

The Making of a Court Society

Kings and Nobles in Late Medieval Portugal

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1. *The court: outlining the problem*

THE MEDIEVAL CONCEPT

The Middle Ages used a diverse group of words when speaking of the court of the kings. From the point of view of the history of concepts, it is of interest to distinguish carefully the span of social and political meanings and experiences that can be expressed by these words, paying particular attention to the rise of new meanings in old words or of neologisms. With a valid and historically coherent definition of the subject of this book in mind, these are, in general, valuable indicators of important changes. As Koselleck states, we can interpret human history in a restricted sense through the concepts of the past, even if the words that are related to these concepts are still in use today. This task requires a work of critical distancing which accompanies both the fundamental historicity and the sedimentation, which is evident in the vocabulary of a given society, of successive uses of a constellation of words. For such, the author reminds us, past uses of a concept should in some way be redefined by the historian.¹

While Latin predominated as the written language in the medieval west, texts resorted to several names for the court – *curia*, *aula*, *palatium*, *schola* – at the same time as the binominal of words was to emerge that was to take precedence over all these: *cors/curtis*.² The formation of a synonym between ‘*curia*’ and ‘*court*’ is a first aspect deserving our attention. In classical Latin, *curia* and *cohors* (from *cors* and *curtis* in medieval Latin) were far from being synonymous. *Cohors* initially meant the empty, restricted space in the interior of a residential complex and, at the end of the classical age, the use of the term extended to military language to mean a certain group of soldiers (six centuries), possibly by association with the space occupied in the camp by each of these units. This use later led to *cohors* becoming the common name given

¹ Reinhart Koselleck, *Le Futur passé: contribution à la sémantique des temps historiques* (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1990), pp. 99–118.

² Egbert Türk, *Nugae Curialium: le règne d’Henri II Plantagenêt et l’éthique politique* (Geneva: Droz, 1977), pp. 3–5; Aurelio Roncaglia, ‘Le corti medievali. Premessa’, in *Letteratura Italiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), vol. I, pp. 33–6.

to groups of armed men such as a praetorian guard (*cohors praetoria*), and was then handed down to the Middle Ages by numerous texts. More important for us, however, is the evolution which led *cohors* to become *cors/curtis*, a word which during the High Middle Ages served to mean the centre of an agrarian complex both in its materiality (still existing today in the Portuguese 'corte', a synonym for a courtyard or stable area), and in evoking the centre of noble power.³

As for the word *curia*, its most frequent use in the Latin world was in the institutional and political sphere as a synonym for *senatus*, or the municipal government. From here comes its association, for example, with *decurio*, while the *curialitas* in imperial Roman society was merely an alternative meaning for the order of decuries. In *Lex Visigothorum* or in Isidore of Seville, for example, as also in the Merovingian texts, the use of *curia* and *curialis* prevails when used to refer to municipal institutions. But, as Georges Duby remarks, 'from the eighth century in those texts which we have, *curia* tends to be confused with *curtis*, meaning the fortification from which public power is legitimately driven back, while the scribes and the better-educated inversely used the word *curtis* when speaking of the royal palace: *in curte nostra*, as Charlemagne said in the most important decrees'.⁴

Thus, during the High Middle Ages, two words began to approximate each other and be used to mean respectively: the material centre of the household (or, by extension, a domestic group) and an organism comprising men who acted 'collectively' and were invested in some form with public authority. The two versions that today clearly are opposites of the public and the private therefore appear to become associated in this binominal of words. We can also conclude by analysis that other names were given to the court of the kings, for example *palatium* and *aula*. In turn, these refer to the materiality of the house, of the royal residence. The word *palatium* meant, in particular in the Low Empire, the magnificent imperial residence built on the Palatine, which was evoked in their common name by all the royal or princely residences of the medieval west.⁵

³ There are several examples in J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) s.v. 'curtis'; J. Corominas and J. A. Pascual, *Diccionario crítico etimológico Castellano e Hispánico* (Madrid: Gredos, 1980) s.v. 'corte'; Ramón Lorenzo, *Sobre cronología do vocabulário Galego-Português* (Vigo: Galaxia, 1968). On the name given to the housing of animals: Alberto Sampaio, *Estudos económicos* (Lisbon: Vega, 1979), vol. I, p. 78.

⁴ Georges Duby (ed.), *Histoire de la vie privée* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), vol. II, p. 30. Later, 'technical' Latin of the universities returned to the original name of 'curia', which is found in the texts of Justinian Law. However, the word appears not to have been much used outside the juridical sphere: Pierre Michaud Quentin, *Universitas: expressions du mouvement communautaire dans le moyen âge latin* (Paris: Vrin, 1970), pp. 141–2.

⁵ C. D. Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, ed. L. Fabre (Paris: Librairie des Sciences et des Arts, 1938), vol. VI, pp. 98–107. On this subject, the essay by Alain Labbé, *L'Architecture des palais et des jardins dans les Chansons de Geste: essai sur le thème du roi en majesté* (Paris: Champion-Slatkine, 1987).

Its use is very common in the semantic field of judicial activities, uniting, as does the binominal *curtis/curia*, the royal residence intended for the exercise of public power. *Palatium*, like the Castilian *palacio* which derives from it, and the Portuguese *palácio* and *paço* were words which were frequently used during the entire medieval period to mean the court, and in the same way the adjective 'palatine' replaced 'cortês' in many texts.⁶ As for *aula*, which is a common name given to a vast space or room where a collection or group of individuals would meet (and let us not forget that the term could also mean the entire space of the church), its use was metonymic, for it was used for the totality of the court, while it also served to designate merely one of its parts. However, it meant an essential part, for the word evoked the space put aside for the meeting of the king with his men.⁷ The word 'sala', of German origin, had a similar connotation.⁸ As Alain Labbé stated, in the texts of medieval epic tradition there is clearly to be seen the reductive identification of the palace as the *aula* or *sala*, that is precisely the place where the image of sovereign majesty related to a fundamental archetype of royalty took root. Finally, in the word *schola*, which is by far the least used and the one whose meaning is the most restricted, we find again the idea of the armed entourage that appeared in *cohors*, with two words that medieval texts also placed closely in meaning.⁹

What does the history of this group of words tell us? The court of the kings of the Middle Ages was, above all, the household of the monarchs, a magnificent residence or palace where they lived with the domestic community, their *familia*.¹⁰ There is also present in these words the idea of the meeting of several men for process of judgment or, simply, exercising together a power

⁶ For the semantics of 'palacio' and 'corte' in medieval Castilian: Bernardo Blanco González, *Del cortesano al discreto* (Madrid: Gredos, 1962), vol. I, pp. 161–6. For the Portuguese 'paço': Joseph M. Piel, 'Paço' e 'milhafre': *história de duas palavras e de alguns termos congêneres*, offprint of *Revista da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1971), and the general observations of Henrique de Gama Barros, *História da administração pública em Portugal nos séculos XII a XV* (Lisbon: Sá da Costa, 1945–54), vol. III, p. 200.

⁷ Du Cange, *Glossarium*, vol. I, p. 481. Before the thirteenth century, the meeting of the king with his dependants and vassals was often also called *consilium* in the kingdoms of the Western Peninsula, a word Sánchez-Albornoz considered a synonym of *curia*: Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *La Curia Regia Portuguesa: siglos XII y XIII* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1920), pp. 17–18; Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, 'El Palatium Regis Asturleonés', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 59–60 (1976), in particular 8–9.

