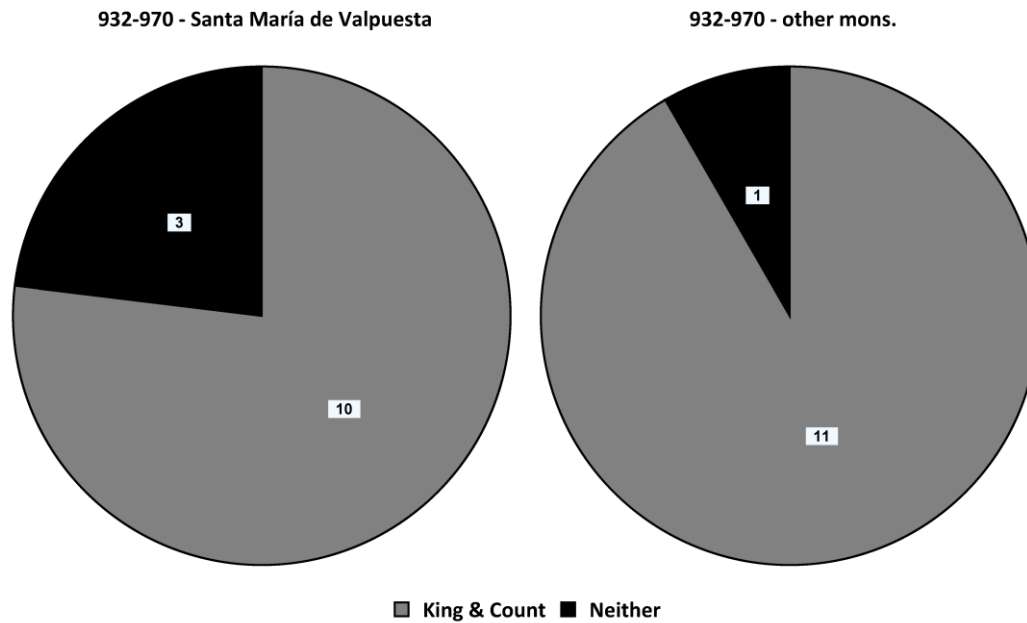


□ Count □ King ■ King & Count ■ Neither

Graph 2 Regnante clauses in the Cardeña collection by periods. Figures for 'Other mons.' in the 900-31 period are too low to graph. Source: author



