GASTRONOMY AND OTHERNESS IN ALPHONSO X’S WORKS: FOOD IDENTITIES IN CARTOGRAPHY

Dianne Burke Moneypenny
University of Kentucky, nadien14@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Dianne Burke Moneypenny

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky
2011
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
Dianne Burke Moneypenny

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Anibal Biglieri, Professor of Hispanic Studies

Lexington, Kentucky

2011

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FOOD IDENTITIES IN CARTOGRAPHY

This thesis investigates Alphonso X's General Estoria, Estoria de Espanna, Cantigas de Santa Maria, Siete Partidas, and other writings in the alphonsine corpus to illustrate the concept of classification through diet. The work of this thesis is to reveal the gastronomic connections between central and peripheral relations in cartography. Through food symbolism and dietary behaviors, cuisine functions as the purveyor of an unrivalled sketch of a text’s characters and the social conditions of the text’s production. Once unraveled, these highly socialized norms of consumption confirm that diet and identity are inextricably linked and lead to a greater understanding of medieval Iberian cultural relations and attitudes revolving around food and the perception of the civility of the world.

KEYWORDS: Food, Cartography,
Alphonso X, Medieval Spain,
Anthropology

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Date
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By
Dianne Burke Moneypenny

___ Anibal Biglieri
Director of Dissertation

___ Anibal Biglieri
Director of Graduate Studies

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family and parents, Dr. Kevin and Jeanne-Marie Burke, whose example and unconditional love always provide the motivation and scaffolding for my success, and my daughter, “Lexi.” My thanks also go to those who supported me along the way including: the Moneypennys, whose patience and kindness never falter, my old friends and the many new ones made along the way at University of Kentucky, Cedar Ridge, and Franklin College. Many of you have directly or indirectly left an indelible mark on this work. You know who you are. You are my gems.
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Introduction:

Throughout the course of human history, one element has consistently permeated all facets of life. We have nurtured and encouraged this occupation to such an extent that what was once one of the most basic requirements of life has now become an art form. This obsession of humankind is the consumption of food. From hunter-gatherers to Food Network and gourmet chefs, eating persistently remains a highly pleasurable and codified practice.

Due to the constant weight of cuisine on the human mind, ingesting particular foodstuffs has surpassed the purely biological realm. In this arena, beyond fulfilling a basic need, eating generates rippling effects from politics to religion to the quotidian experience. We could say that these entities, the fundamental seeds of a society, are often founded or reaffirmed in a mouthful. It follows that what we eat, how, when, where, why, and with whom, are all culturally relevant questions that inherently classify the consumer in different ways and at different times and places.

Coupled with humankind’s desire for food has been the need to define that which surrounds him/her. Cave paintings, whose function was to transplant the exterior landscape to an interior environ, exemplify this obsession as much as today’s modern systems that integrate a network of satellites to hone in on the location of a tree in the middle of a forest. As humans, we feel driven to supplant live earth to an inanimate object in order to find where we fit in the world scene.

The two cravings, for nourishment and developing a spatial/social order, merged long ago. Perhaps, as any program detailing the complex hunting and community habits of animals will attest, they were never truly separate. Our diets have always exerted an
incredible control over our perceptions of the world and our place within it. As such, food exists as a tool less esteemed or known within social structuring, cosmovision, and cartography that further defines perceptions of the world space. Therefore, the fundamental social web of a culture can often be understood in gastronomic terms.

We can observe the social web of the Iberian Middle Ages as a reflection of food’s tendency to spread its roots into other areas of life. Specifically, if we consider that an established diet fits into a given society to accommodate its unique conditions, then food seems to serve as an ever-present distinguisher between "we who eat this" and "those who eat that." In simpler terms, diet defines. Due to the mounting social stratification that marked the Middle Ages, food’s ability to form these hierarchies and construct and police cultural and geographical borders particularly suits the period. Reading Alphonso X’s General Estoria, Estoria de Espanna, Cantigas de Santa Maria, Siete Partidas, and other works in the alphonsine corpus acutely illustrates this concept of classification through diet within the host culture itself, mainly 13th century Castile, and far beyond its borders.

By studying the alphonsine works in this dissertation, we realize the role that food plays in medieval perceptions of world order. In reality, the descriptions of distinct places on the map tend to create gastronomic images. Taking into account the role that gastronomy plays in society at large and its mapped world, we will discern the places far from the known or navigated world in medieval Europe or the “periphery,” including Africa, the Atlantic, the Septentrion, and India, in comparison with the center, Jerusalem. We will explore these themes by employing various cartographic theories and, of parallel
importance, we will discuss how one links food with culture to elucidate a map’s *ecumene*.

By use of this delineation of alimentary items discovered in a place, a point on the map gains life and flavor. So, the thesis posited in this work is that Alphonso cartographically orders the world and all creatures within it and reinforces this ordering with analyses of distinct food cultures by investigating the existence of ritualistic food events, group eating, and the act of eating itself with regards to the particular food’s symbolism, the availability of foodstuffs, the variety of edibles, and the concept of consumption. He illuminates distant lands and peoples in comparison with the socially established dietary norms of the mapped centers, Castile/Iberia/Jerusalem. This web of highly-socialized norms focused on identity via consumption is a tangle of insinuations and symbols that, once unraveled, leads to a greater understanding of cultural relations and attitudes revolving around food and the world. In short, in this investigation, we aim, among many other topics, to see how the age-spanning legitimacy of a modern adage cannot be denied: we are what we eat.

**Theories of Consumption**

Before immersing ourselves in the textual analysis it is essential that, in the introduction of this dissertation, we familiarize ourselves with the common theoretical precedents of gastronomic theory. In general, these studies are fixed on an anthropological sphere that strives to understand culture. As culture is an undeniable contributor to the production of literature, the connection between anthropological ideas
regarding food can be extended to apply to any artistic production within a given society. As Barthes states, these kinds of “projected image[s] of reality” are indeed created by a small fraction of the culture being studied, but they do not shape the group’s perception as much as they serve as a reflection of the extant shared mentality (“Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” 274). Or as Counihan and Van Esterik, in Food and Culture: A Reader, affirm "Food is life, and life can be studied and understood through food" (1). With the theories of Counihan and Van Esterik, and Barthes in hand, and bearing in mind that the analysis of literature parallels the study of life, we will approach the study of these texts with the historical/cultural focus that these anthropological theories provide.

First, as we are studying literature it is necessary to mention that when we speak of food, we do not speak about the food item itself, but the representation of that food. Often, food representations are more easily circulated and carry the same meaning as the food item. Just as a coupon represents money, these literary or artistic gastronomic representations, be they visual, oral or written in the forms of stories, recipes, cookbooks, etc., can still be consumed (Appadurai 24). When a meal is transferred to this kind of textual form, it is able to travel farther and last as long as the pages on which it is written. Because of its newly acquired staying power, this type of food representation reflects changing attitudes to food over time, such as what morsel is edible, acceptable, or common. The sharing of culinary traditions through the oral or textual medium can expose readers to the food semantics of the distinct cultures and facilitate gastronomic observation from afar. Due to this flexibility, one need not travel to experience the food of the other, but can textually taste in the comfort of one’s own
home. With regards to the duration of identifiability and conferred value to consumed items, Alfred Gell states, “…[E]ven quite ephemeral items, such as the comestibles served at a feast, live on in the form of the social relations they produce, and which are in turn responsible for reproducing the comestibles” (112) This dynamic, thereby, gives the reader, and us, the ability to “judge” the meals and discern a food’s meaning and its consumer’s status from food recollections in these texts.

To commence the endeavor of analyzing a culture’s gastronomy, food anthropologists center themselves on food's importance to humanity, which is continual and incontrovertible. It is our first need as Barthes tells us in, “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption,” “Ever since man has ceased living off wild berries, this need [food] has been highly structured. Substances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification; and, as soon as this happens, we have communication by way of food” (Counihan 21-22). This communication through diet is prevailing as “Food touches everything. [It] is the foundation of every economy… a central pawn in political strategies of states and households. [It] marks social differences, boundaries, bonds, and contradictions” (Counihan and Van Esterik 1). As a result of its communicating and “touching everything,” food exceeds the supposed role of a purely biological obsession.

Its ability to “mark” its consumer is based on his/her selection of a specific food item due to variances in signification. As Soler, in “The Semiotics of Food in the Bible,” states “the mere fact that a thing is edible does not mean it will be eaten.” Therefore, if we examine items considered “appropriate” for consumption
and the logic behind these decisions, “we can outline the specific characteristics of a society just as we can define those of a language” (55). In short, “an entire ‘world’ (social environment) is present in and signified by food” (Barthes, “Towards a Psycho-sociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” 23). In this sense, food functions as the key to enter into distinct cultural worlds.

With food as key, it is evident that an inspection of a culture's foodstuffs would facilitate an awareness of their worldviews. These messages contain information on “hierarchy, inclusion, exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries” (Douglas 36). As gastronomy is suspended in the cultural stratus, which Barthes calls a "system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of uses, situations, and behaviors," we must rely on the precepts of symbolic anthropology to decipher the codes embodied by food in a particular culture (21).

After cracking a culture’s food codes, we can translate their “system of communication” in terms understandable today.

The societal protocols inherent in a group’s diet are governed in large part by symbolism. Symbolic anthropology seeks to comprehend how diet and society are intimately related through these codes. If culture is a system comprised of symbols and assigned meanings, then understanding the group's assignment of meaning to even the most mundane of activities provides a window into discerning how these people act within, interpret and communicate about their worlds (Dolgin et al. 3, 4). The repercussions of conferring meaning to these symbols are felt even on the social-organizational processes of a culture and affect its formulated reality (Des Chene 1274). Therefore, unraveling these systems of meaning can expose the core threads of a culture.
This fundamental culturally shared idea is intertwined into daily life to such an extent that, in order to interpret their world, individuals rely on the group's perception of the objects or actions bound within it. What is good? Which is not? The most basic of interpretations are influenced by the group’s use of reason to order their world, in a manner consistent with the logic of cause and effect. Through this collective interpretation and assignment of symbols, the group negotiates a world that fits their specific social conditions, be they environmental, religious, or political. With this, a delicate and socially accepted balance is created between ideas and circumstance with food acting as the “socializing cement of civic organization” (Bober 99).

Symbolic anthropologists affirm that these constructed visions of reality, “become comprehensible when understood as part of a cultural system of meaning” (Des Chene 1274). So a sign and action may seem foreign to the outside observer, as we all wear the lenses of our own system of cultural symbolism. Countless cultural beliefs and measures can be understood by deciphering and interpreting key symbols and rituals within a culture, but only if we can grasp central concepts of the society and disregard our own symbols. Therefore, developing a thorough understanding of the host culture is essential to understanding their symbolic social cues.

All human cultures develop symbols and all cultures have established diets. As such, food anthropologists take many of the basic symbolic anthropologists' concepts and build upon them with a gastronomic standpoint. In this line of thought, cuisine is regarded as representative of this culture because “to eat is a behavior that develops beyond its own ends, replacing, summing up, and signalizing other behaviors” (Barthes, “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” 25). As part of the
system, a mere morsel replaces other ideas and behaviors as mandated by the governing culture. These communal foodways become a gastronomic language, where a bite is worth a thousand words. Thus, one could argue that food is a prime domain for conveying and encoding meaning (Counihan 19).

Contextualizing a meal within a social structure can deem a seemingly trivial event significant as a product of a communal gastronomy and socially-patterened system (Sahlins 95; Barthes, “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” 145). It follows that by decoding the rich symbols held in a meal, fixed on the pages of a novel or any cultural production, we can study how such food symbols can communicate latent cultural ideas. These symbols are rooted in any number of ideologies and, therefore, they interact and reproduce themselves in various ways in everyday lives.

To comprehend how food functions within a culture, we must understand that specific symbols can be encoded in individual food items within specific circumstances (Counihan 20). That is to say that a specific food can have different meanings according to time period, location, circumstance, etc. Barthes touts this symbolic malleability as pivotal in food's articulation of meaning. Its plasticity makes it an effective medium for simultaneously negotiating diverse cultural ideologies (Barthes, “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” 57).

According to Barthes, different cultures can endow foods with varying meanings and these meanings manifest themselves in a particular food’s perception. This collective judgment can be conferred on color, taste, texture and smell and also in the preparation methods, manner and order in which it is served (Counihan 114). Demonstrations of prestige, power, sociability, fertility, protest, rebellion, and celebration can all be
mounded in a spoonful, depending on the meal's conditions. Consequently, due to its emblematic plasticity, food has a limitless capacity to symbolize in a culturally-dependent yet fluid manner.

For food anthropologists, the only curb to Barthes’ malleability is circumstance. Cultural context seems to be the only limiting factor to a food's meaning. Fieldhouse defines “human foodways” as including, but not necessarily limited to, food selection, methods of consumption, preparation, size and frequency of daily meals, and time of eating and states that, “Food habits come into being and are maintained because they are effective, practical, and meaningful behaviors in a particular culture” (1). Therefore culture produces and governs attitudes towards various facets of consumption. Each culture has a distinct pattern of food sense according to its needs. In other words, varying context leads to a varying gastronomic meaning.

The cow provides a particularly interesting parallel to illustrate this idea of contextual meaning. In India, a cow is a sacred animal; in western culture, it symbolizes beef: "It's what’s for dinner.” We could also say a cow embodies the every day hamburger or the symbol of prosperity and masculinity, steak. One could say that a T-bone steak, with its bone and gristle goodness, in the context of the United States represents prestige, wealth, and unbridled manhood. However, in an Indian context steak is not considered edible. To serve it on a plate would defile the sacred and, thus, denote sacrilege. Therefore, in India, the consumption of such victuals would not imply a familiarity with the “finer” things in life, nor would it display the consumer’s capital in being able to afford such luxurious fare. Beef: delectable dish or defiling damnation? As
this example demonstrates, the cultural viewpoint made of communal ideas and beliefs is the most important contributor to a food’s interpretation.

**Mapping as a Social Function:**

All of the theories listed above involve a group’s interpretation of their world through food. Working under the notion that Alphonso’s histories are, in fact, mapping the world as cartographic creations, we now examine the theories of map-making that allow his texts to recreate the world along gastronomic lines.

While Alphonso’s texts describe the layout of the world in detail, they are not maps as we consider them today. Often the contemporary conception of the term “map” does not serve us well in our study of medieval cartography. “Map” to our senses probably conjures an image of the world as a whole or in part. To medieval mindsets it may not have been a pictographical representation, but a written description of the land with information meticulously arranged to convey a specific type of information regarding different locales (Harvey 7). Woodward in *Cartography in Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* talks about the narrative function of maps and citing the texts *Polychronicon*, *Mappa mundi sive orbis descriptio*, Peter Beauvais’s *mappamonde* and others, Woodward adds that, “It is unwise to assume that mappamundi necessarily meant a graphic representation of the world. It is common to find the term used to mean a verbal description in a metaphoric sense…” (287). Furthermore, medieval maps, including the textual, were generally not meant to guide a traveler on a journey, but
served to disseminate a particular ideology. Thus, they become particularly valuable when discerning perceptions of the world and its inhabitants.

Whether as an icon or in textual form, at the most basic level, the map represents a locale. It is “the invisible or the unattainable or the erasable, the future or our past, the whatever-is-not-here-present-to-our-senses-now” (Wood 5). It projects the qualities of elusive space on an inanimate object (page, tablet, screen, etc.) and therefore transforms mere notions to a tangible authenticity. As Arthur Robinson states maps form a “reduced substitute space for that of reality” that functions as a “combination of reduction of reality and construction of an analogical space” (1). This is not to say that this space is reality, but rather a constructed image of it. We must remember that maps and mapmaking are not exact sciences. In fact, Wood would say when, “No longer confused with the world, maps are suddenly capacitated as powerful ways of making statements about the world” (Wood 2).