⁸ Joseph M. Piel, 'Considerações sobre o hispano-godo *Sala, Gal.-Port. *Sáa, Sá*, etc', in *Estudos de linguística histórica Galego-Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda, 1989), pp. 123–7.

⁹ Du Cange, *Glossarium*, vol. VI, pp. 349–50. This word is used to mean the court of Leon in the eleventh century: Evelyn S. Procter, *Curia and Cortes in León and Castile, 1072–1295* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 8–9. In the Charter of Coimbra of 1111, *schola* meant the entourage of the Count of Portucale, D. Henrique. The word also appears in vernacular in *El Cid* ('Oidme escuelas e toda la mi cort!').

¹⁰ Karl Bosl, 'La "familia" come struttura fondamentale della società medievale', in *Modelli di società medievale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981), pp. 131–61.

that is, in origin, public. Some evoke the presence of armed men. It should be emphasised, however, that these words almost always required a denominative (*palatium regis, aula regis, schola regis*), for they were not used exclusively for the court of the kings, but could also suggest other organisms, such as the house or entourage of a bishop or nobleman.

In texts which come from the medieval Iberian Peninsula, as in the rest of Europe, all these Latin terms are found, with their derivatives, to mean the royal court and its members (*familiares, curiales, aulici, palatini*).¹¹ With the rise of the vulgar vernacular, as in other Romance languages, 'corte' became, without doubt, the most used word. The important family of medieval terms related to the word – in particular *courtois/courtier, courtoisie/courtesy* – also meant within the Iberian context a form of life and a particular literary model.¹² The flowering of Peninsular literature from the twelfth century gives ample testimony to the acceptance and power of this model, principally in the Portuguese case.¹³ It should be noted that the men and women who lived at court were not yet, in the Middle Ages, called 'courtiers', a word whose first occurrences with this semantic value, for example in the Latin vocabulary (*curtisanus*), appear to date only from the fourteenth century. The creation of this new word reveals the difficulty in including a far larger group of meanings and experiences within the system of words existing until then. Whether this word had been introduced in the Iberian languages through Occitan or through Italian from the fifteenth century, its generalised use became indivisible from the diffusion of a sixteenth-century ideal of court life, and had already replaced the by-then vulgarised and overrestricted word 'cortês'.¹⁴ In the sixteenth century only this new word appeared to be capable of conveying the entire diversity of aspects of court life in a necessarily polysemic concept, and it bore associations with distinctive behavioural models which were consciously innovative, and which led to the flowering of a true written tradition about the figure of the 'courtier'.

¹¹ See, for example, the semantic study of 'curialis' by José Antonio Maravall, 'Los "hombres de saber" o letrados y la formación de su conciencia estamental', in *Estudios de historia del pensamiento Español: edad media* (Madrid: Cultura Hispánica, 1983), pp. 359–61.

¹² For an introduction to this problem see Reto Bezzola, *Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en occident, 500–1200* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1958–63), or, more recently, C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). For the Iberian Peninsula, see Jole Scudieri Ruggieri, *Cavalleria e cortesia nella vita e nella cultura di Spagna* (Modena: Mucchi, 1980).

¹³ See António Resende de Oliveira's essay, *Depois de Espectáculo Trovadoresco: a estrutura dos cancioneiros peninsulares e as recolhas dos séculos XIII e XIV* (Lisbon: Colibri, 1994).

¹⁴ Besides statements by Corominas and Pascual in their *Diccionario crítico etimológico*, s.v. 'cortesano' and António de Moraes Silva, *Grande dicionário da língua Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Confluência, 1949–59), s.v. 'cortesão'; see also Margherita Morreale, *Castiglione y Boscán: el ideal cortesano en el Renacimiento Español* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1959), vol. I, p. 114; and Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 67–8.

This brief analysis of the multiplicity of names given to the court is therefore justified by a quest for the medieval concept that cannot be achieved without reference to texts. Because of its importance I selected a work that aims precisely to clarify the norm, to synthesise traditions – including those of the classical world – and to be the receptacle of doctrine: the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X of Castile.¹⁵ In the form of an encyclopaedic synthesis, so popular during the thirteenth century, this text includes several passages in which there is a definition of the court. The influence of this work in Portugal is well known, mainly as a source of fifteenth-century Portuguese legislative texts; this is particularly the case in the Second Book, from which I have extracted texts for analysis.¹⁶

The *Partidas* distinguish the ‘Court’ (object of Law XXVII, Title IX of the Second Part) from the ‘Palace’ (Law XXIX). In the first place, the text presents some considerations of an etymological nature: thus, ‘corte’ was to derive from ‘cohors’, meaning ‘ayuntamiento de compañías’, and from ‘curia’, or ‘logar do es la cura de todos los fechos de la tierra’. But also, ‘according to the language of Spain’, ‘corte’ is used, ‘porque alli es la espada de justicia con que se han de cortar todos los males’.¹⁷ The text defines the court as ‘logar do es el rey, et sus vassallos et sus oficiales con él, que le han cotidianamente de consejar e de servir, et los otros del regno que se llegan hi ó por honra del, ó por alcanzar derecho, ó por fazer recabdar las otras cosas que han de ver con el’. As for the palace, it is ‘aqueel logar do el rey se ayunta paladinamente para fablar con los homes; et esto es en tres maneras, ó para librar los pleytos, ó para comer, ó para fablar en gasajado’. In both definitions we understand the importance of the spatial element for the concept of court and palace: both are ‘places’, which seems obvious in the latter case, but which gives rise to some interesting problems in the former. The presence of the king defines the ‘court’: it is an actual space, but it is also a group of individuals who accompany the monarch, an organism whose configurations are fluid, and which includes all those who are within this space, even if temporarily. Meanwhile, the ‘palace’, with its evocation of specific times and activities, appears as a way of life particular to the court, evoked around three aspects which are associated with the royal presence: the exercise of justice; the distribution of food; the use of the word.¹⁸

¹⁵ *Las Siete Partidas del Rey Alfonso el Sabio, cotejadas con varios Códices antiguos* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1807), vol. I, pp. 56–8.

¹⁶ For this influence see, for all, Nuno Espinosa Gomes da Silva, *História do direito Português* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1985), vol. I, pp. 161–2, and the bibliography listed.

¹⁷ *Las Siete Partidas*, vol. I, pp. 82–3. For the encyclopaedic meaning of etymologies in the Alfonsine text, see Hans J. Niederehe, *Alfonso el Sabio y la lingüística de su tiempo* (Madrid: Sociedad General Española, 1987), pp. 214–16.