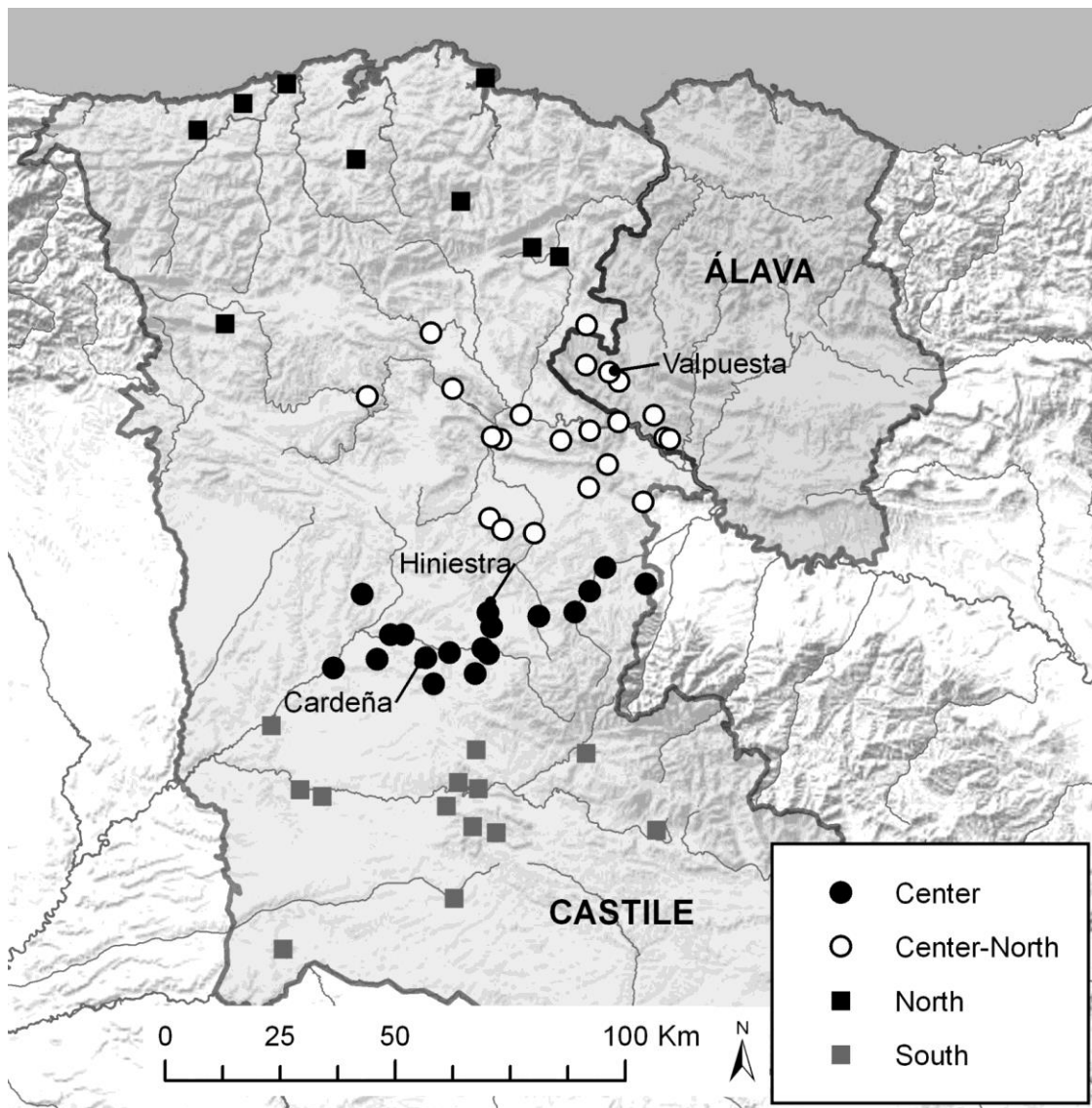
Graph 3 Comparison of four major Castilian collections (891-1040). Source: author



Graph 4 Regnante clauses in the Valpuesta collection (932–70). Source: author

So far, the analysis reveals in the areas dominated by Cardeña in the centre and Valpuesta in the centre-north of the county a similar trend towards the spread of the 'king+count' *regnante* clause, whether in the higher houses, in lesser monasteries, or in transactions between private individuals. The larger numbers of preserved charters in Cardeña allow for a more complete picture than in Valpuesta, but both seem to point in the same direction. However, an obvious question emerges from this realization: is this phenomenon determined by the influence of major monasteries or is it more widespread across the county? And consequently, is there a geographical rationale underlying the observed diplomatic practices?