Once an abstract reality is recreated in cartographic writings, the gaze moves to the space itself and questions arise. “What is there in that space?” “What happens/ed there?” “Who lives there?” “Where is that in relation to me?” This tendency is what Wood calls the “inherent indexicality” of maps that, “link[s] the territories in question to what comes with them” (Wood 14). There are maps that index specific information, such as, military drafts, precipitation levels, average high/low temperatures, probability of natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, landslides, etc.), soil type, zip codes, crime rates, spread of and percentage of population infected by disease(s), income levels, sea temperatures, air quality, and as many indexes as the mind can create and that past generations found worthwhile enough to record (Wood 10).
The natural tendency, after studying the map, is for the gaze to turn upon its creator. It is true that maps function to record locations and to guide travelers using the analogical space, but perhaps their most pervasive work is serving as a “vehicle for the figurative expression of abstract, hypothetical, or religious concepts” (Robinson 3). Through the process of its own creation, the map morphs into fulfilling the needs of its creator. This is what Wood refers to as their “interested selectivity” with regards to what a map shows and what it doesn’t. It functions with the ultimate aim of forming hierarchies that position those dominant (typically their creators) within it, in align with whatever abstract concepts it presents (1-2). Thus the maps emerge, “as a casting from its mold, … [an] isomorphic counter-image to everything in society that conspires to produce it” (Wood 18). Wood summarizes this tell-all map function eloquently below:

[M]aps, all maps, inevitably, unavoidably, necessarily embody their authors’ prejudices, biases, and partialities (not to mention the less frequently observed art, curiosity, elegance, focus, care, imagination, attention, intelligence, and scholarship their makers’ bring to their labor). There can be no description of the world not shackled (or freed—for this too is a matter of perspective) by these and other attributes of the describer. Even to point is always to point...somewhere; and this not only marks a place but makes it the subject of the particular attention that pointed there instead of...somewhere else. (Wood 24)

Thus the unsuspecting pointer (cartographer, geographical writer, etc..) is simultaneously exposing his/her identity while describing the world.
Order up! Map as Menu.

Having investigated how perceptions of the world are evident in mapping of its locales, the question arises as to how this can be linked with food. First, we must consider that we are all products of our environs. Land is perceived as the cradle of humanity itself, as in the book of *Genesis* Adam is created from dirt. And Eve’s eating of the forbidden fruits of Eden’s bounty changes the course of humanity. Thus in both instances, the human experience is governed by the earth: as beings created out of it, sustained by it, and finally expelled from it.

Malpas inquires about the identifying trait that the terrain imparts on its people, linking it with food. He enumerates:

[T]he landscape in which we find ourselves, and through which we are defined, is thus as much a part of what we are, of our minds, our actions and our selves, as is the food we eat and the air we breathe. (Malpas 189)

Thus, food and land go hand in hand as indexes of identification.

However, the connection between meal and map has been articulated much more in human history. Food and the culture of the map have gone hand in hand throughout human experience as even cave paintings of herds and hunting can attest. The human pursuit of sustenance can be counted as one of the primordial reasons for exploration and mapping of the lands. Fernandez-Armesto cites the pursuit of salt as motivation for travel (17). Was it also not the desire for Asian spices that propelled Columbus’s search for a shorter route to its shores and the consequent arrival on American soil? This desire
for luxury items from afar has consistently pushed humanity to expand the borders of its known world.

It would be folly to believe that, at present, we have overcome such exploratory instincts driven by food. For a more contemporary reference, Raymond Grew speculates that:

If it was Duncan Hines \(^1\) who brought a sense of the map as menu (and, by extension, of the menu as map) to the American dining and driving publics, his was hardly a novel comparison—as the multiple meanings of the French word carte (both "menu" and "map") make evident. Already in 1809, Pierre Jouhard (a successful lawyer in Napoleon's Paris) had asserted that a restaurateur's carte transported every customer to "the land that saw his birth, and seated him at the table of his forefathers." (79)

In this sense, the menu is the map and the map is the menu. Where can I eat this? What can I eat there? Both questions are posed and answered by the dual nature of map/menu.

---

\(^1\) Although, “Duncan Hines,” to many Americans, is an icing brand, he was in fact an early food critic.
By utilizing diet, one is able to travel to a far-away land without leaving the dining chair. Raymond Grew also says that, “numerous writers had treated the restaurant table as a mode of transportation only slightly less marvelous than a flying carpet, only vaguely more costly than an omnibus” (80). Considering all of these traits, if we localize food on the map these sentiments of wandering distant lands intensify. In other words, we can read about food from a culture, image how it tastes and image more deeply the landscape where people eat like this. It serves as an identifying trait of the people and the point on the map, such as the one to the left “A Food Map of the United States Showing the Part Played by Each of Our States in Supplying the Nation's Larder” made in 1932 by The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. Each region is identified by a food item that is produced and consumed there. By superimposing food items on a location, gastronomy helps to solidify a space on the map as a more credible unit and, as in the case of this map, fulfills its creator’s other goals. When regarding a map created in 1932, the lowest point of the U.S. Great Depression when a huge number
of its residents stood in line for soup kitchens because of food rationing and scarcity, the purpose behind the map becomes clear. We could assume that it was in the interest of the U.S. to show its land’s plenty through overflowing baskets of berries, seafood aplenty, and Wisconsin’s enormous hunk of cheese, in a communal way as each place contributes to the whole and will weather the storm together. The defining ability of a diet is indispensable for a cartographer in creating a world that is understandable to map “readers;” it allows him/her to suspend an imaginary or distant space into comprehensible design.

**Reconstructing Medieval Maps/Menus**

Before undertaking this study it is necessary to speak of medieval cartography with reference to its division of space in the known world. What we tend to notice when studying these maps is the division of the world organized under the Christian regime and medieval ideology. Alison Peden comments concerning the map’s presence in society as a carrier of philosophy in the Middle Ages:

“World maps, adorning not only manuscripts, but the walls or floors of palaces or even the backdrop of an altar, communicated visual ideas about the earth to a wider public. The nature of such ideas would depend on the type of map: some were overtly theological, others descended from the classical tradition of cosmology. The most widespread Christian maps are known as ecumenical ‘T-O’ mappaemundi (world maps), because they divide the known world into three parts as if
by the letter T', and enclose it within a round O' of ocean. The three parts correspond to Asia, Africa and Europe, divided between Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. As illustrated in the Hereford map above, they are usually presented with east at the top, and (especially during the Crusades) Jerusalem in the centre, according to Ezekiel 5:5: "This city of Jerusalem I have set among the nations, with the other countries round about her."

(1) As Peden informs us, the information that the medievals had about the world was formed from the surviving remnants of classical knowledge that disseminated into the medieval European world by classical texts within academic circles. Classical rumors remained of distant lands scratched on the aged parchments. When medieval scribes judged an account as worthy, they had to inscribe this space within their own world vision. That is to say, the responsibility of translating these ancient images to the present world to educate the masses on the state of the world or propagate a particular agenda, rested on the shoulders of the scribe. In this sense, the scholars were at once the judges and transmitters of cartographic world knowledge. Therefore, we may suppose that they were called to decipher “true” locales out of the web of “imagined” spaces.

This juxtaposition of the fantastical and factual manifested itself in a manner that is difficult for modern readers to conceive. They were not necessarily called to distinguish between and separate these two kinds of spaces. The real and imagined could co-habituate the same cartographic space without quandary. Concerning a map’s plasticity, J.E. Malpas says:

[W]here the difference between the real and the imagined landscape is almost non-existent, the map further enables the transposition of the
fictional into the realm of the real. Much of the interest and romance of the fictional map lies precisely in this juxtaposition of the imagined with the real — in the subtle blurring of boundaries between the two. (58)

Therefore, we can see how they were not required to decide which spaces to include in their “modern” maps. Their principal concern was how to negotiate these lands in their limited plane. They had to create a useful map for their medieval readers and in order to fulfill this aspiration:

[I]t must represent space, and the features located within it, in ways that are accessible to the user of the map, both in terms of employing a method of representation to which the user has access, and in terms of providing a method by which the features represented can be matched with features in the user's own subjective experience of space. The use of compass directions and a co-ordinate system, for instance, as well as the identification of certain key points, enables users of a topographic survey map to use that map in directing their movements, since it allows them to orient and locate their own subjective space in relation to the objective space represented by means of the map. One might say, then, that maps must always employ some allocentric frame — that is, a frame keyed to certain particular features of the map-user's environment — in their representation of objective space. (Malpas 57)

As we have discussed, because of the conscious effort on the part of the cartographer to consider his/her audience and to appease their sense of the world, it is possible to “read” a map as a provider of information about the culture that created it. It is the job of the
cartographer to make the map space accessible and identifiable to its reader. They accomplish this by referencing established cultural codes in food. What better way to make a distant space real to the reader than to transport him/her on the magic carpet of the menu?

**Theoretical Conclusions & Chapter Outline**

Due to the map’s ability to be defined as a “socially selected window” of the world, much can be gained by a study of Alphonso and his recreation of the world through food based maps (Wood 21). However, as Des Chene and Barthes have underscored, attitudes towards food are ever changing. Due to its dynamic state and the fact that a food’s symbolism must be dissected from within the host culture, it is essential to examine the medieval Iberian context to understand how food was viewed.

So, the first chapter, “Theoretical and Cultural Applications to Medieval Iberian Culture,” examines the gastronomic construct of 13th century Castile. We will examine other writings of Alphonso X himself, including some images from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, that portray a particular attitude towards food, but we will also look at some other significant and well-known texts of the time as indicators of the larger culture’s attitudes towards food. We do this because we must immerse ourselves in the host culture to understand its gastronomic-based value system. We must establish the norm in order to decipher interpretations of the abnormal. The portrait of the cultural center gained by this investigation will help to elucidate the peripheral spaces of the world known to Medieval Iberia.
The second chapter, “Gastronomic Precedence: Food for Thought in the Greek/Roman Tradition,” examines Greek and Roman attitudes towards food. This is vital to our study because of their contributions to the Iberian culture. First, many attitudes revolving around food in the Middle Ages have their basis in Classical culture because of the tendency of the Classics to “gastronomically conquer” all lands in the empires. Bober also cites the significant influence of Roman cuisine in Europe today, using the Spanish paella as a prime example (148). This dish, today considered quintessentially Hispanic, actually originated in Roman Iberia. Also, due to a lack of exploration in the Middle Ages in Europe, classical cartography is the backbone of medieval cartography and common perceptions of the world. Lastly Alphonso himself directly and indirectly cites largely classical sources, Pliny, Herodotus, Aristotle, among others, in his writings. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume a perpetuation of classical ideas in his texts. Paul Zumthor articulates the use of past precepts to interpret the medieval world or anything that was introduced into it; in La medida del mundo he states, “los mismos principios cosmográficos, los mismos prejuicios simbólicos formaron, incluso hasta las primeras travesías del Atlántico, el entramado que tuvieron más o menos que utilizar para interpretar lo ajeno, es decir, diferenciarlo y dar cuenta de ello; concebirlo” (248). Therefore, as it serves as the framework for the gastronomic culture of Medieval Iberia, the cartographic source for the interpretation of the world, and as the primary source material for Alphonso himself in the creation of these works, an analysis of the Classical Period with regards to their cosmovision and foodways is essential.

The third chapter, “Ordering the Medieval World: Carving up Food Maps,” of this dissertation examines the basis for ordering. Through a study of Alphonso’s
cosmovision, general heirarchies based on food and space are revealed. The overarching principles from this chapter contribute to the analysis of specific spaces in chapter four.

Chapter four, “Carving up Food Maps,” examines Alphonso’s cartographic creations themselves with regards to peripheral spaces of the medieval European map. In each distant/mythical local (Africa, Islas afortundas, Scythia, e Yndia), we will examine how food is used as an identifying baseline to which readers from the center could relate. We will show how latent ideas about the inhabitants of each space are communicated based on their diets and dietary customs.

It is with an enriched understanding of the enormity of historical and gastronomical influences in human relations that we will enter into the study of the alphonsine and other texts. With these anthropological and cartographic concepts in hand, we hope to elucidate a less studied field in literary analyses: food and identity.
Chapter 1: Theoretical and Cultural Applications to Medieval Iberian Culture

For this study, the most relevant theoretical applications of food studies revolve around the particularities of food events, group eating, the act of eating itself, and the idea of consumption. We will examine each of these tenets in relation to medieval Castilian culture to reveal the societal coding based on a culinary system. Honing in on the gastronomic norms of Iberia will allow us to discern attitudes, expressed through diet, concerning the distant locales on the map.

Food events consist of every day kind of affairs and spectacular celebratory feasts. All cultures have both types of dining occasions, which Davenport says may be manipulated in several ways (98). Regarding the exchange of food at a communal feast in the East Solomon Islands, Davenport theorizes:

…[T]hese memorial exchanges can become competitions, and they can also be public forums for the airing of grievances and longstanding disputes, but this is not the rule. The ideal is that the exchanges should be harmonious and the community as a whole should feel satisfied by the transactions. (98-99)

So, the food event itself, be it quotidian or exceptional and no matter the host culture, is designed to reflect the dynamics of the group. A successful event represents the event’s purpose while showcasing a satisfactory group arrangement.

These events epitomize an assortment of learned behaviors that shape cultural norms regarding food customs (Fieldhouse 71). As we have seen, great importance is placed on food traditions because central cultural values are perpetuated through food.
Diet serves as an ideal vehicle for the transmission of established cultural norms because all of these food customs could, at each event (or meal), be reinforced. Indoctrinating individuals to the prescribed principles of consumption is crucial to maintaining the group. These ritual food events, with very specific foods chosen, methods of eating, manners of preparation, utensils utilized, and hour of eating, are part of an integrated civilizing model (Schivelbusch 169; Goody 13).

In group eating within a specific cohort, food gains particular meaning as it becomes a recognized symbol by those assembled. Dolgin and Magdoff speculate about food’s ability to concretize relationships and to act as the “metonymy of identity” (358). Fieldhouse theorizes that food cultures represent:

[A] collection of learned attitudes and behaviors which dictate not only what is acceptable as food, but also when and how that food is to be prepared, served, and eaten. Each culture tends to think of its food as ‘normal’, and so deviation from common practice is usually ridiculed or dismissed as being ‘heathen’ or ‘foreign’… (71)

Just as a symbol must be observed in order to communicate its message of ‘belonging’ and ‘normalcy’ between group members, people have to know what you are eating in order to make judgments about your identity. Therefore, in order for these messages to be communicated most effectively, first, co-diners must be established.

The question of who to invite to dine is crucial, as eating alone is detrimental to communicative food ways through symbols, but also because “whom one dines with defines one’s placement in a larger set of social networks (Smith 9). Eating together functions as a medium for creating and maintaining social associations. The concept of
“sharing,” be it a food or even a plate, helps the diners/members of the cohort to bond (Smith 10).

Friends of the table are bound by a unique social link based on food. Each dining group is aware of itself and its norms and also of the existence of other foreign groups. For instance, solidification of a particular group can be confirmed based on cooperation with (or noncompliance to) a food system. This system acknowledges and asserts group identity through the medium of “food commonality,” which is centered on the precept that “like” people practice “like” dietary traditions and are subsequently invited to the same gatherings (Charsley 3). According to the theory of “food commonality” a person is pigeonholed with specific culinary norms that indicate to which group they belong. Through a process of conformation, s/he learns what to eat, when to eat it, and more. Characterizing these norms is essential; with them a group can police their boundaries by knowing who is inside their cultural circle and who remains on the outside.

This case is particularly relevant under the religious scope where religions coexist, such as medieval Iberia. Douglas agrees with this emphasis on diet under pressure. She has postulated that, “It would seem that whenever a people are aware of encroachment and danger, dietary rules controlling what goes into the body would serve as a vivid analogy of the corpus of their cultural categories at risk” (Douglas 52). This would lead to more complex culinary regulation as a means to maintain group solidarity.

To provide an illustration of this concept we may look no further than Cantiga 85 of Alphonso’s Cantigas de Santa María. This cantiga potrays a Jewish man who is captured and tortured by Christian thieves. Surviving on a diet of bread and water, the
basic sustenance of life, he calls on the Virgin for aid. She heals his wounds and takes him to see two visions: a valley of dragons and devils torturing the souls of Jews, and a mountain where Christ sits, encircled by singing angels and holy Christian saints. Upon viewing this dichotomy of fortunes, the Jew is understandably bewildered and Mary offers him an alternative, in which she outlines:

«Estes son meus e de meu Fillo, Deus Jesu-Cristo,
Con que seras se creveres en el e leytôes
comeres e leixares a degolar cabrôes.»

_Pera toller gran perfia...

The Virgin told the unfortunate Jew that he could join the Kingdom of Heaven, if he would believe in Christ, eat suckling pig, and stop cutting goats’ throats. Then she exits the scene. What is of great interest, and most effectively illustrates the notion of group eating, is that he not only had to believe in Jesus Christ, but he had to embrace the eating habits of the Christian masses by eating pork. Also, he had to cease consuming and even preparing the food of his fellow Jews. It is as if she were saying, “Join us at our table, eat our foods, and be initiated into our ranks.” The ideas of group solidarity and food commonality reinforce the group boundaries as indicated by Charsley and Counihan.