¹⁸ On the use of the word at court, the theorisation of the *Partidas* (in particular Law XXX of Title IX) develops the statements of the *Speculum*: ‘quien quissiere rretraer antel rey deue dezir palabras buenas e apuestas de las que ssolien dezir ante los reys por que los omnes sson llamados corteses, e palaçianos eran preçiadós e onrrados’. G. Martínez Díez (ed.), *Leyes de Afonso X*, vol. I (Ávila: Fundación Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, 1985), p. 124. For an in-depth analysis of

In fact, we see several models, several traditions which the theorisation of the *Partidas* regarding the court sought to harmonise, all being superimposed in these texts. Besides the courtly theme, in this definition of the palace we can detect the archetype of a court marked by the *familiaritas*, a term in which is captured, as was the case in the Carolingian court, ‘the dual connotation of companionship and patrimonial authority over the household (*familia*), which increase in size during annual assemblies and which include the totality of the political kingdom’.¹⁹ As Janet Nelson states, these assemblies in the Carolingian world were an occasion for principal rites of eating together, hunting, the exchange of gifts, a reaffirmation of ideas of political consensus, and of peace and solidarity among magnates. The physical proximity of the king and the sharing of some moments of his life thus became characteristics of a way of life called, in the texts of Alfonso, ‘palaciano’ and ‘cortês’.

On the other hand, in the *Partidas* we also have an original theorisation that seeks to capture the essence of the subject to be defined – the court – emphasising its connection with space. We are, in this case, faced with a construction which seems to arise from the world of jurists, parallel to that which Frederick II Hohenstaufen suggested in his formula ‘ibi sit Alemanie curia, ubi persona nostra et principes Imperii nostri consistent’.²⁰ This definition of the court as ‘the place where the king is’ is perhaps connected to one of the first formulations of a central idea of medieval juridic thought: the idea that the *corpus mysticum* of the Church (or of the kingdom) is where its head is. Thus Gaines Post states, ‘any city in which a king had his *sedes* became the capital, because of the *regis potentia* or the powers of the king as the head of the realm’.²¹

In fact, many functions that today we would call ‘capital’ were concentrated in this itinerant organism that was the royal court. The theorisation of the medieval jurists sought to reflect on this relationship between imperial (or royal) power and space, having recourse to a defining element: the physical presence of the monarch. That this mode of thought produced some problems of interpretation and could lead to doubts is what is concluded from the glossary of one of the versions of the text of the *Partidas* which I have studied: ‘otrosi es corte la su chancelleria, aunque el no va hi’. Could the presence of the monarch be

these texts, see Francisco López Estrada, ‘Corte y literatura en las *Siete Partidas*’, in *Littérature et institutions dans le moyen âge espagnol*, ed. Monique de Lope (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1991), pp. 9–46.

¹⁹ Janet L. Nelson, ‘The Lord’s anointed and the people’s choice: Carolingian royal ritual’, in David Cannadine and S. Price (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremony in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 165.

²⁰ On the use of this text (dated 1226) in medieval juridical thought, and the parallelism with the later formula of Baldo, ‘ubi est fiscus, ibi est imperium’, see Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Political Medieval Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 204 and note 34.

²¹ Gaines Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State, 1100–1322* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 389.

manifest in any way, other than physical? This idea was not entirely absent in the juridic theory after the thirteenth century. It was also stated that: 'where the emperor is, there is Rome' (Baldo). And as Ernst Kantorowicz and Gaines Post have observed, 'to be sure, this means in one sense that the king is the realm wherever he may go. But there is also, perhaps, the meaning that the king's government and the king are present everywhere in the realm, even though the king remains in the *regia civitas* and in his palace.'²²

To summarise, when seeking to define the court in its relationship with the king and with the space of the kingdom I detect in this major work on the medieval Hispanic tradition a strong influence of the categories of contemporary juridic thought. One could say that, when speaking of the 'palace', the *Partidas* are referring in particular to the type of relationship which is established with the king at the interior of the court, taking the endogenous point of view, while the book defines that same 'court' in its relationship with other realities which were external to it, making use of innovative juridic concepts which become entwined with a more traditional vision of royalty. In their extraordinary wealth these texts, which are so profoundly influential in the political and juridic culture of the late Middle Ages, present us with several facets of a medieval notion of court which is compatible with the new conceptual synthesis that results from its combining with Roman Law, while simultaneously developing some aspects which have already been evoked by this approximation to the history of the words which expressed it.

First must be emphasised the impossibility of separating clearly, in the medieval definition of the royal court, the public from the private. The court is structured around the person of the king and the king is, even according to the categories of political and juridic thought after the twelfth century, *gemina persona*, that is simultaneously a public and a private person.²³ To this dual nature there corresponded in an analogous form the 'mixed' nature of the court, which was simultaneously *curia* and *curtis*. The second aspect to be emphasised is the absence of precise frontiers: the Middle Ages conceived the court more as a centre of attraction in permanent motion, a grouping of varying composition which accompanied the monarch, than as a stable, delineated entity. Two distinctions can perhaps be established at its core, according to the *Partidas*. One of these would be between those who 'continuously served' the king, a small nucleus of companions whose presence was constant, and those who 'approached' the monarch but who did not remain beside him. In Peninsular Latin documentation, for example, *familiares*, *aulici* and *palatini* could belong to one or the other

²² Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, pp. 387–8 and note 51. See also Rita Costa Gomes, 'Invocar o rei na idade média: breve nota de antropologia jurídica', *Revista Portuguesa de História*, 31 (1996), 195–207.

²³ Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 96 and 172; Ernst Kantorowicz, 'Kingship under the impact of scientific jurisprudence', in *Selected Studies* (New York: Augustin, 1965), pp. 151–66.

group. The other possible distinction would be between ‘vassals’ and ‘officers’, which should lead one to reflect upon the variety of relationships that connected the king with his companions and servants within the court. Finally we should emphasise the fact that the medieval concept of the court was based upon a principal element: the physical presence of the monarch, which determined the existence of a space and of a group of men around him. It is worth once again remembering on this point the observations of Gaines Post:

there was, to be sure, much that was private in the royal household. But at the same time, just as in his office the king was a *persona publica*, just as he enjoyed a public as well as a private *status*, so the royal *domus*, *hostel*, household shared in the public aspects of kingship. Perhaps, indeed, the very joining of status to *hostel*, *l'estat del hotel*, resulted from the concept of *palatium* in the Roman and Canon Law and in the legists and canonists. The imperial palace was ‘sacred’ and like all *sacra* was a subject of public law.²⁴

While, on the one hand, the medieval king seemed to ‘segregate’ or to cause, simply through his presence, this space or place as Le Goff²⁵ has more recently stated, on the other hand royalty maintained itself by means of this human network that sustained it and powerfully contributed, in a constant and daily form, towards its reproduction.

STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS

The complexity of the medieval concept of court, the actual plurality of its names, but more than ever the fact that we are able to detect in it categories which contradict central distinctions of the constitutional theory based on the Aristotelian tradition, that is the distinction between the domestic government and the dominion of the ‘politic’, all led historians towards a separation of this important structure of society of the age into diverse objects to be dealt with separately. For this reason we have available some important elements for the definition and study of the court, but these result from distinct fields of research. These results must be the intent of a type of reconstruction that forms them into a new object, without which the relevance of their contribution might be lost.

The most significant force for the study and investigation of the court of the kings in the Middle Ages owes itself to a large degree to institutional history. However, following the global interpretative synthesis of nineteenth-century historians, the court has been viewed, almost exclusively, as a matrix of administrative and bureaucratic structures of an early stage of the monarchy that, little by little, was becoming free of that matrix.²⁶ Starting off from abstract and

²⁴ Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, p. 387.

²⁵ Jacques Le Goff, ‘Le roi dans l’occident médiéval: caractères originaux’, in Anne J. Duggan (ed.), *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe* (London: King’s College, 1993), p. 9.