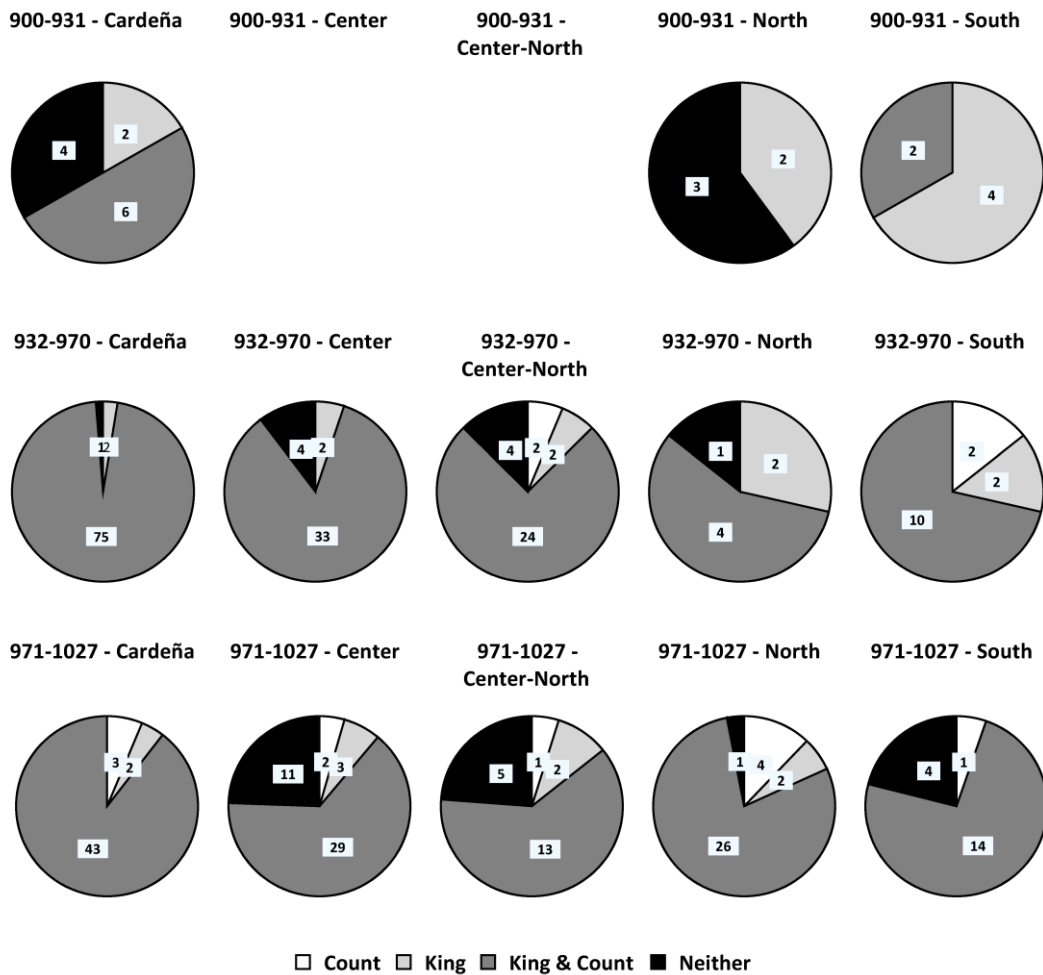
This can be approached by assigning a broadly defined regional tag to each monastic house and mapping as well as graphing the results (Map 2 and Graph 5). For this analysis I have discarded charters issued to monasteries in La Rioja, Liébana and the west borders of Castile, of which there are too few cases to be numerically significant. The rest are classified as *Centre* (the lands around Burgos); *South* (the regions between the rivers Arlanza and Duero); *Centre-North* (the lands between the Burgos core and the Cantabrian watershed, including basically the Bureba and south-west Álava); and *North* (north of the Cantabrian watershed). I have also excluded from the procedure all charters issued directly to Cardeña or Valpuesta, so that their larger numbers will not colour the results and conceal potentially divergent patterns. Likewise, pie charts totalling to less than five cases have been excluded, which affects only the first period.