These ideas of dietary segregation are made even more evident in the legislation of Alphonso’s _Siete Partidas_, Titulo XXIII, Ley VIII “De los Judios:”

Como ningund Christiano, nin Christiana non deven fazer vida con judio. Defendemos que ningund judio non sea osado de tener en su casa christiano, nin christiana para servirse dellos, como quier que los puedan
aver para labrar, en enderezar sus heredades de fuera, o para guardarles en camino cuando oviessen de yr a algund lugar dubdoso. Otrosi defendemos que ningund christiano, ni christiana non combide a ningund judio, nin judia nin reciba, otrosi conbite dellos para comer, nin bever en uno, nin bevan del vino que es fecho por mano dellos. E aun mandamos que ningund judio non sea osado de bañarse en baño de uno con los christianos. E otrosi defendemos que ningund christiano non reciba melezinamento, nin purga que sea fecha por mano de judio. Pero bien puede recibir la por consejo de algund sabidor tan solamente que sea fecho por mano de christiano que conozca, e entienda las cosas que son en ella.  

The two cultural examples above clearly illustrate the theories of group eating tied to food commonality. The Siete Partidas seek to separate and define the diners of distinct faiths. Perhaps the notion of sharing a table, polite dinner conversation, and even food preparation were known to have been powerful bonding agents; so to prevent any muddling of the religious borders, a prohibition of such activities may have been viewed as essential. It is clear that in medieval Iberia, the practice of amassing bonded dining groups was commonplace and that this form of cohort formation and dining was a familiar association. These kinds of dietary regulations build the commonality of the group through the processes of inclusion and exclusion based on food habits.

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2 Constable translates this succinctly into English, “Moreover, we forbid any Christian man or woman to invite a Jew or a Jewess, or to accept an invitation from them, to eat or drink together, or to drink any wine made by their hands.” (Constable, Medieval Iberia, 272)
Although a grouping of people may be established as a gastronomic cohort that excludes others, that is not to say that all members are equal. As these meals reflect social rules, in the form of boundaries, taboos, etc., and reveal the conditions of a society, they may uncover latent social structures and expose a “pecking order,” inclusion/exclusion, boundaries and other underlying social relations of the group (Khare 27; Douglas 61). The menu, or what is eaten, is often an indicator of status.

Food itself functions as an obvious symbol in the question of identity. As Meigs clarifies, “Food as object and eating as act resonate with attitudes and emotions related to the individual’s understandings and feelings about oneself and the other and the relationship between” (103). To eat and share with guests is a process of ordering, as we have seen. But, to serve food to others is to serve oneself, “physiologically and emotionally” (Meigs 104). An individual’s efforts in blood, sweat, and tears go into a dish that is “ingested, it is eaten, it goes inside” (Meigs 104).

An item’s appropriateness for consumption is not based on its suitability for consumption or biological properties, but on the group’s assignment of value (Fieldhouse 23). Realistically speaking, most cultures only consume a portion of available foodstuffs. A label of appropriateness not only communicates what one may eat, but also when one should eat it, and divides ‘normal’ cuisine and from what might be considered a delicacy. Appadurai discusses how an item for consumption might be culturally marked as a luxury. He imparts that a lavish label will be assigned if the item portrays at least some of the signifiers below:

1. Restriction, either by price or by law, to elites;
(2) Complexity of acquisition, which may or may not be a function of real ‘scarcity’;

(3) Semiotic virtuosity, that is, the capacity to signal very complex social messages (as do pepper in cuisine, silk in dress, jewels in adornment, and relics in worship);

(4) Specialized knowledge as a prerequisite for their ‘appropriate’ consumption, that is, regulation by fashion; and

(5) A high degree of linkage of their consumption to body, person, and personality. (38)

Price, is of course, a very easy way to distinguish between those who can afford delicacies and those who cannot. “Complexity of acquisition” can be exemplified by importation from distant lands or even complex methods of preparation. Even the notion of cooking or warming of foods confers to it a higher status (Mennell et al 108). An example given for “semiotic virtuosity” is that of spices in cuisine; this is seen as symbolizing a complex message because it is/was expensive and hard to obtain. Concerning “specialized knowledge,” we could say that detailed methods of consumption, such as those required for shellfish, or a demonstration of appropriate table manners during consumption may also apply (Mennell et al 121). The last defining characteristic, association to “body, person, and personality,” is easily established by food as the item for consumption. So, status can be assigned thanks to an individual’s ability to obtain/eat such socially-defined luxuries.

For example, by employing the theories we have seen thus far, inviting acquaintances to dinner defines, according to the motivation for the event, who is on
the guest list, and what is served. Group members judge those who are endowed with "good taste" versus those suffering from "poor taste." This places the host in a precarious yet necessary position in front of a jury formed by food group peers. For example, the organization of a group meal suggests prior coordination. An impeccably planned menu on the part of hostess showcases the latter and anything less illustrates the former, as suggested by an individual's perception of and discerning taste for a particular fare (Gofton 142). As we have seen, those who eat and offer particular foods are bestowed the position that these food items themselves hold.

These labels based on diets presumed by group members show one way to identify cultural members in relation to their “taste” for a specific food. As we have seen, rich foods brand their rich consumers and vice versa. In the words of Farb and Armelagos in Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating, “The quality of the meal and its setting convey a more subtle social message than anything that is consciously verbalized; attitudes that would be impolite if stated directly are communicated through the food channel” (4-5). To illuminate this concept we need only consider the differences between: meeting someone for a drink versus meeting for dinner; inviting someone to eat at a restaurant versus inviting someone to one's home; or beckoning one to the dining room versus a cozy meal in the kitchen itself. Douglas says, “Drinks are for strangers, acquaintances, workmen, and family. Meals are for family, close friends, honored guests” (41). As these examples and Douglas illustrate, the parameters of relationships and ordering of hierarchies are often defined and governed by food.
Because of the message sent through food, in the Medieval Ages people (those with money or station) dined to impress with intricate feasts and seemingly interminable appetites. In the words of Massimo Montanari:

> Medieval sensibilities were very strongly attuned to the correspondence between diet and "lifestyle," understood as the concrete expression of a specific social status that had to be clearly demonstrated by its possessor. Dietary behavior had an immediate significance, since it was the first way in which differences of rank were communicated and displayed. (179)

So, what one chose to consume or serve to guests became the tangible representation of the quality of the host/hostess themselves. However, it was essential not only to display one's class, but also to stay within it. Excessive diets were not permitted to those below their station and a hefty fine was conferred to whosoever dared to surpass the imposed gastronomic limits. In the words of Henisch in Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society, “Lavish generosity was the hallmark of an important man. To err on the side of reckless extravagance might bring financial embarrassment; to err on the side of frugality could achieve nothing but contempt” (11). So, we can see that the social parameters for appropriate culinary display were established and judgment was conferred on a public level.

A classic example of display of power and wealth through dining and public judgement of a dining event comes to us from El cantar de Mio Cid. The preparations for the elaborate wedding of the Cid’s daughters begin:
Pensaron en preparar entonces el palacio,
Por el suelo y por arriba, tan bien encortinado;
Tanta púrpura y tanta seda y tanto paño preciado;
Sabor tendrías de estar y de comer en el palacio.

Todos sus caballeros aprisa se han juntado. (188)

So, first we are already made aware of the good taste and high status of being able to eat in the palace\textsuperscript{3} itself, which according to Appadurai would be the first and second of the criteria for luxury, restriction to elites and difficulty in acquisition. As the excerpt says, “Sabor tendrías de estar y de comer en el palacio.” This serves as evidence of the deserving nature of the refined Cid and his benevolent attitude towards his daughters and guests.

For the wedding itself, the Cid asks that the King give away his daughter and orders “plantar siete tablados/Antes que entrasen a yantar, todos los quebrantaron/Quince días cumplidos, las bodas duraron” (190). This spectacular joint wedding is seen as a glorious representation of the Cid’s beloved status. He shares his table\textsuperscript{4}, to such an extent that the floor breaks under the weight of his culinary generosity and perhaps his guests’ newly acquired girth due to the fifteen days of celebration and feasting. According to Henisch, the Cid’s “lavish generosity” during this food event served to solidify the position of the Cid with his cohorts who “Muy bien hablan de ellos, como era aguisado” (190). So, then, with the power of the populace, who spoke favorably of his tastes, the

\textsuperscript{3} “Palacio” could mean “palace” or it could mean the front room of a noble house where gatherings would occur. Either use suggests the event’s formality.

\textsuperscript{4} “Tablado” is defined by the Real Academia Espanola as a stage, which would be a built up space for dining made with a series of “tablas.” We will see an example in CSM shortly. Interestingly enough, in Old Castillian, a “tabla” could signify “board” or also a “Mapa de la Tierra o de una parte de ella.”
Cid regains all of his lost honor with the king. Manipulating the sway of the people through the sumptuous unending feast proves to be an intelligent and profitable tactic for the Cid and perfectly illustrates status granted by diet.

The concept of discriminating tastes is also present in another classic text of Medieval Iberia. Below is an excerpt from Francisco Marcos Marín’s edition of *El libro de Alexandre*, a popular poem created in the form of *mester de clerecia*:

El infante Alexandre luego en su ninnez

enpeço a mostrar que serie de grant prez

nunca quiso mamar leche de muger rafez. (estrofa 7)

The stanza above is foreshadowing the greatness of Alexandre; that he would be “de grant prez,” because of his discriminatory dining preferences as an infant. He would not drink the milk of a “mujer rafez,” which suggests a milkmaid of lower status. Therefore, from birth one of the greatest historical figures of all time exhibited “good taste” before he was able to articulate it in any other manner. The poem alludes to his dietary preferences as our first clue of the glory to come.

Although the menu of a dining group exhibits the formation of peer food groups and establishes hierarchies within these groups, it is crucial to remark that status-indicators are not limited to the menu itself. Douglas
states, “Meals require a table, a seating order, restriction on movement and on alternate occupations” (Douglas 41). The image below from the Cantigas de Santa Maria exemplifies a structured dining scene. The title is “Como el rey fija a comer en casa de buena dama.” In the front and center, we see the King. His seat and table is elevated higher than the other diners present. Incense is wafted above his head as servants carry steaming dishes to the table in a procession. The King appears to be holding a piece of bread in his right hand while his left hand rests on the table. The character to the left of the scene is holding a decanter of red wine. He has a bowl, knife, three pieces of bread, and two chalices in front of him. It also appears as though he will be served first as the parade of jars approaches. Considering the quantity of utensils and the seemingly formulaic dining schedule, Appadurai would consider Alphonso’s “specialized knowledge” of how to function in this scenario as a signal to his status. Each of the meal’s entities has a coded meaning and points to the King’s superiority over his codinners.

The picture above is drawn on the cusp of the presentation of the meal. We do not know what is contained within the dishes, so that part of the meal is elusive to us. However, alongside each diners’ dish, there appears a circular loaf of bread.\(^5\) Each table member has white bread and the King has two loaves for himself. Bread was certainly a staple of any meal in Medieval Castile as it was used in the manner of a utensil. It also reflected the norm for any civilized company because of its complex methods of preparation that mark it as a luxury.

\(^5\) John Keller points out that this representation of bread is the same found in excavations of Pompeii on page 25 of his book, Daily Life in the Cantigas de Santa Maria, which reiterates the connection between classical and medieval diets.
Also, the guest to the far left appears to be grasping a glass or decanter of red wine. This glass or decanter appears to be for the three diners to share, as the second diner is holding an object, perhaps an empty glass to be filled. The separation of the King’s wine from the others’ is significant. Red wine, as bread, was a common part of dining functions in Castile.

Besides what, the question of how one eats is also essential in their identification within and by the group. One of the most visual indicators of status is a simple utensil. It is true that utensils are meant to be by nature “utilitarian.” They do serve a very practical purpose, allowing one to more easily consume his/her food. However, at a feast amongst a plethora of dining utensils, presumably only those of the highest social station will know which to use when. In this sense, a fork transforms itself from a mere physical device to one with socially defining powers. Barthes describes the meaning of what is considered a utilitarian object and gives an example of its ability to surpass its physical state in “Semántica del objeto” within his work La aventura semiológica:

El objeto sirve para alguna cosa, pero sirve también para comunicar informaciones, todo esto podríamos resumirlo en una frase diciendo que siempre hay un sentido que desborda el uso del objeto. ¿Puede imaginarse un objeto más funcional que un teléfono? Sin embargo, la apariencia de un teléfono tiene siempre un sentido independiente de su función: un teléfono blanco transmite cierta idea de lujo o de femineidad; hay teléfonos burocráticos, hay teléfonos pasados de moda, que transmiten la idea de cierta época (1925); dicho brevemente, el teléfono mismo es susceptible de formar parte de un sistema de objetos - signos; de la misma manera,
una estilográfica exhibe necesariamente cierto sentido de riqueza, simplicidad, seriedad, fantasía, etcétera; los platos en que comemos tienen también un sentido y, cuando no lo tienen, cuando fingen no tenerlo, pues bien, entonces terminan precisamente teniendo el sentido de no tener ningún sentido. (2)

Barthes’s idea signals that what might be rude to vocalize is communicated through cunning means, symbolism of a necessary object. As such, a fork can serve as a conduit of social delineation, an indicator of class disparity, and designate the partition of knowledge, aesthetic awareness and values between two or more cohorts (Gofton 141). The appearance of such coded utensils can effortlessly communicate its user’s higher or lower class to other members at the table.

So, as we look back at the image from the Cantigas, we note that the King, seated at a taller table on an exclusive rug, with his own bowl, knife, and two chalices. Set on the other table the three guests share two bowls and one knife. This separation is not accidental, but indicative of a hierarchy being communicated. The three other diners know very well what is their’s and what is the King’s. They would not dare to reach for his knife to cut their bread. His higher status is also communicated by his exclusive rights to the majority of the dishes and being the first to receive service from the three carrying dishes on the right.

To be diligent, we must also realize that even royalty had restrictions and utensils can demonstrate their limits to stations as well. An example from General Estoria depicts King Balthasar at a feast. We can imagine that, initially there is
much merry-making amongst friends with a formidable spread of food and wine; then the King formulates a scheme. He decides to fetch the holy goblet brought from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to add to the grandeur of his meal. The text explains:

& seyendo en aquellas alegrias grandes & en aquellos solazes uinol atalent de enuiar al so tiemplo por los uasos de dios que el noble Nabuchodonosor aduxiera de iherusalem & les pusiera en el so tiemplo, como por reliquias & por nobleza en remenbrança del. mas que otro uso que nunca fiziera el daquello uasos si non este. Mas este Balthasasar mouudo con soberuia & bien tanto con locura. Mando los adozir pora beuer en ellos, & denostar a dios por ello. &' troxieron aquellos uasos que eran de la casa de dios de iherusalem. & beuieron en ellos en los maniares daquella fiesta. & Balthasar yaziendo a costado a la mesa en so comer a sabor dessi. Cato & uio una mano uenir del muro. & escriuir en la paret una escriptura. (GEIV 261)

At a feast with “alegrias grandes,” Balthazar decided to drink from God’s cups, “los uasos de dios,” divine vessels never used for consumption but intended purely as a relic in veneration of the Heavenly Father.

In order to surpass his current social station, Balthazar tried to use a utensil, the goblet, above his station. In doing so, he violated his human bounds and a hand appeared out of the mural on the wall and wrote scripture to admonish him. "Soervia," "locura," and "maniares" all indicate the text's opinion of his impudence in taking the sacred cups
out of the house of God, the temple, for use at his own table. Thus, it appears that assigning status to certain utensils was a known entity in medieval Castile and the breaking of this code was seen as unacceptable.

Balthazar broke an established cultural code. In an effort to upset Douglas and Khare’s “pecking order,” he attempted to use cups that, in accordance with Barthes’ *Semántica del objeto*, were much more than a physical entity of consumption. These chalices were “como por reliquias & por nobleza en rememrança del.” Therefore, drinking from this holy object was a serious overstepping of his station. The text, and God for that matter, addressed his audacity. Employing the theories of Fieldhouse regarding boundaries and intimacy allows us to gather that the King was trying to gain intimacy with one above his rank, God, by surpassing a set boundary. Unfortunately for him, the boundary proved impassable.

The last topic related to our study of food revolves around the reciprocity of consumption. In a dissertation concerned with eating, the fear of being eaten must also be addressed. Salisbury says “just as food is associated with life, it is equally linked with death” (70). This reciprocity of eating and being eaten is, in fact, the natural cycle of life, but it is a disconcerting fact for many humans. Mikhail Bakhtin postulates that, “The gaping mouth is related to the image of swallowing, the most ancient symbol of death and destruction” (qtd in Salisbury 70). This fear was felt when dealing with man-eating animals, cannibals, and Hell itself.