²⁶ See the influential works of Paul Viollet, *Histoire des institutions politiques et administratives de la France* (Paris, 1890–1903); Achille Luchaire, *Manuel des institutions françaises: période*

timeless notions of state functions, history of institutions thus began ‘emptying’ the medieval royal court, and through the resistance of the object – for the more that was removed from it, the more there ‘remained’ something – it considered as merely residual aspects all that which was not indispensable to those functions. These ‘remainders’ were, for example, an obscure (and certainly necessary) domesticity, and a political dimension which was becoming more visible during the final period of the Middle Ages.

In this approach, which must be recognised and understood to be limited for my purposes, the court is seen merely as a *curia*, an embryo of a future reality – the total emancipation of the exercise of public power. It could be thought that, in a large part, the ‘invisibility’ of the medieval court in European historiography until the 1980s owes itself to this explanation, the fruit of a ‘survival of developmental typologies of the nineteenth century’.²⁷ It is important to emphasise the singularity of the court of the kings when addressing historiography of the medieval state rather than to compare it with other contemporary organisms, such as the households of important nobles, the monastic family or the ecclesiastical dignitaries and the papal curia. Being attentive to the regime of court duties during the several periods, institutional history presupposes, however, an evolution which would have come about through progressive specialisation and through a rational division of functions, such as the administration of justice or the collection of taxes, in an attempt to attribute to these positions a certain solidity and coherence within a division into periods which leans towards an explanation of the exclusive exercise of functions whose nature is that of a ‘state’.

For my part, I shall make my point of departure the structure of the Carolingian court, and shall leave aside all the polemics that surround the origin of court duties and their concrete characteristics, its continuity with or rupture from late imperial institutions or the Germanic *comitatus*.²⁸ The organisation of the court of Charlemagne, as described to us in the treatise *De Ordine Palatii*, attributed to Hincmar of Rheims, appears as an original synthesis and at the same time as a harmonious vision which is full of political intent, of an organism which includes several of its own elements of ‘barbarian’ royalties of

des Capétiens directs (Paris: Hachette, 1892). Also on English historians for the derivative of the ‘royal household’, T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), in particular vol. I, pp. 18–31. For the Iberian Peninsula, Luis García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia de las instituciones Españolas: de los orígenes al final de la edad media* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1977), p. 202; or A. L. Carvalho Homem, *Conselho real ou conselheiros do rei? A propósito dos ‘privados’ de D. João I*, offprint of *Revista da Faculdade de Letras* (Oporto, 1987), pp. 19–20.

²⁷ Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), e.g. pp. 335–7; Susan Reynolds, ‘The historiography of the medieval state’, in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997) pp. 117–38.

²⁸ See for example Eugen Ewig, ‘La monarchie dans l’Europe occidentale (Ve–Xe siècles)’, in *La Monarchie*, Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin 21 (Brussels: Université Libre, 1969), vol. II, pp. 57–105; also Herwig Wolfram, ‘The shaping of the early medieval kingdom’, *Viator*, 1 (1970), 1–20.

western Europe, and others which arose in a probable dialogue with the conservative and complex characteristics of Byzantine usage.²⁹ Two aspects of the ordinance of the court that are referred to in this source are particularly relevant: its hierarchic sense and the functional separation into three distinct nuclei of servants – hall, chamber and chapel. The service of the hall is supervised by the trilogy of *senescalcus*, *buticularius* and *comes stabuli*, while the chamber is under the supervision of the *camerarius*, and the chapel that of the *apocrisarius* or *archicapellanus*, to whom the *cancellarius* was subordinate.³⁰

Without doubt, the organisation of this court seems simple when compared with the Byzantine court, in which there are known to have been dozens of subservient duties in several hierarchies (some of which were simply honorary), evoking certain aspects of oriental courts in its elaborate ceremonies and the use of eunuchs.³¹ The historians of the Byzantine Empire have emphasised ‘the power of cultural continuity’ embodied in such a court as being ‘in many ways a living archaism’.³² Byzantium certainly served as a repository of objects, memories and practices which, however, lent themselves merely to a fragmentary reception not lacking in ambiguities, for while it was a human configuration giving body and sense to these elements, the court in its internal complexity remained in a large part inimitable in its own grandeur and liturgical context.³³ The extraordinary prestige of Carolingian royalty formed a closer and, in its relative modesty, more accessible model of the structure described by Hincmar. In the history of the medieval western courts after the eleventh

²⁹ Thomas Gross and Rudolf Schieffer (eds.), *Hincmarus De Ordine Palatii (editio altera)*, Monumenta Germaniae Historia. Fontes Iuris Germanici Antiqui in usum scholarum separatim editi (Hanover: Hahnsche, 1980), pp. 56–82; Louis Halphen, ‘Le De Ordine Palatii d’Hincmar’, *Revue Historique*, 183 (1938), 1–9; Janet L. Nelson, ‘Kingship and empire in the Carolingian world’, in Rosamond McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Innovation and Emulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 52–87.

³⁰ On the use of seals in relation to royalty, Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, ‘Ritual in the Royal Chancery: text, image, and the presentation of kingship in medieval French diplomas (700–1200)’, in Heinz Duchhard et al. (eds.), *European Monarchy: Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), pp. 27–40.

³¹ Byzantine uses are described in the ‘Book of Ceremonies’ of Constantine Porphyrogenite, a compilation dating from the tenth century; Albert Vogt (ed.), *Le Livre des Cérémonies de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1967). On this text, Averil Cameron, ‘The construction of court ritual: the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies’, in David Cannadine and Simon Price (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremony in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 106–36, and the comparison with Fatimid Egypt in M. Canard, ‘Le cérémoniale fatimide et le cérémonial byzantin: essai de comparaison’, *Byzantion*, 21 (1953), 355–420. It should be emphasised that Du Cange does not appear to have consulted this source for his well-known *Glossarium* (printed in 1658 and revised in 1733–36).

³² Alexander P. Kazhdan and Michael McCormick, ‘The social world of the Byzantine court’, in Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), pp. 195–6.

³³ Janet Nelson deals with the limits of this cultural transmission by means of an actual ritual: ‘Symbols in context: ruler’s inauguration rituals in Byzantium and the West in the early Middle Ages’, in *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Hambleton, 1986), esp. p. 266.

century, the vulgarisation of this model performs a fundamental function, as stated by Georges Duby.³⁴ It is therefore not surprising that one of its main aspects, the distinction between the hall and the chamber, is also found in the noble and ecclesiastical *familiae*. How should this coincidence of forms which has been noted by the historians of the Middle Ages for so long be interpreted?

Some important suggestions stem from the anthropology of royalty, particularly following suggestions of Frazer and Hocart.³⁵ The organisation of court duties must be related to the ritual which certainly surrounded the Carolingian sovereigns, and also to the 'proxemic' rules which regulated a gradual access to the person of the king,³⁶ to the materialisation of a distancing necessary for the establishment of the actual power of the monarch. The king, as a being who had to be kept 'outside the group', was permanently guarded by a nucleus of servants who comprised the core of the court: the chamber, an organism similar to the Byzantine 'Kubukleion'. But the Carolingian monarch was also the dispenser of food and drink, which is reflected in the functions of organisation and performance of rituals of eating together, by the dual *senescalcus/buticularius*. Besides this, the king supplied his retinue with or maintained horses needed for his itinerance and for war, and this lay within the dominion of the *comes stabuli*. His relationship with the religious sphere, the place where his peculiar nature of *rex-sacerdos* was affirmed, was in turn placed under the authority of the *apocrisiarius*, a high ecclesiastical dignitary.³⁷ The similarities between the formal organisation of the several medieval courts therefore have roots in the actual ritual processes which led to royalty in the High Middle Ages and which contributed towards its retention, in a manner which is enduring and imbued with tradition. This aspect will be taken up at greater length in the final chapter of this book.