Map 2 Regional distribution of Castilian monasteries. Source: author

Graph 5 represents the behaviour of these four regions in the three established periods once Cardeña and Valpuesta are excluded, although on the left the Cardeña results are displayed to facilitate comparison. Starting with the South, the first period only offers six cases, so the relative dominance of 'king only' vs. 'king+count' is hardly significant, as one single occurrence more could mean a great change in either direction. For the second and third periods, 'king+count' clearly predominates, all other options being represented by only a few cases. The northern side of the county is similarly under-represented in the first period, although the total lack of 'king+count' mentions is interesting and brings the region more in line with contemporary usages in neighbouring Liébana, as seen above. By contrast, in the second and third periods 'king+count' becomes dominant. In the Centre-North the first period is numerically negligible. The second, though, is clearly in tune with the county's overall pattern. The numbers of charters without a *regnante* clause are relatively high, but do not revert the

general trend. As for central Castile,⁷⁰ in the period 932–70 Cardeña presents a 96% dominance of 'king+count' clauses, while the rest of the region yields 85%. However, in the later period the region drops to 64%, with a remarkable increase of charters without a *regnante* clause, just as happens in the Centre-North and in the South. It seems, therefore, that Cardeña represents an extreme case in a general trend that is largely the same all over the county after 932. Before that, the analysis is hindered by the low figures, but it could be hypothesized that the North was relatively late to join the overall trend.



Graph 5 Regnante clauses in Castilian monasteries, by periods. Left: Cardeña. Right: rest, except Cardeña, Valpuesta and San Millán de Hiniestra. Figures for Centre and Centre-North in the 900–31 period are too low to graph. Source: author

Discussion

This paper is hardly more than an exploration of a very complex issue by means of a quantitative analysis of the preserved charter evidence. A number of complementary

⁷⁰ In this graph it was necessary to remove the San Millán de Hiniestra set, whose strongly divergent pattern is probably due to transmission issues, a subject I cannot elaborate on in this context.

investigations must be carried out in the future that could bring nuance into the image derived from this study. Nevertheless, the strategy adopted in this paper has succeeded in highlighting a striking diplomatic peculiarity of the Castilian charters and finding avenues to envisage its underlying ideological implications.

Firstly, a survey of a large number of charters from northern Iberia demonstrates that in the period before AD 1000 the practice of adding political synchronisms to the dating clauses of charters was extremely rare in the western areas of the kingdom, as well as in the León heartland. It was relatively more common in the eastern regions around Castile, but the latter was unique in producing a vast majority of charters that mentioned both the king of León and the count of Castile.

Secondly, such an insistence in connecting king and count is at odds with the reality of how royal power was exercised within the county of Castile. An examination of narrative and diplomatic sources reveals that royal power operated in Castile almost exclusively through the counts. Beyond special political contexts, like military stress or exceptional political struggles, such as the crisis of the 940s, the kings were largely invisible in Castile. Moreover, across the county's huge territory there is no trace of royal patrimonial property, royal grants of land to churches or laity, royal founding or endowing of monasteries, nor the king's presiding over courts of justice. The counts of Castile, by contrast, did play all those roles very visibly. With the exception of the 940s crisis, they were the indisputable rulers of Castile and, as the decades passed, they felt strong enough to intervene in the kingdom's high politics and to develop dynastic strategies involving both aristocratic and royal kindred. However, never in this period did the Castilian rulers dare to claim royalty, or to seek separation from León. And their charters insistently cited both king and count as synchronisms, a practice that was exceptional elsewhere in the kingdom.

Thirdly, a detailed break-down of dating clauses in the Castilian charter corpus reveals that the practice of jointly mentioning king and count was widespread across the dominions of the counts of Castile, but with different levels of intensity. The two most important ecclesiastical houses were Cardena, near Burgos, and Valpuesta, in Álava. The more 'official' character that could be presumed for both of them shows clearly in the coherence with which they dated their charters by king and count. However, this was not just a feature of the high political circles. Medium and lesser monasteries across the county shared the same practice and, what is more, records of transactions between private individuals keep to the same pattern.

Fourthly, not all regions behaved exactly the same. A geographical breakdown suggests that the north of the county was slower to join the mainstream, but thereafter assumed the same practices. Interestingly, in the later period, when the counts of Castile reached their highest levels of autonomy, the northern charters were more likely to cite just the count, while the central areas kept to the traditional 'king+count' clauses.