The basic undercurrent of thought was that, if humans were supreme, they were to be exempt from consumption by animals per God’s order. Salisbury says, “Animals who had reversed the order of God’s world by eating people were even more strenuously
forbidden” (69). Eating a pig that had consumed human flesh was an indirect practice of cannibalism. Hunts for man-eating animals, such as wolves and bears, led to near extinction of these animals in medieval Europe (Salisbury 70). And, of course, wolves are portrayed as villainous creatures throughout folklore and fairy tales.

Cannibalism was seen as another act contrary to God’s order. “Proper eating represents humanness and effective socialization, while out-of-control eating and cannibalism stand for wildness and incomplete socialization” (Counihan, The Anthropology of Food and Body, 21). John Friedman in his book The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought takes on the query of why explorers associate cannibalism with the people of lesser known regions. He describes that these explorers considered some people as:

[T]he degenerate remnants of earlier races, miscreants who do not properly fit within the boundaries of the civilised world nor into the proper cycles of the natural world. They bear in their very deformities--and in their isolation--the displeasure of God. It is characteristic of the creatures of this tradition to inhabit isolated regions: remote islands or mountain ranges, deep ponds and lakes, swamps. (Friedman 152)

The opening of bowels of Hell was the last mouth waiting to gobble up humans. Sinners became fodder for the devil as in Dante’s Inferno (Salisbury 73). The devout sought protection and salvation from their God from such a fate.

We can see this obsession of being consumed by the mouth of Hell below in Cantigas de Santa Maria “Como Santa Maria lidia por nos y vence los diablos.”

17
In the picture we have the mythical dog, Cerberus, with its three throats. It is swallowing a slew of beastly creatures as Jesus helps push them in with a staff with an angelic onlooker. Intriguingly, the text mentions that the dog’s three throats are for swallowing Christians, Jews, and Muslims separately. This image clearly illustrates the fear of being consumed by flames in the mouth of the beast of Hell and the concept of this as a punishment conferred by Jesus for the unfaithful.

To conclude this chapter, through the introduction of gastronomic anthropology theories we see that there are many facets of a meal that deserve study. The medieval applications of these theories have given us a very basic foundation of food culture in medieval Castile that will serve our study well as the center point of normalcy for the scribes of Alphonso’s texts. In order to decipher when the author(s) are painting others as different or strange in their customs, as we look upon depictions of a meal, we must pay special attention to group eating, food events, and consumption as signalers of identity. It is the set of established culinary codes based on these
central tenets that will allow us to read their gastronomically based interpretations of other places in the globe. Of course, when we speak about medieval perceptions of the world we cannot exclude the influence of Greece and Rome on both Castile’s cosmovision as seen in cartography and dietary preferences. With the goal of better understanding medieval attitudes about the people of the globe, in the next chapter we examine the powerful influence of the Classical Period upon the Middle Ages through the surviving tales of expeditions and philosophies.
Chapter 2:

Gastronomic Precedence: Food for Thought in the Greek/Roman Tradition

To unravel the historical gastronomic customs and comprehend how food figures into the authors of the alphonsine texts, we commence by considering how a medieval citizen during this period may have viewed consumption and the world. It was seen, especially in Alphonso’s case, through the varied lenses of Roman/Greek philosophy, religion, mythology, medicine and, most especially, taste. These European/Mediterranean precedents of the medieval attitude towards the culinary world demonstrate how eating certain substances define the consumer according to long-instilled norms. In this manner, we see the past’s clout in how the human mindset strives to characterize the other by what is on his/her plate, if he/she even used one, for that matter. So, this chapter will outline classical attitudes about food in two sections, one dealing with “the other,” (mapping others, conquering others); and the second dealing with “us,” (with a focus on the Greek/Roman map centers).

Alphonso X frequently employed the perspectives of Pliny, Plutarch, Ovid, and others in his writings. Because of Alphonso’s use of classical sources and the influence of the classical Mediterranean world in Iberian culture, the aim of this chapter is to provide an overarching cultural and historical, not theoretical, framework for the later areas of investigation. Through historical and philosophical documents, we aim to examine what was considered cuisine in the classical world and reveal the distinct

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*Saying “medieval citizen” is precarious as this period spanned nearly 700 years and Iberia was a land of many different kingdoms. In this thesis, we are aware of this fact but use this phrase to indicate some kind of common thread that they may have shared. It is true that each kingdom exhibited unique gastronomic features, but there were many elements of food ideology that they shared.*
attitudes revolving around its consumption and, also, in Chapter 4 we will be able to see what classical accounts Alphonso chooses to resuscitate.

To begin, both the Greeks and Romans expanded their known world by extensive travel due to expeditions and wars. As a result, with the emergent humankind around them, they had to decipher where exactly their civilizations fit in this continually expanding and amorphous world map. With the aspiration of self-definition, the encounters with the unknown necessitated a distinction between the familiar (us) and what the Classics called the barbarian races (them). To formulate this binary model, which never proves to be precise with its black/white, good/bad duality, the Greeks and Romans relied, among other ideas, on culinary ones.

Cartography, in general, was very important to the Greeks and Romans. Maps’ frequent presences in Classical literature testify to their familiarity in everyday life (Dilke 53). Also, Odysseus travels to various lands, including the land of the Lotus-eaters, which is generally thought to be North Africa (Dilke 55). The veracity of Homer’s geography is questioned, but the presence of the “wine-dark” sea shows the cultural familiarity with such pedagogical devices and forms an interesting link with the notion of food as does Odysseus’s travels to a land where a people is identified by its diet.

Besides Homer, few contributed more than Eratosthenes, a 3rd century BC Greek scholar. Latitude, Longitude, the Earth’s circumference and tilt, and even a system for finding prime numbers called today “Eratosthene’s sieve,” all have one ancient Greek as their creator/calculator. He created a world map based on his calculations. It was centered on Rhodes, with an Alexandrian meridian. He describes it as covering from
“cinnamon country” in the South to the island of Thule in the North (Dilke 33). In the center of Eratosthene’s maps rests his “self selected window,” his ideal around which all other spaces are oriented. Also, extending his map to the reaches of cinnamon country is significant because he is describing that space by its production of a food that is valuable to him/his homeland-and falls under Appadurai’s ideas value through restriction of acquisition and complexity.

Strabo, a 1st century Greek, is another geographer that should be included in our study. Strabo studied both Homeric and Erastosthenic geographies. Strabo describes the people of the Earth as well as the locales. Of “Ierne,” or Ireland, the northernmost part of his map, Strabo says it is wretchedly uninhabitable because of the cold (Dilke 64). He also characterizes a southwestern part of Asia as the land of the “Icthyophagi” or fish-eaters, where, due to scarcity of food and water, the people and their livestock share a diet, fish. The cow meat smells of fish, they build with the bones of fish, they make fish bread by mixing a “small amount of flour” with pounded fish, and they sometimes bake the fish in “covered earthen vessels,” but they normally eat them raw (Strabo 132). Although they bake bread and occasionally heat their food, these people are portrayed as more primitive humans who lack the use of iron. Linking the concept of raw food to Appadurai’s theories of complexities shows that this method of preparation is the opposite of complex; therefore, it is valueless in the eyes of the Greeks/Romans. So, Asians are completely characterized by their diet, which they share with their livestock.

Pliny, a 1st century Roman, is a frequent and noted source of Alphonso X. In his Natural History he distinguishes five klimata, or parallels. These are similar to longitudinal lines, but Pliny ties them to a regions climate. Of course, the equatorial
region is the middle *klimata*. This is sandwiched between two more temperate climates. The caps at both ends form the last two *klimata*. Obviously, life in the temperate regions, incidentally where Rome is located, was viewed as the most pleasant. Europe was also seen as supreme as it garnered over half of Pliny’s Earth’s land mass (Dilke 67).

From Odysseus’s travels to the region of the lotus-eaters and Strabo’s maps outlining India as a zone of fish-eaters, the practice of defining a place gastronomically is commonplace. On classical maps, one will often see the suffix “–phagi,” meaning “eaters.” Perfectly aligning with Salisbury and Freidman’s ideas of the peripheral cannibal, Herodotus, for example, characterizes those of the far north as “Androphagi” or man-eaters (Bunbury 192). We have also seen how in their cartographic endeavors, classical writers tended to locate their center as the map center and position their home and culture as the ideal.

Of course, expeditions lead to discovery and conquest, and as such they were highly valued by the Greeks and the Roman Empire. Plutarch describes that Greek explorers left the Mediterranean and echoed their Athenian pledge of allegiance to the place “where wheat, vines, and olives grow.” This reflects the gastronomic trilogy of classical culture: bread, wine and olive oil. Obviously, any sites of exploration at any considerable distance from Rome/Athens were subject to a climate and atmosphere that influenced a distinct food production and consumption. Thus, the voyagers came into contact with diets very different from their own (Montanari 72). Taking their pledge into account as evidence of society’s profound influence concerning appropriate foodstuffs, as branded by society as Meigs and Fieldhouse indicate, these expeditions caused surprise,
disgust, and labels of savagery to follow the classical descriptions of the edibles (and, therefore, peoples) in other regions of the earth.

Incidentally, it also lays the groundwork for “agricultural conquest.” As Greeks were rulers where “wheat, vines, and olives grow,” planting these items allowed for a pre-ordained supremacy based on a land’s agricultural production. In the 8th and 7th centuries BC, the Greeks would even transplant their hearth fires when forming colonies (Bober 110). The soldiers would carry fires from the hearths of Athens, begin the hearths in their colonies, and thereby transplant their agriculture and ovens’ influence on the strange new lands. Their habits certainly prove that shifting their cuisine to the colonies was an effective tactic for conquest. And, planting grain especially in other lands helped to support their dependency on the product as it exceeded the possible output of the peninsula. When possible, therefore, Greek/Roman soldiers transplanted their landscape on “new” lands. However, it was not always feasible to create the world in Rome’s image. In some areas otherness prevailed. An interesting account of otherness is recounted by Sybaris regarding travel to Sparta. The Spartans were generally admired and feared by the Romans for their bravery and strength in battle. However, after dining with them on their distinct “black broth,” Sybaris deduces that their valor is perhaps provoked by their wretched diet. He rationalizes this theory by saying: “For any man in his senses would rather die 10,000 times than live [eat] as miserably as this” (Montanari 67). Sybaris portrays a sort of diet driven suicide because death by battle would be a pleasant escape from their miserable fodder.

Travel to other regions led to encounters of peoples of distinct regions with "human" countenance that were practically relegated to the realm of myth due to their
gastronomic norms. Because of the culture shock arising from confrontations with strange gastronomy a classification of subhumans and evolutionary anthropology based on diet were generated. Incidentally, the Greeks considered themselves to be morally and logically superior to these others. Within this conceptual framework and with the goal of comprehending and reasoning out the world, Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of humans and, therefore, diet. Speaking of nomads, hunters, and cultivators in his book, Politics he declares:

There are many different kinds of food and that means many different ways of life, both of animals and humans; for as there is no life without food, differences in food produce, among animals, different kinds of life. (qtd. in Longo 1256a)

This stratification of different lives due to food consumed reiterates the interdependence between culture and diet. When looking to explain humans different from himself, Aristotle chose diet as the most consequential contributor to their discrepancy.

Continuing with this idea, if the Greeks represented high humanity, how do we know where others fit in the map? Dispersed among the varied regions of the world were humans, but we must remember not to think of “human” as a blanket identifier. For the Greeks and Romans there were levels of humanity. The central sustenance in their trilogy, along with wine and oil, is bread. Homer even called wheats and barley, “the marrow of men” (Bober 87). Despite being deemed Greek, bread actually originated in Egypt and traveled to Greece and Rome. The Egyptians esteemed bread as a foodstuff as

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7 In spite of other differences, the classical writers freely added the epithet “Greek” to barbarian populations who were later found to be bread-eaters. For example, “Greco-Scythians” (Montanari 72).
well, considering it the staff of life. Bober states the evidence for its importance is found in its persistent occurrence in “countless examples of its use as wages to laborers, its diversity by the number of words for it in the Egyptian language” (39).

All bread eaters were not considered equal, even with bread as the axis of the classical gastronomically-defined world, Greeks/Romans discern "higher humans" from others as those who ate bread in the form of cooked barley or grain. In this mentality, bread-eaters were distinguished from non-agricultural peoples or even those who partook of other species of grain or uncooked wheat (Longo 155). Evidence of bread’s societal weight, even within the category “bread” itself, is demonstrated by these multiple denominations made by Diphilus of Siphnos. This epicurean states that, “bread made of wheat as compared with that of barley is more nourishing, more digestible and in every way superior…bread made from refined flour comes first, after that bread of ordinary wheat and then the unbolted, made of flour that has not been sifted” (Tannahill 77). Each level of humanity corresponds to a type of bread.

Analyzing Diphilus’s statement shows that, with the fundamental ingredient of bread, many distinctions are made through processing. The natural unsifted flour forms the coarsest bread; the refined flour bakes into the finest loaf. So then, according to Diphilus, the more processed the bread, the better it is and those who eat it are.8

So, we may be asking ourselves, “why bread?” Considering Levi-Strauss’s ideas of the “raw and the cooked” that confer sophistication based on the degree of cooking, the emphasis on bread as the civilized meal makes sense as bread involved fairly complex preparation methods. According to Appadurai, it is the very manufacturing of this edible

8 Barthes also makes this distinction with varieties of bread as units of signification. (Counihan 22).
that was considered the evidence for its elevated status. The human hand and other tools are required for its preparation. For one, ingredients had to be mixed and perhaps even seasoned. Next, the bread had to be formed into a non-natural shape and ultimately cooked in some sort of oven. Warming or cooking, as discussed by Mennell et al, serves to elevates breads status. Bober comments that, “Roman cuisine delighted in letting no original taste survive its ministrations without being transformed, masked, or incorporated into a radically different concoction” (149) In other words, ingenuity was in the art of disguise and bread allowed for creative reign, a departure from nature.

The idea of food as a creation contrasts with the perception of “barbarians” or nomadic peoples who are portrayed as hunter-gatherers. Such people would scavenge to survive. They might not alter their food, but partake of the earth’s bounty as is. For the Romans such “natural” fare would be animalistic, as our theories indicate.

Of course, first impressions do not always prove accurate. The power of bread was such that, in spite of other differences, the classical writers freely added the epithet “Greek” to barbarian populations who were later found to be bread-eaters. For example, those Scythians with their horrid black broth became called “Greco-Scythians” (Montanari 72). If where bread, olives, and vines grow is part of Greece, or at least a territory to be “defended” by the Greek armies, then those who inhabit these spaces are, according to this logic, Greek. Thus, my feared neighbor has become my fellow citizen, all thanks to the civilizing influence of bread.

The Map Centers
We have seen that when formulating identities for the peoples encountered during an expedition, the Greeks/Romans employed their trinity of bread, wine, and oil to distinguish level of humanity or lack thereof. However, these distinctions were not limited to the far away world. The Classics also made labels based on diet within their own culture centered on with whom one dined, the degree of systematization and utensils used, and diet.

To unravel the question of with whom one dines it is vital to consider the etymology of the word "companion" or "compañero." It derives from the Latin "compansis" or "with bread," as in “one with whom I partake of bread” (Crumpacker 180). Members of a society, obviously, eat together and in the Classical world, they eat bread. As Dolgin and Magdoff outline, choosing bread as a foodstuff serves to reinforce their identity as a “metonymy of identity.” Thus, the friendly or recognizable is reinforced by the idea of a particular food (bread) and eating it together, as Charsley’s ideas of food commonality indicate. With Smith’s social network through food, “my fellow bread-eater” has evolved to become what we might consider to mean “friend.” So, my dining group consists of those with whom I eat bread and, therefore, a cohort is formed by consuming a selected food. As the previous example indicates, Greece becomes more united with Scythia as bread-eating members of the world.

Thanks to the Mediterranean diet, as a contributor to their culture, the Greeks and Romans were able to produce the city. They considered their Mediterranean haven, complete with urbanity, “civilization.” Montanari describes it as “a privileged corner of the world closed to the alien universe of the barbarians” (69). This civilized image contrasted with that of hunters and nomads, who had no ovens and roamed the land in
search of food instead of producing it. Because of this gastronomic instability, they were seen to be unfit for “civilization” and more like animals than “true” humans/ bread eaters.