³⁴ Georges Duby, 'La vulgarisation des modèles culturels dans la société féodale', in *Niveaux de culture et groupes sociaux. Actes du Colloque* (Paris: Mouton, 1967), pp. 33–41. See also the important general observations on the empire by Karl Ferdinand Weber, 'L'historien et la notion d'état', in *Eheite der Geschichte: Studien zur Historiographie* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1999).

³⁵ James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (abridged edition) (London: Macmillan, 1922); Arthur Hocart, *Kings and Councillors: An Essay in the Comparative Anatomy of Human Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Arthur Hocart, *Kingship* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970). See also Claude Tardits, 'L'invitation au comparatisme. Marc Bloch et les anthropologues', in Hartmut Atsma and André Burguière (eds.), *Marc Bloch aujourd'hui: histoire comparée et sciences sociales* (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1990), pp. 135–6; Rita Costa Gomes, 'A reflexão antropológica na história da realeza medieval', *Etnográfica*, 2 (1998), 133–40.

³⁶ I am using here the concept of 'proxemics' suggested by Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Doubleday, 1966). I must thank Sergio Bertelli for having brought to my attention the use of this conceptualisation.

³⁷ This name, of Greek origin (corresponding to the Latin *responsalis*), alludes to one of his early functions, that is communication between the emperor and the pope, and also to the duty of mediation at the palace between the sovereign and the other bishops. In the Carolingian era, however, the names *archicapellanus* or *summus capellanus* were already used: Louis Thomassin, *Ancienne et Nouvelle Discipline de l'église* (Bar-le-Duc: Guérin, 1864–66), vol. II, pp. 386–99.

Some of these duties fell in earlier times to men from more humble backgrounds, but the importance associated with the services or the *ministeria* of the Carolingian court made them desirable and coveted, and simultaneously promoted those who performed them. Therefore the new tie of vassalage replaced the old dependency of the familiar who was charged with a particular group of duties. From a sociological point of view, this transformation meant an appropriation of this system that caused the monarch to be surrounded by the aristocracy, and the injection of new values into the actual concept of court 'service'. We can relate this transformation on the other hand to the creation of a system of payment to court servants which resulted from the amalgamation of two methods of payment: the *praebenda* (food, 'sustenance' and clothing, which were periodically distributed) and the *beneficium* (land concession).³⁸

The very general picture sketched above forms an indispensable basis for the appreciation of the variety presented by the royal courts of the medieval west in their organisation after the eleventh century. From early on, we witness the phenomena of hereditary transmission and the sharing or duplication of duties as their appropriation by magnates and nobles intensified. A comparative history of institutions, which still sorely needs to be carried out, would perhaps show the distinction between two structural groups of courts, as suggested by Petit-Dutaillis or Bryce Lyon: one which was characterised by the relative independence of the various services (with the king able to be the direct head of each one), of which there is a good example in the Anglo-Saxon court; the other being the group of 'continental' courts, or of the Iberian courts, in which one person only (the *maior domus*) supervised all the servants or, at least, several different sectors.³⁹

By taking the evolutionary point of view of institutional history, to which I initially referred, we should see emerging: from the chamber (an organism which permanently accompanies the monarch), the keeping of the treasury and, later, the germ of financial institutions; from the chapel (a clerical organism *par excellence*), the offices of the written word and the chancery; from the hall (which, as has been said, evokes the periodic meeting of the king with his servants and vassals), the duties related to the exercise of justice, military organisation and even, perhaps (as suggested by Sánchez-Albornoz), the germ of

³⁸ Heinrich Mitteis, *The State in the Middle Ages: A Comparative Constitutional History of Feudal Europe* (Oxford: North Holland, 1975), pp. 164–5; Benjamin Arnold, 'Instruments of power: the profile and profession of the *ministeriales* within German aristocratic society, 1050–1225', in Thomas N. Bisson (ed.), *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 36–55.

³⁹ Charles Petit-Dutaillis and Georges Lefebvre, *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubb's Constitutional History* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1930), pp. 348–54; Bryce Dale Lyon and Mary Lyon, *The Wardrobe Book of William Norwell, 1338–1340* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1983), pp. i–xlvii. See also Mitteis, *The State in the Middle Ages*, pp. 154–5 and 194.

representative assemblies. Without wishing radically to challenge this evolutionary framework which, within its general lines, is accepted by the majority of authors, I propose to introduce to it the attention due to the 'domesticity' of the kings, attempting a global vision of the organisation of the courts which does not consider this aspect as a mere archaic residue of lesser importance, clearly separated from the remaining spheres of activity which develop in the royal retinue. In my opinion the selection of concrete characteristics that fell to the diverse duties of the medieval courts should not be considered in too restrictive a way. As we shall see, the 'service' of the king took many forms. Many offices had a variety of spheres, both administrative and fiscal but, at the same time, 'domestic' and even ritual. It is in the unity of all of them that the prestige attributed to royal service by men of the period can be understood. My research sought therefore to question once again the terminology of the sources, seeking not only to understand the regime of court positions, the way in which they were transmitted and the norms which governed them, but also to put in perspective their effective function through a study of those who held the posts and the concrete activities which they performed.

Sources that allow a global picture necessary for a first approach to the organisation of the courts, although relative to the later medieval period, seem to be small in number. Therefore recourse to normative texts as well as other types of sources, such as those of a proto-financial character (for instance lists of payments to members of court), was inevitable for an attempt to fill in the lacunae and to ascertain the problems of interpretation that arose. I constructed four graphic diagrams, starting with known texts, which would allow for the evaluation, beyond the general framework already shown, of the variety of forms of concrete organisation of the royal European courts between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.⁴⁰ It is only by concentrating on the global context that we shall be able correctly to interpret the data available on the Portuguese court.