Finally, it is important to point out that, although the Castilian charters only begin to be numerous from the 930s onwards, the extant material clearly shows that the 'king+count' *regnante* clause was in use well before the rise of Fernán González, so it cannot be attributed to him or his entourage. Certainly, during his rulership, the practice became standard, but that was rather an enhancement of a previously established documentary habit.

With all these considerations in mind, it seems clear that the pattern of use of political synchronisms in the charters of the county of Castile cannot be explained away

by invoking general trends in the kingdom (the rest of it behaved quite differently), the influence of one or two major houses (there were many more productive centres), or a regional tradition of scribal training (the use pervades all social levels, from the comital spheres to the local). In the first decades of the tenth century, there were several aristocrats competing for supremacy within the new, expanding territory. At that time, the 'king+count' clause could represent a claim to each count's hegemony among other magnates, the royal figure turning into an extended attribute of the aristocrat's power, a sort of direct linkage that implicitly aimed to write out similar claims from competing quarters. The characteristic lack of narrative sources in Castile, however, makes it difficult to explore conflicts among aristocratic factions in the generation before Fernán González, when this diplomatic usage was arguably operating as a channel to express political competition.

After 932, however, the practice seems to have been recycled into an even more powerful tool, an expression of a widespread political culture shared among a number of different actors. Despite traditional visions that have explained Fernán González's rise to office by the king's choosing his ablest, most loyal candidate for the job, it seems ever more credible that his accession actually terminated a time of instability and internal competition and opened a new period in which a consensus about rulership was established within an enlarged, unified Castilian territory. In this context, the massive employment of the 'king+count' clause reads as the expression of a political convergence of the Castilian aristocracies: a single rulership that left no room for alternative claims to power, as well as an opportunity for the definition of a large-scale ruling class.

Future research must compare the County of Castile to other early medieval polities in which the rulers never claimed royalty, but kept steady ideological connections to kings that were acknowledged as superior, yet rarely operated directly within their territories.⁷¹ Within Iberia, the closest comparison is, of course, with the Catalan counties after Wifred the Hairy, when the comital dynasties became effectively autonomous, but never challenged Frankish royal superiority and even showed a high degree of dynastic allegiance in the event of the rise of the Capetians.⁷² The Castilian charters' repeated references to a king that was not expected to endow churches or reward warriors must be read as meant for 'domestic consumption'. The message was not one of loyalty to a distant king; it was an expression of comital superiority, buttressed by the flow of legitimacy linking both names, but more importantly, by a consensual political culture that permeated deeply into Castilian society.

Instituto de Historia – CSIC – Estudios Medievales

⁷¹ S. De Moxó, 'Castilla, ¿principado feudal?', *Revista de la Universidad de Madrid* 73 (1970), pp. 229–57; for the nearby Liébana region, see R. Portass, 'The Contours and Contexts of Public Power in the Tenth-Century Liébana', *Journal of Medieval History* 38–4 (2012), pp. 389–407. See more generally K.F. Werner, 'Les principautés périphériques dans le monde Franc du VIII siècle', (Spoleto, 1973), pp. 483–532; K.-F. Werner, 'Kingdom and Principality', in T. Reuter (ed.), *The Medieval Nobility* (Amsterdam, 1978), pp. 243–90.

⁷² Zimmermann, *Écrire et lire en Catalogne*, pp. 332–7; J.M. Salrach i Marés, 'La legitimación del poder condal en los orígenes de Cataluña', in P. Martínez Sopena and A. Rodríguez López (eds), *La construcción medieval de la memoria regia* (Valencia, 2011), pp. 21–32; F. Sabaté i Curull, 'El nacimiento de Cataluña: mito y realidad', *Fundamentos medievales de los particularismos hispánicos (IX Congreso de Estudios Medievales, 2003, León)* (Ávila, 2005), pp. 221–76.