What is most interesting about Aristotle's theory of humanity is that the connection between food and identity is established without debate. In the eyes of Aristotle, it not only gives life, but also specifies what kind of life one will have upon its ingestion. Therefore, in accord with the “civilizing model” proposed by Schivelbusch and Goody, consuming a certain food caused an equivalent effect in its consumer and "refined" fare produced grandeur whilst meager fodder promoted barbarity. At the most elementary level, and aligning with the theories of Fieldhouse regarding “normal” and “foreign,” it is a diet that produces the barbarian/civilized person and their ways of life.

However, that is not to say that Rome, for example, was completely biased against foreign fare. A certain amount of luxury was assigned to imported items, as Appadurai suggests. The Roman preference for gourmandizing came from Greece (146). Exotic spices and fruits certainly found their place on the Roman table, reiterating the ideas of Appadurai and luxury. Cherries, for example, were brought back by General Lucullus and became an obsession (Bober 174). As these examples attest, absorption of the foreign was not forbidden, but the food item promptly became “Roman,” as more than likely did the province that was just conquered in order to obtain it.

So, the classical model of the world was formulated, centered on the Mediterranean and revolving around the consumption of bread. In the centered peninsula itself all bread was made from barley or wheat. It was consumed to such an extent that nearly 80% of the Greek caloric intake was from cereals. The rest of their intake took the form of olive oil, pulses, and the rare morsel of meat (Longo 155). These Greek and
Roman cultural perceptions of human distinction based on diet, which in their case was bread-biased, continued into the Middle Ages and affected perceptions with the evident grain bread preference.

The Map Center’s Center

As we have seen in the ancient mindset, ingesting the right food perpetuated sophistication on the world scene. However, even within the classical civilizations themselves a distinction based on diet was commonplace. In particular, the superiority associated with food took many forms, but the cities or "polis" of Athens and Rome were considered to be the most relevant indicator of civility and intellectual supremacy.

In this urban-centered mindset, where the city occupied the most central position on maps, one who lived in the city was superior to those societies that had no cities in which to dwell or those who benefited from urban opportunity but chose not to relocate. Many did choose the municipal lifestyle and, thus, a tiny spot on a map grew to have enormous economic and social weight.

During these centuries, cities expanded, became more densely populated and, therefore, needed more of the surrounding countryside to prosper. The parasitic pull of the urban center created a dizzying placement of dense human population, which left little land to cultivate for food. Concerning the preeminence of the “polis,” Montanari declares that:

Both the Greek and Roman civilizations were eminently urban; the country-side was considered and annexation of the polis or civitas…Despite this ideological integration, however, the
distance between life in the city and life in the countryside—even as far as food was concerned—was considerable. (76)

Contributing to this annexation of the countryside was the fact that city vegetable patches could only augment the dwellers' diets. Therefore, green fields, essential to its survival, surrounded the stone city.

As the city relied on the country for sustenance, city dwellers became accustomed to not physically providing their own food. Due to this development, with time, it became uncomely for city dwellers to work the soil for one's fare. All people obviously ate from the land, but, as Corbier mentions, “At both the top and bottom of the social hierarchy people ate what they produced. Peasants had nothing else, whereas wealthy landowners who lived in town obtained part of their food from their own estates” (130). While, as Corbier reveals, it is true that the wealthy “owned” land, they did not work the soil.

The consequence of the notion of physical angst in the field being associated with peasantry was taxing on the “rus,” as, to fill their plate, the city and the wealthy collected and drained the resources from the surrounding countryside where the food was grown and tended. This incidence of outsourcing multiplied exponentially under the heavier Roman urbanization where, Dupont says, “Ringing central Rome was the Roman countryside, or rus, with its gardens, cultivated
fields, and country houses...beyond the rus lay the true periphery of the uncultivated, hence sterile, land: forest, mountain, swamp” (121).

With this description, we can visualize a set of concentric circles. The innermost circle would be the city. Around the city we have the cultivated fields and, finally, in decreasing rings of sophistication, we arrive at the uncultivated and strange periphery. Here we see a section of Tabula Peutingeriana, a 12-13th century copy of a 4th century Roman map of the Roman Empire that illustrates the circular concept of Rome. In the center we see the city, the Tiber River, and the immediate countryside, represented by a circle. Spreading out from this center and penetrating into the “wilder” regions of the empire are 12 roads separated by an almost equidistant space. These roads are, at first, very straight and methodical. Their purpose is, as all roads, to lead to Rome. However, when we follow them out a bit, they begin to curve, turn, and become more chaotic. This exemplifies the orderly idea of civilization that ends as the roads begin to sway off path in the unstructured “forest, mountain, swamp.”

As the paved center Rome used the countryside for nourishment. The urbanity's importation of foods led to diets that began to vary noticeably between city and country dwellers. The rural citizens would sell the more exclusive produce to the city for a suitable profit and settle for the more basic requirements of life. Thus, the urban luxury of gourmet fare was born, or at least expounded.

This leaves us with the binary model, however inaccurate, proposed by the empire; city is to orderly fare as rural area is to uncontrollable grub. In fact, in an effort to regulate diets and promote urban living, Roman citizens received government provided provisions. The food of choice was, of course, bread. The program was called “annona”
and it distributed grain free of charge to city-dwellers (Dupont 115). Needless to say, this became an exorbitant expense on the part of the Republic. But, grumbling stomachs inevitably lead to grumbling mouths, which are calamitous to empire. In contrast, a mouth stuffed with bread finds it difficult to complain. So, for Roman emperors/senators, feeding the populace was worth the expense because, by supplying the population with a regular and predictable food supply, the government thwarted any riotous behavior motivated by starvation.

While the urban citizens of Rome were carefully provided with the necessities of life, country-dwellers were left to fend for themselves in their feral lands. Dupont comments on those who lived outside of the city center. She states that:

Untamed spaces were inhabited by shepherds and hunters… nomads, not unlike the most savage barbarians. They were troublesome people, often slaves without wives or homes and all too likely to become bandits or mercenaries. They were neither citizens nor civilized. (118)

Wandering and ungrounded, rural peoples were an obvious thorn in the side of urban dwellers. These peripheral Romans were undocumented, often working outside the system, and, therefore, intimidating. Roman city-slickers could not understand why these people did not jump on the urban band wagon. Their uncivilized and mysterious ways were seen to be a threat to the delicate thread of a civilized city suspended in the vast rural world.

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9 Some -including Tannahill- say the expense of the annona grew to such an extent that funds for the defense of the city and other programs were inadequate. Therefore, they cite the annona as one of the principal reasons for the subsequent fall of Rome.
In order to provide for themselves with their own devices these “troublesome people” ate what they could. They scavenged or “grazed” the countryside for edibles. They ate wild plants, whose dietary benefits were not well regarded by urban folk, who likened naturally occurring plants to animal fodder. In Accord with Appadurai’s ideas of status and complex acquisition of a product, only a plant that had been cultivated by human hand, versus sporadic vegetation, was worthy of consumption by a city-dweller. In contrast to the city’s restricted view of edibles, the unruly inhabitants of the even unrulier space were left to “exploit the wasteland” of the periphery (Dupont 121).

Besides consuming scandalously “wild” plants, country-dwellers also hunted in the feral spaces, which was considered an untamed occupation. In the eyes of the city, barbarians hunt and citizens cultivate and raise livestock. Regarding this negative perception of hunting, Montanari has found that:

Hunting, in particular, was presented as a humble occupation dictated by poverty; what is more, it forced the hunter to spend time away from the seat of civilization, the city. (73)

A greater amount of time spent away from the civilizing influences of the urban atmosphere, consisting in a reliable meal and other benefits, contributed to the barbaric image of the hunter. From the urban perspective there was simply no need to hunt and risk death, hunger, or even starvation, when you could partake of a predictable and regimented free diet of annona.

In the city dwellers view, if one wanted to hunt for sport or recreation, they could simply enjoy the activity in one of Rome’s many controlled reserves of semi-tamed animals or spend time at the Coliseum for their fill of regulated barbarity (Montanari 72).
Controlled carnage was the method of choice for the urban resident. This form of “domesticated hunting,” which preserved at least the essence of the chase and the hint of danger, was much preferred to the practice of actual and capricious hunting of potentially ferocious animals.

The central paradigm of all of these dietary distinctions is that the city represented leisure, control, and safety. The pastoral setting, on the other hand, embodied physical angst, instability, and impending peril. For those experiencing urban existence, the risk associated with life outside the city was asinine.

Class by Food

The culinary dualism suggested by the concept of separation carried over to human relations that were not as dependent on geography. The notion of a "food-code" denotes the cultural influence that gastronomy generated in distinguishing the familiar from the foreign. Even in group dining the line was marked, for within Greek/Roman “human” society, class stratification was extensive. To illustrate this we must examine the shared meal. We have already seen how a “friend” is a “fellow-bread eater,” but let’s investigate this concept further.

Meig’s ideas of eating together and Fieldhouse’s assignment of value encoded in “com panis” is essential to our study. The communal meal was a prominent way to impart or divine the standing of a relationship. One shared the table with his/her peers, a group of near equals, but not without internal stratifications. Cicero reveals the significance and camaraderie engendered by group eating when a friend remarks that he may forego an impending dinner party. He harangues:
Conversation is at its most agreeable at dinner parties. In this respect we Romans are wiser than the Greeks. They use words meaning literally, ‘co-drinkings’ (symposia) or ‘co-dinings’ (syndeipna), but we say ‘co-livings’ (convivial), because at dinner parties, more than anywhere else, life is lived in company. (qtd. in MacClancy 106)

Thus, in Cicero’s mind, dinner produces a pleasant tête-à-tête. He even notes the Greek linguistic inadequacy in defining a shared meal. Due to Cicero’s insistence, we may note the importance placed by Romans on group consumption and, therefore, continued reinforcement of social networking at meals. He chides his friend for deviating from the customary food code. By skipping the meal, the friend would be “living alone” or isolating and preventing himself from connecting with others from his status group.

Burkert notes the importance of participating in these kinds of group dining events in the classical world, be they symposia, syndeipna, or convivial. On this topic he remarks that, “[group-eating] guarantees the social control of the polis by the aristocrats. It is a dominating social form in Greek civilization from Homer onward, and well beyond the Hellenistic period” (qtd. in Neyrey 7). Therefore, considering the importance Burkert places on the communal meal of the symposium, combined with Charlseay’s like people-like diet and Smith’s ideas of bonding, we see that over the course of centuries group eating served to solidify control and group relations and promoted an aristocratic-urban connection.
In a quote that reinforces many of our theories, Plutarch pleads that Senecio always remember and carry on the tradition of symposium in his fittingly appointed writings, Table Talk. He states that:

[Forgetting] all that occurs at a driving-party is not only opposed to what we call the friend-making character of the dining-table, but also has the most famous of the philosophers to bear witness against it.-- Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Speusippus, Epicurus, Prytanis, Hieronymus, and Dio of the Academy, who all considered the recording of conversations held at table a task worth some effort. (qtd. in Neyrey 612)

He urges that this tradition of communal dining and conversation be passed on as Plato, Aristotle and many other notable philosophers were consigned to reverence of its cultural and philosophical importance in their writings. Plutarch, reinforcing our theories, also refers to the “friend-making” character of the table, which echoes Cicero’s insistence on the importance of group-eating and solidifying of relations.

We could deduce that these symposium relations were quite literally governed by the mouth. That is to say that the jaws\(^{10}\) present at the event alternated between food, drink, and conversation. Thus, a symposium reflected a civilized "order," not chaos (Plutarch, Table Talk qtd. in Neyrey 616); it was a learned behavior revolving around food (Fieldhouse). So, attending a symposium with a successful outcome required knowledge of a highly-systematic norm that reflected explicit and implicit rules of decorum involving when to talk and when to eat, reflecting Davenport’s ideas of harmony and Fieldhouses’s learned food behaviors. Of course the only members of

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\(^{10}\) It is also important to note that these “jaws” were male. Women were not permitted at symposia. The only exceptions were courtesans and food servers.
society who would be able to spur conversation with the educated attendees at these events and to understand the formulaic etiquette required for admission into their circle would be the aristocratic class.

That is not to say that the less fortunate classes did not also partake in group-dining events. They certainly did and there are certain aspects of diet that were shared between all classes. Dupont describes the day-to-day gastronomic prudence of all compared with the excesses of the dining event. She describes this contrast as, “ranging from every day frugality for people of all social ranks to great orgies of wine and meat consumption on special occasions, when over-indulgence was ‘de rigueur’.” (123) Thus, we see that -in theory- all citizens practiced consumption tempered by a conscientious appetite the majority of the time. But, during the great feast celebrations of the year, these conventions were thrown to the wind in favor of a gluttonous consumption.

Even if the masses were present, the aristocrats tended to host such events. As we mentioned these dinners were not just for the rich. Invitations trickled down all social ranks and each had significance and a part to play in the event. So they were an excellent playing field for communicating one’s elevated status by the established “pecking order” we discussed via the theories of Khare and Douglas. Under such circumstances, and in order to flaunt their elevated social standing, aristocrats spent lavishly, and even ruinously, on public banquets in order to communicate their superiority (Dupont 123).

It is true that, as the upper class had greater funds, they did throw many banquets. But, in fact, all levels gave banquets for one another to some degree and for a particular purpose. A meal given by the aristocrats for the lower classes, “denoted generous condescension and social predominance,” and when given by the poorer for the richer
“implicated humility and subservience,” and between equals these meals “demonstrated the communality (however temporary) of the meal” (Montanari 70). Thus, encoded in these events in the classical world, is a message very similar to “com panis” and the idea of serving one’s self through serving food. The message conveyed by the common meal giving and receiving was perhaps something like this: We are all members of a greater community-an organization with different levels. We all respect our levels, those around us, and the society as a whole.

Nonetheless, even within this meal of commonality, subtle and blatant distinctions are made. The most obvious of these is that different classes eat different kinds of foods. Corbier says that at some events “municipal councilors received full dinners while commoners were simply served a glass of wine” (130). As Mennell et al. outline concerning food preparation, the ultimate luxury reserved for the rich was a hot meal (Corbier 134). This was especially prevalent when diners ate in shifts. The aristocrats and wealthy would eat; the next lowest social group would get their leftovers and so on and so forth.11 As the dishes were brought steaming to the table those who received the hottest food were those who ate first- the rich.

Although the dietary tide seems to be in favor of the rich, there were some benefits to being poorer. Tannahill says that it is true that “the rich drank less water and more wine,” but they were also more limited to social standards. If one was poor, they would not be expected to demonstrate as much decorum. The poor ate what they found without discrimination unlike the rich who “could not eat goat, mutton or pork without having to

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11 As we can imagine, this created a horrible mess of food on the floor. This food was left on the floor as a superstition. Mosaics of classical floors even contain images of food as if left over from a recent feast.
wait for a sacrificial occasion” (Tannahill 67). Therefore, social criteria of the rich did, in at least a few instances, limit their diet.

Besides food consumed and its temperature, other ways to define diners existed. At the same table, among presumed equals, there were demarcations being made. Even at a table of the rich, we can see Khare and Douglas’s ‘ritual boundaries,’ reinforcing the richest/most well regarded, richer/ less well regarded, and the least rich/ least well regarded, etc. One preferred method to delineate at the table was through seating. The carefully arranged seating plan required planning prior to the party so that spaces chosen replicated one’s role and social status within the group. The head of the head table (which was actually the middle) is for the highest rank; and the “right hand” of this position was the traditional place of honor for the second most influential guest. From this dining arrangement the term “right hand man” was born.

All of these cultural attitudes revolving around food can be found in literature from the time. For example, in keeping with these alimentary norms, an account of adjusting the meal to the diners’ statuses comes to us from Plutarch. He narrates the story of Lucullus, a Roman epicurean. Plutarch says that he “adjusted the sumptuousness of his banquets to the rank of his guests,” which is in complete accord with food linked to status that we have just seen. As a consequence, at first this statement seems a benign observation of the typical practice of the day, but Plutarch could not resist a tongue-in-cheek addendum to his study. He states, “And when he dined alone, he insisted on being treated at his own table in a manner befitting a man of his quality: ‘Lucullus is dining with Lucullus’” (qtd. in Corbier 131). Plutarch’s sarcastic depiction could have been formed out of Lucullus’ frugality with guests or overindulgence of himself. The fact is
that both were culturally unacceptable. The ideal aristocrat would exhibit a generally measured appetite relieved by group gluttony.