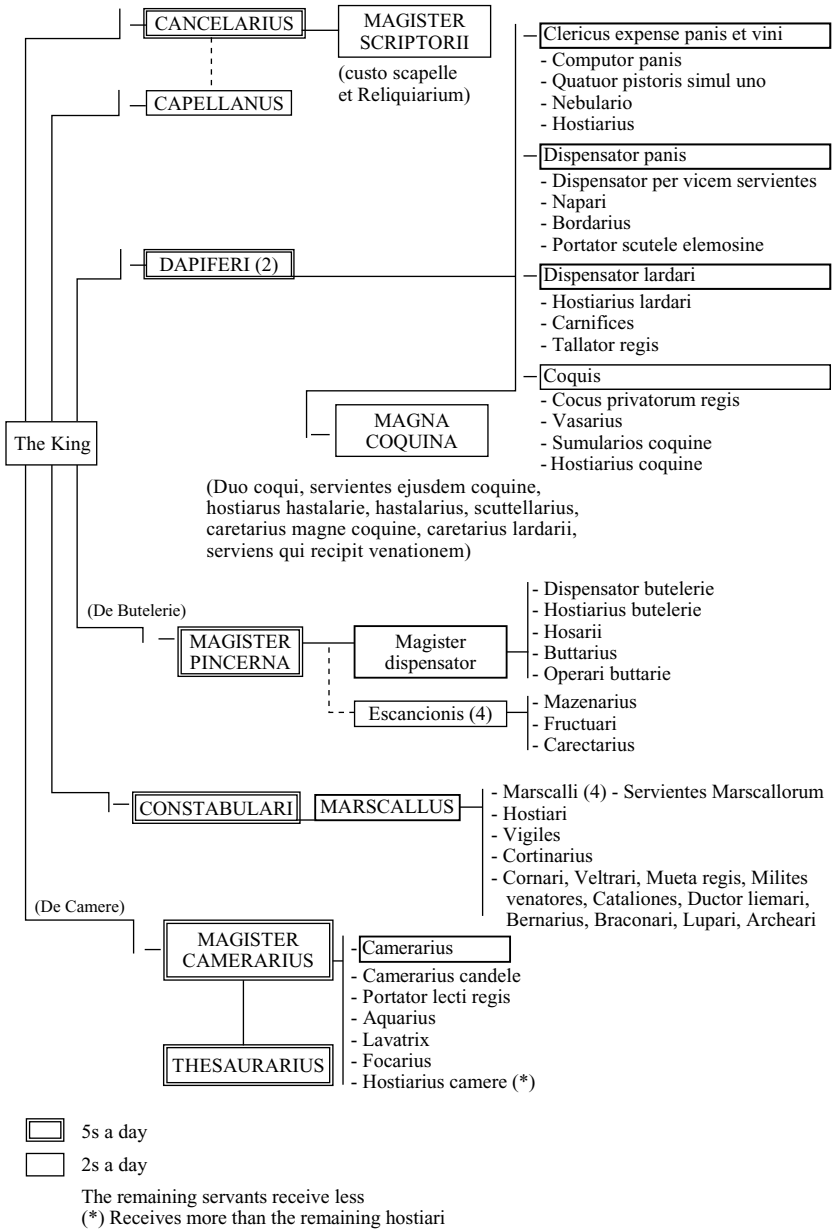
The construction of these diagrams suggests the clarification of two points for the reader. The first is in respect of the use, without translation, of the vocabulary found in the sources. In fact, I would suggest that translations of the terminology are risky, since at times information is lost in an attempt at clarity. Simple translation can in this case lead to loss, since there is recourse to

⁴⁰ For an elaboration of Fig. 1: Richard Fitz Nagel, 'Constitutio Domus Regis', in Charles Johnson *et al.* (eds.), *Dialogus de Scaccario: Constitutio Domus Regis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 129–35. For Fig. 2: *Las Siete Partidas*, vol. I, pp. 56–87. For Fig. 3: Próspero de Bofarull y Mascará (ed.), 'Ordenacions fetes per lo molt Alt Senyor en Pere Terç, Rey Darago, sobra lo Regiment de tots los officials de la sua cort', *Colección de Documentos Inéditos del Archivo General de la Corona de Aragón*, vol. V (Barcelona, 1850). For Fig. 4: the text of Olivier de la Marche, 'L'Etat de la Maison du Duc Charles de Bourgoigne, dit le Hardy', in Henri Beaune and J. D'Arbaumont (eds.), *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche* (Paris: Renouard, 1888), and the Ordinations of 1419/21, 1426/27, 1431–32/33 and 1437, edited by Werner Paravicini, 'Die Hofordnungen Herzog Philipps des Guten von Burgund. Edition', *Francia*, 11 (1983), 257–301; 15 (1987), 183–231; 18 (1991), 111–23.

an identification and correspondence between diverse duties and posts that are not always diachronically acceptable. This is a common result when translating from medieval Latin, as has on occasion been found when analysing the way in which, in the Portuguese case, the names of some earlier posts were translated into the vulgar language in the texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, without taking note of changes which occurred in the profile and characteristics of the old offices. More problematic still is the translation, for example, into the English language of names of posts that existed in other institutional systems, where the characteristics and regime of services performed diverge substantially at times. All translation in this case presupposes a parallelism in the organisational forms which, on the contrary, could eventually result from an actual historic interpretation, never postulating it at the outset. It is also important to draw attention to the fact that the sources, which were selected because of their heterogeneous nature, do not allow for a direct comparison of the resulting graphics for the deduction of a linear evolution of organisational forms of the medieval court. On the contrary, what is dealt with here is images which demand a synchronic vision, although they are presented in chronological succession, identifying forms whose coexistence is able to reveal different historicities and durations, and which include recent duties and other, older ones, the survival of some and the introduction of others at the organisational level of the respective courts.

A schematic vision of the organisation of the English court based on the *Constitutio Domus Regis*, a document that can be dated 1135–36, allows one to detect its principal orders and groupings (Fig. 1). In it we find a list of the various duties with their respective wages, information that is of an unparalleled hierarchical value. Two phenomena found in this source are brought to our attention: the relative independence of the chancery in relation to the chapel, and the separation between the services of the hall and the chamber.⁴¹ The complexity that this source reveals in these two areas, traditionally associated with the ‘domesticity’ of the kings, is notable. What must be emphasised is the separation with respect to the hall between the services of food and those of drink, which are placed under the control of the dual *dapifer/pincerna*. The distinction between the various duties was based upon two essential vectors: for whom the food was intended, and with what type of food it was concerned. Therefore, the food intended for the king was kept apart in its preparation from the food for the court – and we then have a *cocus privatorum regis*, independent of the *magna coquina*. The administration of bread and wine acquired an enormous importance, and justified the presence of a *dispensator panis* and of a *dispensator*

⁴¹ On these posts, see Chris Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England, 1360–1413* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); James Willard and William A. Morris (eds.), *The English Government at Work, 1327–1336* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1940), vol. I, pp. 206–49.



5s a day
 2s a day

The remaining servants receive less
 (*) Receives more than the remaining hostiari

Fig. 1 The English court according to the *Constitutio Domus Regis* (twelfth century)

butelerie, as well as a *clericus expense panis et vini*, all of whom were officials deputed to the control and recording of expenses for these activities.