Many classical texts recount these dining events placing emphasis on the decadent luxury and gastronomic indulgence that an invitee would observe. These texts delight in enumerating all the exotic and rare foods found in the vastness of the Roman Empire. Banquets seem to be hosted in a spiraling competition; each meal more elaborate than the last. They would frequently reach such an extent that they would spur criticism for their excessiveness. Philo in the sixth chapter of “Contemplative Life” scrutinizes such an event. He begins his criticism by describing the fineness of the dining table and room with “[s]ofas… made of tortoiseshell, and ivory…most of which are inlaid with precious stones; and coverlets of purple embroidered with gold and silver thread; and others brocaded in flowers of every kind of hue and colour imaginable to allure the sight.” Thus, we learn that, beyond arranging seating, particular care was taken to make the environment of the meal comely.

Philo continues his account with the dizzying amount of utensils—each indicative of a systematic and coded use. He notes the “vast array of drinking cups arrayed according to each separate description; for there are bowls, and vases, and beakers, and goblets” (50). Such an array of objects would have surely been overwhelming to one unaccustomed with the grandeur, which is precisely what Barthes notes in La semántica del objeto.

As the food is served, Philo progresses on to the state of the meal. However, instead of moving directly to the particular tastes, he pauses and begins his account with sight and smell as important factors in a lavish meal. He reveals an:
…infinite variety of sweetmeats, and delicacies, and confections, about which bakers and cooks and confectioners labour, …they [the guests] turn their heads round in every direction, scanning everything with their eyes and with their nostrils, examining the richness and the number of the dishes with the first, and the steam which is sent up by them with the second. Then, when they are thoroughly sated both with the sight and with the scent, these senses again prompt their owners to eat, praising in no moderate terms both the entertainment itself and the giver of it, for its costliness and magnificence. (53)

There are a few interesting ideas in this brief passage. The first is the cornucopia of food. Every mentioned edible is a manufactured product and, therefore, superior according to Appadurai and Mennell. None of it exists naturally, which suggests a lavish expenditure and hints at the classical bias towards man-made food. As these food items must be prepared, Philo also mentions the bakers, cooks, and confectioners who labor over them. Therefore at this banquet the meal is prepared by the working class, which is not permitted to partake of it.

Explained previously via the theories of Henisch (social parameters for judgement) and Farb and Armelagos (quality judgement), the guests serve as jury as they examine everything in all directions. They critique: 1) richness of the food, 2) variety of dishes, and 3) the heat emitted by each. Each of these appraisals of the meal echoes what we have seen as indicators of class. Then they sample the foods and confer their verdict: Success! The guests then must shower
excessive praises on the “entertainment” (meaning meal, presentation, etc.) and the host/hostess for their most gourmand tastes and generous hospitality— all while noting the cost it must have incurred. Their final verdict in each area points to and secures the status of the host.

All of this extravagance of the Roman people disgusts Philo and his satirical description in the texts reflects his feelings. His dislike probably echoes Henisch’s ideas of contempt for surpassing one’s station. In the case of Philo, it would be related to the glut of humanity in trying to copy divine paradise. Critical as his assessment may be, it also does much to describe the culinary excesses that the aristocratic antiquity would undertake to secure their social status and maintain the good opinion of their peers. They attempt to appeal to many senses, such as sight, smell, taste, and thought, to solidify their station. And they eat excessively to satiate their noble appetites.

**Religion**

In the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, due to a rich religious philosophy, there were many "others." This category contained the Gods of various stations and the dead. Each cohort dined in a distinct and culturally established way. For instance, according to ancient doctrine, the Gods "consumed" nectar, ambrosia, and smoke from the inedible parts of the sacrificial victim (Longo 154). The food of the dead consisted of lotus and pomegranate seeds. Human victuals were composed of other edible substances.
With the concept of altar as table, we could argue that in some sense the Gods and mortals "shared" a meal. Humans eat the edibles of the sacrificial victim and leave the rest for the divinities. This line of alimentary segregation within the shared meal is rigidly drawn and a ‘pecking order’ established. Devastating consequences await the mortal or God who dared stretch the gastronomic limits and taste the food of the other. This echoes Douglas’ precepts of group dining and the many ways to distinguish between consumers at the same table. According to Longo:

The division between their two natures is made concrete,

as we have said, in the opposition between mortality and

immortality, strictly linked to their respective food codes-

one for men and one for gods. (154)

This citation reflects that, even within the pluralistic pagan religious tradition associated with the Roman Empire, separation was important.

As we previously noted, for much of classical history, instead of carving definitive lines between singular religions, Greeks and Romans tended to delineate between supernatural and terrestrial beings by their diet. A possible explanation of this phenomenon is that for the Ancients, the Gods were very much an accessible entity of every day; they walked among humankind and coexisted with them. They alternately procreated with, taunted, or bequeathed gifts to their mere human subjects with an alacrity appropriate to their fleeting emotion.

The quotidian presence of the Gods coupled with the Greek/Roman notion of religious ambiguity makes the distinction between religions gratuitous. It was perhaps
assumed that everyone-more or less-believed the same; thus, the more pressing matter at hand was to define the relationship between the mortals and Gods.

**Christianity and Judaism**

However, around the 6th century B.C., a new way of thinking began to gain momentum. It surged in the form of Judaism. The early persecution of this religion led its members to live clandestinely practicing their faith within the Empire. As Meiggs has stated, a religion under pressure finds gastronomic measures a necessary practice to define their religious group. Solidarity through food appeared to be the model for both sides of the argument. Perhaps because of this early persecution, Judaism surpassed all expectations in dietary influence.

One of the central ways it ultimately challenged the Roman line of pagan thought was in sacrifice. The carnal image of beasts sacrificed to various idols was eventually superseded by a much tamer practice. The sacrifice, meat-eating, and gluttonous environment revolving around ritual sacrifice was “substituted by the vegetarian ‘eucharist’ which recalled a far crueler sacrifice that took place once only for the good of all men” (Montanari 77). With this idea of the one true and supreme sacrifice, any other would seem sub par. There was no need to continue the ancient practice of animal slaughter. It was trumped by Christianity, which, importantly, did not completely

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12 It is extremely vital to note that what we consider Christianity surged originally only as a later sect of Judaism. It was not separated until much later by reforms such as those of the Apostle Paul. (Herring 11)
eradicate sacrifice. Instead the pagan slaughter was substituted by the matchless model of Jesus’ crucifixion.

The Last Supper serves at the foreshadowing of Jesus’ sacrifice and the Eucharist. Jesus takes bread and wine and offers them to his disciples at the meal as a prelude to his sacrifice. With bread as flesh and wine as blood, Jesus quite literally serves himself at his own table (altar) as Meiggs suggests. Thus, the ritual of breaking bread and drinking wine in remembrance of this sacrifice began as Jesus mandated.

Over the course of the centuries, attitudes towards this practice changed. The first sources outside of the Bible to mention the activity are from the 1st century: the Didache, the Letter to the Smyrnaeans and Justin Martyr. Obviously this practice began in Roman times, but it experienced various philosophical transformations. In fact, in his book From Symposium to Eucharist, Smith suggests that, at least at the onset, the line between pagan and religious banquets was not as rigidly drawn as we like to think today (2).

Beyond the practice of a modified sacrifice, another area that Christianity influenced but did not eliminate was the traditional Roman diet. We have already mentioned the Romans’ preference for bread, olive oil and wine. Christianity took that obsession to a new level by making them holy. Montanari says that:

By making bread and wine sacred and by adopting oils as the sacramental substance par excellence, Christianity reinforced the values of the Roman ideological food model and transmitted it with renewed energy to the…Middle Ages. (77)

Therefore, again, instead of expelling a long-held cultural belief or custom Christianity embraced the Mediterranean diet under a new guise.
Espousing typical rituals with distinct meanings was a unique characteristic of Christianity, characterized as a threatened minority as described by Douglas. But there were also areas of dietary contention between Jewish and Roman/Greek meals, which outlines a complex culinary regulation for the mixed society. For one, Jews typically ate two meals a day, whereas Greeks and Romans ate three meals a day. In the Second Temple period, Jewish diet also shifted to a “kosher” and “non kosher” duality, with kosher equaling clean and non kosher meaning unclean. For the Romans, if an animal was sacrificed, the parts intended for humans were fair game. Thus, the more restricted Jewish notion of kosher foods was incomprehensible to non Christians.

For all groups the diets of the other’s seemed inconceivable. This disbelief was especially strong when it involved a dining favorite, pork. As Romans had a special appetite for “the other white meat,” the Jewish ban of the victual did not appease them. Feeley-Harnick comments on the Roman incredulousness towards this restriction; she says that “[T]he Jews abstention from pork was something that the Romans—who believed, as Varro put it, that ‘nature made the pig for the banquet table’ - could not understand” (qtd.in Neyrey 137). This citation illustrates that pork was a cultural mainstay. To ban a central foodstuff from the traditional community banquet was unthinkable to the Romans.

Although they may have been a source of friction between rival groups, within each religious cohort these dietary differences promoted camaraderie within a culinary group. Feeley-Harnick in *Anthropological Aspects of Meals* outlines the early Jewish diet. She states that:
Food, articulated in terms of who eats what with whom under which circumstances, had long been one of the most important languages in which Jews conceived and conducted social relations among human beings and between human beings and God. Food was a way of talking about the law and lawlessness. (72)

Thus, as a minority group in the Classical period, Jews would use food to reaffirm their close-knit group in a sort of culinary religious ceremony where adherence to the religious law was the crux of the event. For them the “sacrifice” of a tasty meal was further proof of one’s devotion to God’s law.

Told from the point of view of an outsider, Philo supplies an account of Christian dining practices. Following his recount of the gruesome excesses of the Roman aristocracy, Philo in Book 8 and 9 of Contemplative Life describes his preference for the stoic Jewish meal. Beginning with the structure of the occasion, he starts:

And the order in which they sit down to eat is a divided one, the men sitting on the right hand and the women apart from them on the left…and at all times and in all places they practise a liberal, gentlemanlike kind of frugality, hating the allurements of pleasure with all their might… And the table, too, bears nothing which has blood, but there is placed upon it bread for food and salt for seasoning, to which also hyssop is sometimes added as an extra sauce for the sake of those who are delicate in their eating, for just as right reason commands the priest to offer up sober sacrifices, so also these men are commanded to live sober lives, for wine is the medicine
of folly, and costly seasonings and sauces excite desire, which is the most insatiable of all beasts.

In contrast to Roman chaos, this image is one of explicit order and separation. Men sit on the right, and women on the left. Philo does not hover on a description of the sights and smells of the dinner, nor does he elaborate on the finery of the room and table-setting. Because instead of seeking pleasure, as non Christians do, they expressly avoid it. Jewish eating is represented as bloodless, wineless, and nearly seasonless and sauceless. It is a sober affair requiring self-control and sacrifice. We do not glean the image of a debacle of gorging and glut associated with the Roman banquet. This plain meal, that inherently seeks to avoid earthly pleasure and “beasts of desire,” stands in sharp contrast to the excesses of the Greek/Roman non-Christian gathering. At the close of the meal, instead of the standard loose-lipped wine drinking and philosophy of the symposium, they read scripture and sing hymns.

Conclusion:

Over the course of centuries, due to “barbaric northern invasions” and many other factors, the Roman Empire lost its centralized western power and fragmented into many parts. In spite of this break, numerous aspects of its culture continued into the Middle Ages. Especially in Iberia, thanks in large part to Muslim sources, classical knowledge was disseminated through texts. Therefore, through these cultural and philosophical paths, many Roman ideals were carried into medieval Iberian societies.

In conclusion, the purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate the Greek and Roman ideals regarding food and identity. We can see many norms and a highly developed system of beliefs based or reinforced by food. These classical food notions
accompanied their maps and mythologies and their social structure and government to form a classical world view. The Greeks/Romans quite literally planted the seeds for an encoded gastronomic system that buttresses their perceptions of the world. As we have investigated the forebears of these concepts, in the next chapter, we will examine the links between maps, foods, and world order that were perpetuated in the medieval period.
Chapter 3:

Ordering the Medieval World: Carving up Food Maps

Cantigas de Santa María 328:
Esta é como Santa Maria fillou un logar pera si eno reino de Sevilla
 e fez que lle chamassen Santa Maria do Porto.

Sabor á Santa Maria, de que Deus por nos foi nado,
 que seu nome pelas terras seja sempre nomeado.

Este logar jaz en terra mui bôa e mui viçosa
de pan, de vynno, de carne e de fruita saborosa
 e de pescad' e de caça; ca de todo deleitosa
tant' é, que de dur seria en un gran dia contado…

Undertaking the task of writing world histories and constructing an image of the
known world and identities aligned on gastronomic parameters required a compilation of
classical materials and other accounts, which we reviewed in the previous chapter. The
purpose of the following pages is to demonstrate how Alphonso X ordered his medieval
world along cartographic and gastronomic precepts, as the citation above taken from his
Cantigas de Santa María illustrates. In order to examine the alphonsine texts as
cartographic productions we will first contextualize the most common maps of
Alphonso’s day and then extrapolate these images using his texts to see how he ordered
the world by characterizing spaces and foodstuffs. To do so we will see two types of
geographical maps: zonal and T-O, and other more social maps that serve to order the
map’s entities, such as the Great Chain of Being maps. Each map reflects hierarchic
reasoning and function as the basis for comparison of the peoples of the globe by their
diet.

If the world today is seen as infinite, equalitarian with respect to matter, and
tending towards chaos, the medieval world was seen as geocentric, closed and finite,
spherical and oriented around a center with hierarchies. It was, “[C]erco que numqua queda, cobertura fermosa de catar, formamiento que a en si, muchas formas” (EE 367). For the medieval mapmaker attempting to recreate this beautiful circle with a form composed of more forms, the task at hand was to take classical Platonic and Aristotelian cosmological theories and combine them with their current world knowledge to promote Christian philosophies (Kline 10; Zumthor 305). To this end, the world was depicted as a harmonic organism created by the hand of God and each area was inherently defined by its divinely administered qualities.

For our purposes and to consider the concept of hierarchic scaling, or a form made of forms, it is vital to recall that medieval maps were not meant to guide on a journey, but rather to propagote a particular ideology. The ideology of the time for many in Europe was, of course, Christian. Zumthor clarifies that, until the XIII century, the goal of maps was to, “ilustrar la Revelación bíblica y rendir el homenaje de la Tierra a la voluntad divina” (309). As reinforcing these dogmas, which required “domeñar lo indefinido superponiéndole-e imponiéndole- una trama de lectura,” was often the motive to medieval maps, the images constructed may seem inaccurate or abstract (Zumthor 305). However, orienting the world to fit extant philosophies makes geographical precision secondary because, according to Kline, “the conceptual overrides the practical” (4). The map to the left, the XIth century Beato de Liébana, was commissioned by Fernando I to illustrate the story of

Figure 6
the twelve disciples and the spread of Christianity (Mayayo 55). Obviously, when looking at this map one notes that scale and accuracy were not its principle concern.

Cartographic creations such as this whose “form, content, and meaning reflect many aspects of medieval life” are valuable on a cultural level (Woodward 286). Woodward has commented on the narrative function of maps, but we are looking more closely at the mapping function of narrative (288). As such, it may be most prudent to think of the majority of medieval maps, especially in Alphono’s case, as textual diagrams from which we may extrapolate images of the world that are ordered along the lines of a particular ideology.

In Alphonso’s Estoria de Espanna and General Estoria a textual map with a “public iconographic role” is precisely the type of cartographic creation that we observe (Woodward 290). When studying Alphonso’s written maps, however, we must consider that when dealing with a largely illiterate population the image carries unsurpassable weight. Describing the world in marked accord with the most prevalent types of cartographic images of his day allows the Learned King to play off of these well-known images that typically hung behind the altars of places of worship.

It is logical to deduce that Alphonso employed these common images as testimonials to his writings, but the connection may have been even more developed. Medieval maps (obviously much reduced in size compared to those adorning the walls of royal/noble homes and churches) were often intended to accompany manuscripts (Thrower 42). In fact, the majority of surviving mappamundi are located within manuscripts, many as “ipso facto book illustrations” (Woodward 286). Moreover, Alphonso harbored a penchant for incorporating illustrations to enrich his prose, as we
see in the cases of the **Cantigas de Santa María** and **Libro de ajedrez**. Lastly, within the **General Estoria** and **Estoria de Espanna**, the continued use of the verb “oir,” meaning “to hear,” allows us to consider that his texts were meant to be read aloud, presumably to those who could not read for themselves (the vast majority of medieval societies). In the aforementioned instances, maps would certainly function as the image to be focused upon while reading/listening to the histories. They also demonstrate that it is entirely within reason to assume that maps were meant to accompany his texts in one form or another as didactic tools, as was the Greek tradition described by Eumenius in A.D. 297 (Woodward 290). Therefore, examining the most prevalent types of medieval maps, which function simultaneously as forebears and authenticators of Alphonso’s prose, becomes vital to our study.

**Medieval Zonal Mappaemundi**

World maps of the medieval period are called *mappaemundi*. As our study focuses on the gastronomic cord behind medieval maps it is worthy to note the etymology of the term. *Mappa* is from Latin meaning a tablecloth or napkin. *Mundus* means world. So, fittingly enough in this dissertation of food, in the first half of this chapter we are studying the “tablecloths of the world.”

The two most common *mappamundi*, found in Europe in the Medieval Period are climatic zonal maps and are T-O maps. These images of *mappa mundi* are descendents of classical cartographic principles that passed through the channels of Macrobius, Orosius, and Isidore of Seville as a “continous cartographic tradition from the Roman
Empire to the thirteenth century” (Thrower 41; Woodward 288). References to the classical geographers, such as “segund dize ysidro & iheronimo & otros con ellos” (GEI 103) and “Onde razona aun Orosio sobresto” (GEI 156), abound in Alphonso’s works. The purpose of such maps was, “to give a great deal of information about its [the world’s] inhabitants and their relation to the deity” (Harvey 284). It stands to reason, therefore, that the Learned King cited their descriptions of the classical world to shape his texts and cosmovision based on the tenets of medieval European Christianity.

The first kinds of map with classical influence are those labeled with zones. Zonal maps, also known as Macrobian maps, are spherical figures showing the Earth divided along horizontal lines (Woodward 300). The latitudes, in accord with the Greek tradition to distinguish the *ecumene*, slice the globe in an effort to label each terrain with regards to its habitability or *climata* (Thrower 42; Woodward 300). Medieval scholars perpetuated the classical tradition of temperate zones to calculate human occupancy of the Earth. The ends for such an endeavor would have evident theological considerations, especially taking into account the medieval mapmakers’ preference for ordering the world along divine parameters (Thrower 42).
By slicing the world in this manner, temperate maps create five different belts as shown in the zonal map here (Thrower 44). The two frigid arctic zones, obviously labeled as uninhabitable, cap each end of the sphere. Also, belting the center of the Earth along the equator is the torrid *zona calida inhabitabilis* or *zona perusta* (Bagrow 44; Woodward 300) labeled thus for its extreme heat. Alternating between these three inhospitable belts rests the last two. They are represented as the Northern and Southern temperate zones. The Northern Hemisphere was the known world; the Southern Hemisphere was often depicted as the land of Antipodeans (Woodward 300).

By means of an analysis of Alphonso X’s works, we can recreate the image of the world divided along temporal delineations. One particularly interesting reference to the world as the product of zonal categories is in Book II of *General Estoria*. In this citation Alphonso, “*del linage de los dioses,*” gives an interesting interpretation of the genesis of human occupancy on the globe. He articulates the “opening” of the Earth by his ancestors, as he is descended from Holy lineage, who built grand palaces, towers, and castles and destroyed them as they saw fit. He credits them with surveying the Earth as they:

> abrieron las carreras & los logares fuertes por el mundo que eran cerrados de grandes penas & sierras pero non podie passar nin andar ningun(n)a cosa. Et trastornaron los yermos que eran muy grandes & muncho escuros por espessedumbre de los montes & pauorosos por munchas bestias fieras & muy periglosas que auie y. Et buscaron los logares que eran buenos
Therefore, Gods or perhaps demigods are praised for overcoming great obstacles to explore the lands of the Earth. Blessed as they undoubtably were with higher intellect they “measured” the lands, weighing each new terrain against the last. After this, they decided where humankind was “meant” to inhabit and where it was not. The disregarded lands, deemed accursed, were left to weeds.

Before moving on, there are a few key remarks to glean from this citation that will serve our investigation. First, it does not take one long to gather that this separation of the world into measured civilized areas of “we” of Godly lineage versus the silvestrian spaces of “those others” rejected by the Gods played an intriguing role in defining the inhabitants of these lands. Also, the leaving of the “yeruas” as is in the undesirable locales allows us to infer the presence of agriculture and the Godlike cultivation of “yeruas” in the desirable regions. The notion of crop producing as evidence of superiority has been examined with the ideas of Appadurai and Mennell.

As we have gathered thus far, referencing the discovery and division of the world as the product of divine divides the world into the climate zones in Alphonso’s texts. Obviously, in line with such a mindset, paradisiacal lands were ideal for human occupancy while those that were deemed extreme in nature were considered uninhabitable. In order to dissect the relationship between the labeled idyllic regions and desolate belts, we begin with the descriptions in Alphonso’s texts of the less desired lands.
Frequent mention is made of these lands on the map and their climatic conditions including the “uiento abrego,” “fasta medio dia donde nasce el uiento abrego” (GEI 80), and “austral como tierra dell abrego” (GEI 85) on the cold side and “tierra quemada” on the hot side. Alphonso elaborates the images of the inhospitable peopleless lands, or three extreme belts in the following description:

Et njen sufriese esta tierra omnes en sy njen sol que la escalentase. mas tierra maldita yoguiyes desierta cubierta de yelo & descubierta de moradores & tierra que non sopiesen los omnes commo las tres cintas do non bjue njenuna cosa…en las dos antel grant frio & en la otra ante la grant calentura sy tu non primera mas avn sola oujeses sofrida la nemjga desta batalla. (GEV 372-373)

It is key to note that he describes these lands as “malditas” or cursed, where nothing resides, neither humankind nor sunlight. Time in these lands is compared with the worst kind of suffering due to the battle between the great heat or great cold that inflict them. The two lands of unbearable cold and the other of scorching heat are certainly not among the lands blessed by God and therefore intended for the best of humankind (ie. those descended from the Gods such as Alphonso X). Obviously the assumption of lifeless extreme lands poses an interesting debate when such spaces are found to harbor inhabitants, which we examine in our fourth chapter.

To delve farther into the descriptions of the inhospitable belts, we begin with the zonas frígidas. Examination reveals that they are, “partyda la parte del yelo & la cinta de la njeue. Et estas son las dos sonas que yazen postrimeras de las otras tres de amas partes” (GEV 566). These desolate caps of the globe are surrounded by “crueles uientos”
and “las ondas de la mar; mas frio me pare que la elada” (GEII 953). Thus the general descriptions of the frigid regions paint them as the limits of the Earth where wind and frozen sea are the greatest attributes. In fact, the notion of absence is pivotal to understanding their geography.

One item of notable dearth is light. For example Scythia, a region generally located in Northern Eurasia is described as a place, “do la noche asconde las estrellas.” The description of a land of night creates an image of a land devoid of the sun’s rays and even the sun altogether; even starlight is swallowed by darkness.

The play of lightness and darkness has obvious symbolism between good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, life and death, etc.. If in the beginning God created light or is light itself (EE 112), then light is cultivated or evidence of God’s presence. Darkness is the state of pre-existence, the unplowed field, or God’s absence. So, in this sense, one could say that perhaps God “skipped over Scythia.” Therefore, the dark land would be untouched by the hand of God and unfavored by the demi-Gods who opened the Earth but left “las yeruas” or, in the case of Scythia, ice.

Another marked absence in the frigid zone is the lack of variety. That is to say, Scythia is also portrayed as a land of monotony. Its sea, the “mar de cicia,” is illustrated, “con frio de yelo & la yela esto es de oriente & de medio dia a setentrion” (GEV 3-4). So, as far as the eye can see, east to west and south to north ice abounds. There is never mention of an end; ceaseless cold reigns. These depictions of Scythia underline the absence of diverse life-or any life at all.

Stillness is also apparent in the descriptions of the frigid regions. The Orkney Islands are also described by their surrounding sea. As such they are marked by “so mar.
Note: The original text has been transcribed and translated into English, with footnotes and references preserved. The text is a discussion on climate and geography, comparing the desolate North to the temperate South, and the equatorial South to the hotter regions.
with the frigid regions of the Earth, we are left with the idea of unending silence, intolerable climate, and, in place of white nothingness, a burnt black barren Earth.

Following the logic of Alphonso, this would not be the ideal place for humankind to inhabit. So, the descriptions of Ethiopians take this into account.

[D]esto puedes auer tu por testigo. el color mismo del pueblo que mora en Ethiopia cuya sangre es quemada de la grand calentura del sol que a alli el poder del su feroor & de los bahos del abrego que es entre los uientos el mas caliente. dond an los omnes dalli el color muy negro. (GEI 232-233)

According to this passage the Nile passes though the African region where the blood of the people, burned as it is by the heat of the sun and hot winds, causes them to be full of fervor and black as ash. Reiterations such as the woman who was “negra como los otros ethiopianos que son negros por natura dell assentamiento daquella tierra que yaze en linde de la cinta quemada” (GEI 688) are commonplace. Thus, the argument of a creature being influenced by its zone of inhabitance is well articulated and reinforced.

If in the intemperate zones life is difficult and strife never wavers, what we may ask, is life like in temperate zones. The following passage detailing the land of Arabia and Palestine demonstrates that it is, in short, paradise.

[L]os montes daquellas tierras se abaxan de las altezas al llano. yal pie daquellos montes. diz que se fazen unos campos muy grandes & llanos & de muy grandes anchuras. & diz que auie esta tierra la calentura & el atempramiento del sol. njn mas njn menos. sinon como lo auie mester la tierra para seer muy plantia. (GEI 270)
Majestic mountains; large, full, and wide fields; tempered equally by the warmth of the sun balanced perfectly lend to the fertility of the land. It is, indeed, an enviable terrain. The image of balance, “njn mas njn menos,” and control, “atempramiento,” contributes to the notion of divinely assigned lands. In these lands, one’s cup overfloweth thanks to the tempered elements and God’s grace.

So, we have seen the “corners” of the Earth compared to the more desired regions, but what of the land in between both? Although the conceptualization of a zonal world requires the drawing of lines to indicate where the blessed ends and the accursed begins, these borders were not absolute. An example that testifies to this observation is Egypt.

Egypt, more specifically “la segunda Egipto,” rests between the temperate and extreme regions. Therefore, Alphonso’s descriptions of the land are interesting. He says, “Ca los dalli. por que se ua aquella tierra faziendo uezina de la cinta quemada. son los uarones & aun las mugieres dend. mas negros que blancos” (GEII 44-45). So, the land in between buffers the extreme nature of the burnt belt, as its peoples’ skin color attests.

To summarize our findings, in the temperate world map that we extrapolated from Alphonso’s texts, the world is divided into idyllic and tempestuous belts. The epitome of God’s work on Earth to temper and balance dark with light, heat with cold, etc.. is found in the zonas templadas. Alphonso’s very ancestors, the Gods, deemed these lands the intended home for mankind. The other belts, severe and uncontrolled, are seemingly devoid of God’s touch and life there reflects their insuitability to harbor mankind. The spaces “in between” that separate these belts reflect qualities of both. Thus, in every sense of the word, the zonal map perpetuates an ideology indicative of civility/divinity by degrees.
Medieval TO Mappaemundi

If Macrobian based maps are deemed more scientific in nature, our next maps are more ideological: TO maps. The medieval world, although conceived of as a smaller space than contemporary maps, was divided by four directional points much like today. What is currently known as North, South, East, and West was once referred to as Septentron, Mediodía, Oriente, and Occidente according to astronomy. Septentrio is the seven plow-oxen from the Great and Little Bears; Meridies is the position of the sun at noon; Oriens indicates the direction of the sun as it rises; and Occidens is the direction of the setting sun (Woodward 296). It is vital to note that, although we share directional point with medieval perceptions of space, medieval maps, specifically T-O maps, were generally oriented with what we consider “West” or Occidente in the position considered “South” or Mediodía on contemporary maps.

The four directional points served to further carve out the land into three principal areas. The medieval world is represented as an O, a shape common since Isidore of Seville (Zumthor 311). Within this O, the spaces were divided into three in a T shape, representative of the cross (Zumthor 313). This representation, common to the medieval period, is known as the T-O world map.

In this type of circular map the world is divided into the three known land masses by the T shape, as the diagram to the right illustrates. This conceptualization of the world continues classical

**Figure 9**

![Diagram of a T-O world map](image-url)
philosophies regarding the Earth such as the notion of three continents.\textsuperscript{13}

The visible continents, Asia, Europe and Africa, are divided by the rivers Tanais (between Europe and Asia) and Nile (between Asia and Africa) and the Mediterranean Sea (between Europe and Africa) (Woodward 296). Crates of Mallos, cited as a source in General Estoria Books I and IV, served as the source for many of the concepts associated with the T-O map (Thrower 42).

Christianity also played a significant role in the T-O maps, shown here in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century Psalter World Map (Harvey 25). First, Jerusalem was placed in the center of the Earth where the three prongs of the T meet. This ideal setting reflects its importance in Christian ideology. Regarding the notion of centrality, Zumthor remarks:

\begin{quote}
La Mirada contemplativa que los abarca, desplazándose desde el centro hacia la periferia, pasa de lo conocido a lo menos conocido, alcanzando por fin las zonas de las que nadie sabe nada, pero cuyo sentido se ordena en el recorrido mismo. Por eso es tan importante el centro del círculo, tanto si se concibe como un espacio (una región) un punto: en ese caso, suele tratarse de Jerusalén. (311)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} Some maps contain a fourth continent per the Antipodes of Aristotle where one legged men and other monstrous races roamed. For many, Columbus’s voyage to America in 1492 confirmed their existence (Woodward 302).
In center position, marked by a red dot in the figure, Jerusalem was itself signified with respect to its importance in the world. Nevertheless, it also functions as a signifier of the importance of religion in life and the “continued authority and centrality of the crusades,” which was germane to Iberia’s political views and ongoing Reconquista (Kline 195).

Surrounding Jerusalem are the three other landmasses. In many T-O maps they are often labeled with the names of the three sons of Noah who, after the great cleansing flood, resettle the lands. Japhet inhabits Europe; Sem goes to Asia; and Ham travels to Africa (Thrower 42). Isidore of Seville, who in his Etymologiarum included the first map to be printed in 1472, illustrates the T-O concept associated with the sons of Noah (Thrower 59). Of course, each son of Noah has a particular association that eternally characterizes the terrain they settled and its inhabitants. We will see this typification in Alphonso’s works shortly.

In the formation of his T-O map, Alphonso X describes the Earth as “el cuerpo de la tierra redondo es & mayor mientras aquello que esta della cubierto de las aguas de la mar Occeano” (GEII 222). He also explains that scholars of the past considered its round shape and therefore, “Departieron la en tres partes. & a aquellas partes pusieron le estos tres nombres Asia, Europa & Africa” (GEI 80). Asia is situated in the area we would consider to be the northernmost division with both Europe and Africa supporting it on the

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14 Yonito, fourth son of Noah is also mentioned in the texts periodically.
southwest and southeast respectively. Also ringing the entire area as its circumference would be the “gran mar que cerca toda la tierra” (GEI 80).

In General Estoria, Asia is considered as large or larger than Europe and Africa combined and Sem, the eldest son of Noah was said to populate Asia. Due to its colossal size it stretches from the septentrion, the north, to the mediodía, or south, “donde nasce el uiento abrego” (GEI 80). In the construction of this tripartite world and image of Asia Alphonso cites Pliny, the book of Paul, the Book of Provinces and Galter from the Book of Alexander.

Europe, begins, “en el algarbe de españa & enel mar de caliz & subiendo la tierra ariba contra orient como ua aquel mar mediterraneo” (GEI 80). 15 Japhet and his descendents are considered the peoples of Europe.

Africa is the last continent in this scheme. It is said to be inhabited by Cam and his descendents. According to Pliny it is not as large as Europe and some have argued that it was nothing more than an appendage to Europe instead of standing as its own continent (GEI 80). Alphonso X specifies that, with regard to this separation, the sabios:

Parten a europa & a Affrica el mar mediterraneo assi como sale de occident. & sube entre caliz & cepta. & ua faziendo sus senos alas unas partes & alas otras. & sube fasta acre a parte de iherusalem. (GEI 80)

15 The Mediterranean Sea is aptly named as it was thought to divide Europe and Africa into two. It forms the vertical line of the “T” and as such was the “mar de medio de las tierras” (GEI 80).
Thus Alphonso is of the opinion that Africa is completely separated from Europe by the Mediterranean Sea, which continues to Jerusalem. The division of Africa from Europe is important for Alphonso X to make for ideological reasons, which we will discuss later.