The abundant distribution of food during the royal itinerance in the English case allows to a large extent an evaluation of the importance of these services. We know, for example, that at the end of the thirteenth century Queen Eleanor distributed the respectable quantity of 9036 individual meals to the poor in one single year, this simply during her travels apart from the king.⁴² In all probability, the services related to the royal hall had as a duty not only the distribution of the several rations of food and drink which fell to members of the court, but also the fact of eating together, with which the *portator scutele elemosine* was connected. Certain provisions in particular, such as meat, fruit and salt, had servants connected to them, and this gave rise to a complex system of records and accountancy. The same logic of association between related activities placed the servants of the stables and the services related to the military and hunting retinues under the supervision of the *constabularius*. For its part, the world of the chamber became shared between a *magister camerarius* and a *thesaurarius*, and the presence of servants such as the *portator lecti regis*, or the *aquarius* and *lavatrix*, should be noted in the hierarchy of the chamber, as should the autonomy of the services of the treasury.⁴³

With regard to the ordinance of the Castilian court at the end of the thirteenth century, it is possible to compare the relative accuracy of the profile of the English court, based on the *Constitutio*, with the conciseness of a source of doctrinal intent such as the *Partidas*. This text, written from the point of view of the king himself, uses the metaphor of his body to describe the court and distinguishes between the duties which corresponded to the ‘sentidos que obran en poridat, asi como imaginando, et pensando et rembrándose’; the duties whose function was similar to the organs ‘de dentro del cuerpo quell ayudan a vevir’; and finally those which ‘obran mas defuera del cuerpo a guardamiento et amparanza del’ or, as stated further on, ‘en las cosas que pertenescen à honra, et à guardamiento et à amparanza de su tierra’.⁴⁴ It should be noted how this classification, which starts from the philosophical-political *topos* of a comparison between society and the human body, plays with a double meaning of the organic metaphor, considering as it does on the one hand the court as a ‘sensorium’ of the royal body and, on the other, identifying this with the totality of the kingdom.⁴⁵

⁴² John Carmi Parsons, *The Court and Household of Eleanor of Castile in 1290* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1977), pp. 8–9.

⁴³ The identification of this *thesaurarius* is unanimously suggested as being the later ‘keeper of the wardrobe’. On the relationship between the ‘wardrobe’ and the ‘exchequer’ (the department which centralised accounts): Lyon and Lyon, *The Wardrobe Book of William Norwell*, pp. xxv–xxvi.

⁴⁴ *Las Siete Partidas*, vol. I, pp. 57–8.

⁴⁵ Otto Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 22–5. On this idea in John of Salisbury (one of the most common sources): Fumagalli

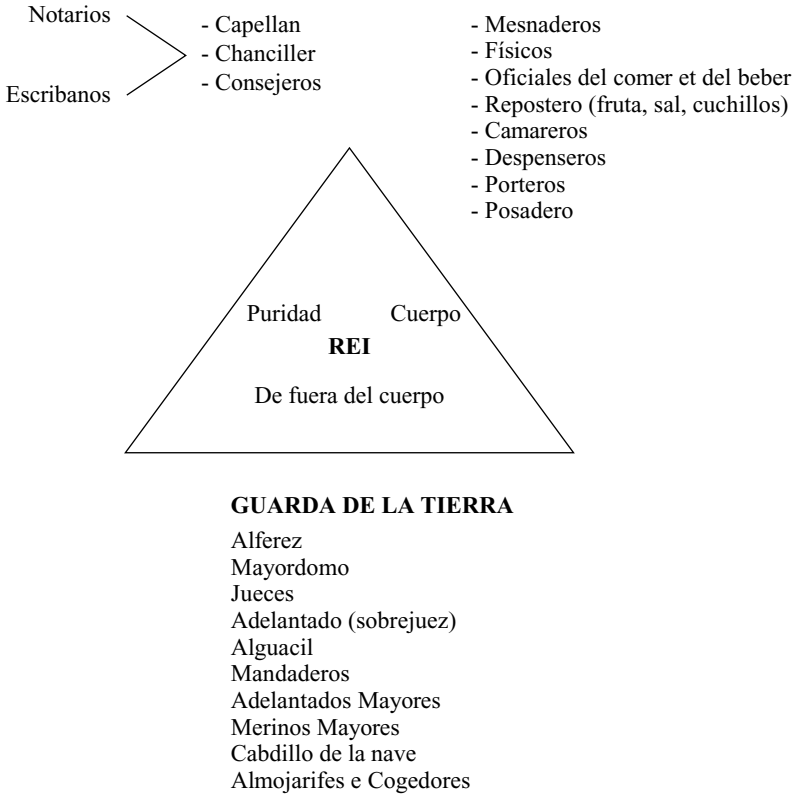


Fig. 2 The Castilian court according to the *Partidas* (thirteenth century)

Reproduced graphically, the ordinance suggested by the *Partidas* clearly reveals an entire schematic (Fig. 2). The text merely mentions the principal duties of the court, and simplifies to the most elementary expression 'domestic' order, not allowing for a clear view of the hierarchy existing among them.

Two aspects must be emphasised, for they evoke the essential originality of the Iberian courts before the fourteenth century: the predominance of the *mordomo* and the independence of the *alferes*. The first aspect, which was detected by Sánchez-Albornoz from the reign of Alfonso III of Asturias (866–910), has been related to influence from beyond the Pyrenees, which was accentuated with the advent of the Navarre dynasty in the westernmost regions of the Peninsula in

the eleventh century.⁴⁶ This ‘monocephalic’ character of the Peninsular courts remained, even though the French sovereigns had abandoned it. The adoption of the *senescalcus* by the Carolingians has been interpreted as a precaution because of the earlier supremacy of the *maior domus* in the retinue of the kings.⁴⁷ The Anglo-Saxon court, like the English court later on, never had such a hierarchy. Besides, when the name of this position appeared and spread across the Iberian Peninsula, it was already considered an archaism beyond the Pyrenees, as noted by García de Valdeavellano.

While in Capetian France the tendency towards heredity in access to the position of *senescalcus* was stressed, leading to the unfilling of this position at the end of the twelfth century as an attempt to combat the political influence of those who held the post,⁴⁸ the supremacy of the Peninsular *mordomo* never apparently posed a threat to the Iberian monarchs. The post held no military prerogatives (as was the case with the French *senescalcus*), nor during the earlier periods was it hereditary. Probably it was in the coexistence of the *mordomo* and the *alferes* that there lay one of the reasons for this apparent equilibrium. Therefore, while we speak of the influence from beyond the Pyrenees in the adoption of the *maior domus* by the Christian kings of the Iberian Peninsula, we may also allow for the analogy with the Muslim institutions of Al-Andalus, where we find the retention of this duality of offices, that is a distinction and a complementarity between leadership of the military retinue and that of the household of the monarchs.⁴⁹

It is not known whether the replacement that occurred in documents from Leon in the twelfth century of the Latin names *signifer* and *armiger* by the Arab *alferez*, the name given to the leader of the king’s gentlemen, indicates a significant change in the functions of this post. The new name seems to relate it not solely and exclusively to the carrying of the insignia and royal standard, but

⁴⁶ Sánchez-Albornoz, ‘El *Palatium Regis* Asturleonés’, pp. 11–16 and 26; Luis García de Valdeavellano, *Historia de España: de los orígenes a la baja edad media* (Madrid: Alianza, 1980), vol. II, pp. 92–5. For a later period see Nilda Guglielmi, ‘La curia regia en León y Castilla’, *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 33–4 (1955), 116–267; 38 (1958), 43–131.

⁴⁷ J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 231–48.

⁴⁸ Ferdinand Lot and Robert Fawtier, *Histoire des institutions françaises au moyen âge*, vol. II, *Institutions royales* (Paris: PUF, 1958), pp. 52–3. For the Capetians, Eric Bournazel, *Le Gouvernement capétien au XIIe siècle, 1108–1180* (Paris: PUF, 1975), pp. 111–19; John W. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus: Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 104–6.

⁴⁹ E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de L’Espagne musulmane* (Paris: Brill, 1950), vol. II, pp. 128–30; Rachel Arié, ‘España musulmana (siglos VIII–XV)’, in Manuel Tuñón de Lara (ed.), *Historia de España* (Barcelona: Labor, 1984), vol. III, pp. 60–5; Mohamed Meouak, ‘Notes historiques sur l’administration centrale, les charges et le recrutement des fonctionnaires dans l’Espagne musulmane (2e/VIIIe–4e/Xe siècles)’, *Hesperis-Tamuda*, 30 (1992), 9–20. On the distinction between the ‘offices of the sword’ and the ‘offices of the pen’ see Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, ed. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 213–14.

also to skill in mounted combat. In fact, the Arab word meant the 'champion' who launched the challenge against the enemy army, and this identity was carefully preserved for posterity by historians when relating episodes of war.⁵⁰ The Christian kings of the Peninsula used the Arab name for this post in the same way as they appear to have adopted the combat techniques of the Muslim armies.

In spite of their relative brevity, the *Partidas* allow us to confirm the importance of the trilogy *mordomo/alferes/chanceler* in positions which were hierarchically superior in the Castilian court during the thirteenth century. The structure of the hall and the chamber under the supervision of the *mordomo* is briefly referred to in the text. To the first of these there belonged the 'oficiales del comer et del beber', the 'despenseros', who controlled the expenses, and the 'porteros' whose judicial duties are emphasised in the text. To the second were connected the 'físicos', the 'camareros', the 'repostero' who was to protect items from 'poridat', the 'posadero' who organised the itinerance of the court and, most probably, the small armed retinue which permanently guarded the body of the king – the 'mesnaderos'. The text also does not fail to mention the 'capellan'. These posts, however, played a reduced part in the chapters of the *Partidas*, which concentrate on the offices 'de fuera del cuerpo', that is in the relations which the court maintained with the kingdom and, consequently, in its judicial, military or fiscal activities. A comparison of this sketch in the *Partidas* of the 'domestic' functions with the greater complexity demonstrated in another almost contemporaneous source such as the accounts of Sancho IV is illuminating. In this latter text, which is very different in nature, it is possible to find, for example, that in Castile there existed a separation between the 'cocina del cuerpo del rey' and the 'cocina' of the court (much the same as the English court), as well as the characteristics of the various officials 'do comer e beber'. This financial documentation shows that there existed an internal hierarchy in the chapel and we can also gather a few indications as to the service of the stables and hunting.⁵¹

The organisation of the court of Aragon in the middle of the fourteenth century is one of those of which we know most for the medieval period, thanks largely to the 'Ordenacions' of Pedro the Ceremonious (Fig. 3).

⁵⁰ On the *armiger* of Leon, see Sánchez-Albornoz, 'El *Palatium Regis*', pp. 21 and 24; Josefina Mateu Ibars, 'La *confirmatio* del *signifer*, *armiger* y *alferez* según documentación Asturleonese y Castellana', *En la España Medieval*, 1 (1980), 263–316. On the Arab term and the use of combat evoked, *Encyclopédie de L'Islam* (Leiden: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1954–98), vol. II, pp. 800–1. See also António Dias Farinha, 'Contribuição para o estudo das palavras portuguesas derivadas do árabe hispânico', *Portugaliae Historica*, 1 (1983), 253–4; Inés Carrasco, *Los cargos de la Hueste Real en tiempos de Alfonso X: estudio onomasiológico* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1922).

⁵¹ 'Libro de diferentes cuentas de Don Sancho IV (1293–1294)', in Mercedes Gaibros de Ballesteros (ed.), *Historia del reinado de Sancho IV de Castilla* (Madrid: Tip. Archivos Bibliotecas y Museos, 1922), vol. I, pp. i–cxlvii. See also Asunción López Dapena, *Cuentas y gastos (1292–1294) del Rey D. Sancho IV el Bravo* (Córdoba: Caja de Ahorros, 1984).

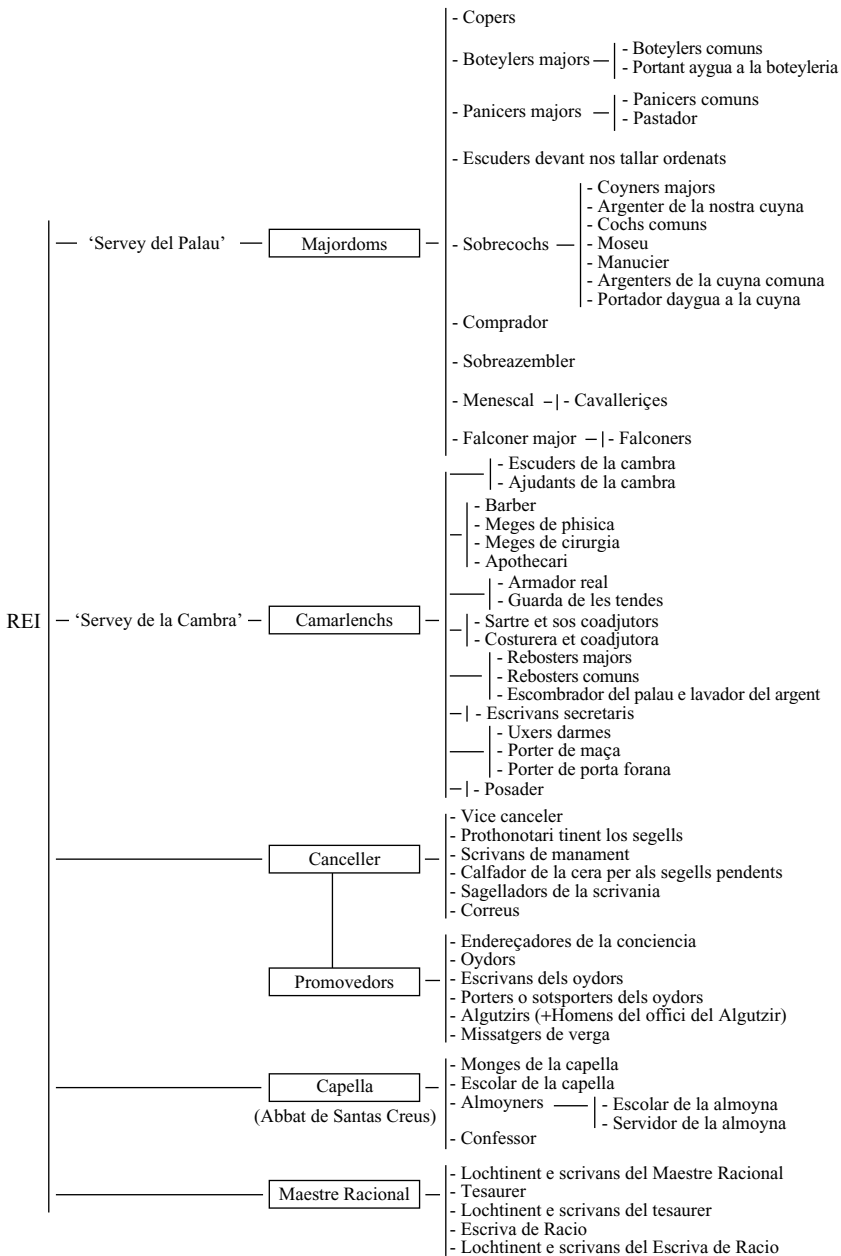


Fig. 3 The Aragonese court according to the *Ordenacions* of Pedro IV (fourteenth century)