The horizontal division between Asia and Africa is not made as clear. El sabio relates that, “Parten a asia de Africa por medio de la tierra” (GEI 80). It seems, therefore, that the dividing line between these two continents is not as evident, which will be interesting for the coming ideological discussion related to these continents.

Many of these theological principles surge from the biblical history and conflict of Noah’s sons, Sem, Cam, Japhet. Noah cursed Cam, “por muy grand saña que tomo noe contra cam por ell escarnio quel fiziera” (GEI 88). Thus Sem and Japhet were at odds with their sibling. Also, Cam was viewed as inferior to the other two. Alphonso clarifies the reasons for the tension between the three as “cam era menor de cuerpo que iaphet que nasciera despues que el & que sem. La otra que era cam de menor entendimiento quelos otros” (GEI 88). Poor Cam was seen as a loner.

In contrast, Sem and Japhet have a long history of working together. According to Alphonso, Sem settled Asia and Greece, “despues que regnarien los de Sem & de Japhet en uno” (GEI 72). This comradery was beneficial to their civilizations. However, those of Japhet would soon rise above even those of Sem. Afterwards, “& desi acabados los otros tres regnos que regnarien en cabo los de Japhet solos como fizieron despues de todos los otros. Et fueron estos los romanos que son de parte de occident” (GEI 72). So, Japhet reigned alone and is credited with spreading the seeds that would lead to the Roman Empire.
If this weren’t enough, Alphonso elaborates on the discord between members of his society as a product of the dissension between Noah’s sons en “Donde uino la principal enemistad de los fíjos de Japhet & de los de Cam.” In this following passage he explains tensions between Christians, Jews, and Muslims:

[T]ouieron despues los ebreos que uinien de heber que fue de la liña de sem & otrossi los de iaphet que quanto de los de cam pudiessen leuar o de tierra o dotras cosas quier por batalla quier por otra fuerca & aun prender a ellos & tomar los por uassallos pecheros & sus sieruos que non fazien pecado nin yerro ninguno. Ca su padre noe que fuera padre de todos de los vnos & de los otros gelo dexara como por heredat. Onde quien quisiere saber dond uino esta enemiztad tan grand & tan luenga entre los xristianos & los moros. Daqui cate la razon. (GEI 94)

According to this history, Jews and Christians have the “derecho & priuilegio” (GEI 95) to enslave Muslims wherever they find them (Africa or Iberia). And this division of the sons of Noah, is the cradle of the age-old conflict.

The relationship between Christians and Jews is also examined. The first book says, “Entre nos los xristianos & los gentiles que son aun y de los de Sem. & si algunos y a otrossi enellos de los de Japhet. Dezimos que deuie seer amiztad” (GEI 96). Thus, there should be a natural peace between Christians and Jews because of the likemindedness of the brothers Sem and Japhet in the continents Europe and Asia.

**God’s Navel: Jerusalem**
Where the three continents come together at the intersection of all lines in the center of the medieval world rests Jerusalem. It is “celestial iherusalem” (GEI 318) and “tierra rica de muchas riquezas” (GEI 950). To echo Jerusalem’s position and importance as the center of the world describes Sem’s journey through this land. According to the Learned King, Sem:

\[
\text{[E]ntendio que podrie seer el medio del mundo & llego a aquella tierra a que agora dezimos Judea. Et semeiol muy buena tierra de todas cosas & en medio del mundo & a mano de todas las otras tierras. & finco en el logar o agora es la çibdat de Jherusalem... E que serie lugar comunal a todos los lugares de dentro de tod el cerco de la tierra pora los quil quisiessen uenir alli a ueer & a orar & fizo y su puebla. (GEI 108)}
\]

This reference shows a world oriented around Jerusalem. It is the communal center where inhabitants of the Earth journey, in a return to the center, to see and to pray.

As the center of the circular Earth, Jerusalem was also seen as the omphalos, or navel. It was purported to connect God with his followers and, thereby, the passage between the earthly and the celestial in the form of Jacob’s ladder. Its heavenly connection was discovered by Jacob one night, as in the Book of Genesis (28:11–19), and recounted in Alphonso’s texts. In Book I of General Estoria, on his journey Jacob decides to sleep on the outskirts of a city, “& uio en sueños una escalera que alcançaua de tierra al cielo. & ángeles de dios que subien & descendien por ella. & ensomo desta escalera uio el estar a dios quel dicho yo so el dios de abraam & de ysaac tus padres & esta tierra en que tu duermes te dare yo a ti & a tu linage” (380). This vision allows Jacob to conclude that this land is “uerdadera mentre sancto,” “de dios,” the “casa de dios,” and
lastly, the “puerta del cielo” (380). This account marks Jerusalem as geographically and spiritually centered.

Analogous to its philosophical importance, in T-O maps Jerusalem is the unquestionable geographical center. This fact is key to medieval cosmovision that defines the world as an organism created by God. Jerusalem was considered “aquella cibdad como ombligo de toda la tierra. como es en el cuerpo de la animalia el su ombligo. Ca assi yaze iherusalem en medio de la tierra como ell ombligo esta en medio del cuerpo de la cosa” (GEI 950). Therefore, it represented a privileged space, the center and the cord, that connected the *terra firme* to the *terra celeste* and the standard by which all other lands are judged.

The zonal maps and T-O maps are both evident within the Alphonso X texts. As we have seen within these kinds of cartographic constructs each region is assigned certain characteristics. The figure to the left combines the two concepts to define the importance of each space. The center circle is ideal followed by the layers of circles around it in the inner belts. The farther the distance from the center circle, the poorer or less blessed the land and people are.

**Celestial Mapping**

However, besides describing the history of the world and Iberia by using the most common maps of the time, the Learned King takes to classifying other entities in the
world. To continue with the propagation of the desired ideology, Alphonso begins to order the world by means of a scale where all beings are judged as subjects of their Creator. By employing science, religion, mythology, and other cultural belief systems a chart is created. The product of such endeavors, known as a “Great Chains of Being,” map the world and reflect ideals based on divine stratification.

These charts, like the other maps we have seen, are not unique to Alphonso X. It is common to see graphic representations embodying all of God’s creation as it was in the interest of many to order the creatures of the world below God. This a technique called *encyclopedism*, typical of medieval maps (Zumthor 313). In order to present this type of humanistic discourse, an encyclopedic map combines a local with a representation such as animals; these concepts are linked by a symbol that has a historical, theological, topographical, and/or theratological significance (Zumthor). The product of such effort is a map similar to the resource map.

Encyclopedism of medieval maps tends to reiterate extant philosophies regarding mankind’s place in the world. The following is a XII century example of such a chain that focuses specifically on humans and Christ. We see the humans trying
to climb up the celestial scale to reach the higher plane at the Creator’s feet. Ten people are ascending, the last being pulled by his hair, and the echelons are marked with their corresponding label. On the left side of the scale we note the sun and planets, natura, 4 levels of anima, to seraphym, cherubim, and other angels, and finally to God reigning supreme. On the right bottom we see spera folis, to principis corporus, vegetabilis, animalis, rationalis, celestis, ten levels of intelligentia, and the ruling divine.

The chain divides both the mundane and celestial planes. This is the customary division made at the onset of these charts. Alphonso X’s text illustrates the division of creatures under God. It also begins with the celestial at its apex, where:

non sube njngun omne en carne que solo omne sea et non mas. Como xpisto que es dios & omne et sancta maria su madre que era muy mas que omne solo. & sobresso fue alla resuscitada luego et glorificada & tal fue leuada por las manos de los angeles & subio a la gloria del fijo.

(GEI 1081)

This region is of course, not one of the four earthly elements; Alphonso places the celestial plane above air in his discussion. He titles this passage, “De las cosas del cielo por que da aqui a entender el uno de los elementos assi como del sol njn de la luna njn de otra planeta njn de otra estrella njnguna & estas son las creaturas del cielo” (GEI 884).

So, the “uno de los elementos” where the sun, moon, planets, and starts reside is actually further divided and classified into four layers. The first layer is where stars and planets exist. Considered a creature of the heavens, the sun is defined as, “oio del cielo cerco de la calentura, claridat que numqua decae, onra del dia, departidor de las horas” (EE 112). The moon is, “porpola del cielo, envidiosa del sol, enemiga de los
malfachores, conorte de los que andan camino, enderescamiento de los que andan sobre mar, sennal de las fiestas, demostramiento de las tempestades” (EE 112). The sun is presented in a more positive manner, but both celestial bodies are credited with contributing to order. The sun marks the hours of the day; the moon marks the routes for night travelers and seamen. The planets’ solid earthly qualities and their place as contributors to order instead of chaos are indicative of their status over the world yet under more highly ranked celestial elements.

The second layer of heaven seems to be more of a separating stratum. It is described as, “Las de las estamen nas las aguas que son sobrel firmamiento” (GEI 1081). Thus it is depicted as the birthplace of water. This place of water is oriented vertically over that of the earth-like planets.

The third is the “cielo empireo que quiere dezir tanto como cielo de fuego fascas de claridad. & es este el cielo o están los ángeles” (GEI 1081) where, “Las estrellas & las formas de los dioses tienen el suelo del cielo” (GEI 1259). This reiterates structure and creates a hierarchical heaven where God reins over other celestial beings such as archangels and lesser angels residing in the “suelo del cielo” as we saw in the XII century graphic. Fire, then, is heavens floor and rests above the earthly planets and the stratum of water.

And, the fourth is “el cielo que esta sobre todas las otras cosas del mundo & es todo muy claro & muy limpio. & deste cielo dize ouidio en el primero libro del su libro mayor que todo es muy luzio & que non a en el pensedumbre ninguna, nyn njnguna cosa de la fez de la terrenal, nyn de la materia de la tierra. & cuenta Maestre pedro que en este cielo es dios sobre todas las cosas que fizo” (GEI 1081). This description alludes to the
idea of air with its clarity, cleanliness, light, and absence of land materials. Therefore, we have air above fire, water, and earth in the celestial planes.

God, who resides in this ultimate plane is “voluntad que numqua a de morir, alteza que no puede ser despreciada, forma que a en si muchas formas, demanda que no puede ser asmada, oio que numque duerme, poder que tiene en si todas las cosas, luz que non a fin” (EE 122). So, God is the highest of the high, power, unending light, and a form made of many forms. Structure, then, seems an inherent part of divinity itself. Thus, the hierarchized heaven reigns of the lesser yet ordered mundane below.

From the celestial we now move to the most basic level of the mundane. Earth was also oriented around four elements: air, fire, water, earth. Alphonso X describes how each being is a product of the element under which it was created, “Et por que de la humor & de la calor nascen en los Elementos todas las cosas que cuerpos an & uiuen assi cuemo departen los naturales” (GEII 190). These elements permeated all aspects of life, even medicine with the advent of the four humours Alphonso mentions: sanguine (air), choleric (fire), phlegmatic (water), and melancholic (earth). A being’s temperament was based on their corresponding element. For example, those creatures associated with air were happy and generous while those under earth were gluttonous and lazy (Holman 200). A balance between the humours (which could be obtained through diet) was vitally important to maintain. Thus, per the concept of divine scaling, the world is ordered and each body is assigned a station to which it pertains and exemplifies, ideally with order and balance, throughout its existence.

As each element had defining characteristics, so do the creatures that dwell in each. According to Ovid and others of Rome, “De las quatro animalias que uiuen cada
una en su elemento,” explains of the ordering of the world with animals that are confined to their element in Latin with this explanation in Castillian.

Et estos uieossos quieren dezir desta guisa en el lenguage de castiella que el gamaleon & el Topo & el harenc & la Salamandra uieuen en senos elementos de guisa que por mantener sus uidas non toman gouernamiento ninguno de los otros Elementos si non cada uno el del suyo. Ca el harenc uiue dell agua sola. & el gamaleon dell aer. & el Topo de la tierra. & la Salamandra del fuego. (GEI 1259)

Chameleons, moles, and salamanders are rigidly imprisoned in their element. They are of a severely skewed nature do their lack of balance between natures.

Alphonso then enters into “las otras animalias uieuen todas de todos los elementos” (GEI 1259). He is careful to specify that many spend the majority of their lives within one element, but they can pass from one to another for at least short periods of time, which allows a better balance of the humours.

Fire, the “suelo celestial” (GEI 1259) is mentioned as one of the elemental planes in various parts of the texts as “mas alto & mas cerca del cielo que ellos [elementos] & la luz que alumbra” (GEI 120). Pagans considered it “meiorando en las naturas de los quatro elementos,” thus “dexaron los otros & aoraron al del fuego” (GEI 120). It is described as the most powerful element as it “encierra a los otros tres que son. La tierra, las agues, & ell aer. & los escalienta & los tiempra a cada uno como lo a meester” (GEI 120). It also occupies the “mayor espacio & mayor logar & part en la fechura & en el cuerpo del mundo” (GEI 120). So, fire is seen as within the core of the Earth/Hell, and as marking the floor separating Heaven and Earth.
Concerning the mention of potential edibles in the element of fire, we find nothing. The salamander is listed as its sole inhabitant, although other mythological creatures are also associated with fire, such as the phoenix. The absence of gastronomic reference within fire is to be expected. This was not a realm for humans. Since classical times, during a sacrificial event, certain parts of the sacrificial would be burned. Such an action would deem them holy and intend them for God alone. In this sense, fire served as the border between humanly edible and divine substances.\(^{16}\)

Alphonso next also introduces the element air. Interestingly he recalls that before worshiping fire Pagans judged air the element “mas cerca los cielos que son las siellas de dios & de los ángeles” (GEI 119). This would seem to contradict what he is saying about fire as being the closest element to God. However he was explaining the progression of pagan beliefs from the beginning of time to the onset of Christianity. Specifically in the discussion in Book I of General Estoria, Alphonso is relaying God’s mandates related to the construction of idols; he enumerates, “Nin faras nninguna semeianca de cosa que sea en el cielo de suso, nng en la tierra de yuso, nng daquellas cosas que son en las aguas so la tierra” (GEI 883). In this mandate, fire is conspicuously absent. This makes sense because fire is seen as the floor of heaven, in many instances. So, while addressing this particular covenant Alphonso refers to air as “el segundo elemento” (GEI 884).

Air, “se alumbrauan todas las cosas” and “se mostraua cada una cosa de que color era & de que figura” (GEI 119). With this description it seems as though air is attributed the quality of revealing the truth, a characteristic typically associated with light/fire. Alphonso also cites that air is a necessity for all creatures as everything breathes and

\(^{16}\) See Introduction “classical influences.”
those breaths drawn throughout life are the most noble and purer than the bodies that require them (GEI 119). Even other elements, according to Pliny in a passage where he explains fish, “breathe” the air. He proposes that, “non es maravilla si el aer entra por el agua que es delgado elemento pues que entra por la tierra que es el mas espesso” (GEII 421-422). The thinnest element is, therefore, essential to all and within all.

The creatures that call the ubiquitous element air home are delineated as the eagle, dove, and all other birds and fowl (GEI 884). In his passage, “Del comer de las aues” Alphonso explains the Mosaic laws regarding creatures dwelling in air. His extensive lists enumerate:

Que njen comiessen aguila njen grifo, njen alcotan, njen esmereion, njen milano, njen bueytre, njen cuero, njen njinguna otra aue que del linage destas semeie, njen estruz njen lechuza, njen aztor, njen bufo, njen somurguion, njen cigueña, njen cigno, njen onocrotalo, njen porfilion, njen heredion, njen caridrion, njen habubiella, njen murciego, njen njinguna otra aue que semeie del linage de qual quier destas que auemos contadas. (GEI 1164)

The restrictions pertaining to birds go on, but the general understanding is that birds of prey, waterfowl, bats and even “aues que en quatro pies andudiesse,” such as locusts, are unclean (GEI 1164).

The third element in this discussion is water, the element “mas limpio & tal que ninguna cosa temporal non la puede escusar. ca ell agua laua & alimpia & tiempra todas las cosas” (GEI 119). As it is clean and tempering, the purity of water is lauded. These qualities made the pagans realize, after worshiping land, that “mas de aorar ell elemento dell agua que el de la tierra” (GEI 120).
Newts and mermaids, “a quien llamauan los gentiles estonces dioses & deessas & que eran mancebas fijas dalgo,” are mentioned first as creatures within its bounds (GEI 884). In the passage, “De las animalias que uiuen en ell elemento dell agua tan bien en la mar como en las aguas dulces” Alphonso mandates:

Que comiessen de todos aquellos & de los pescados que las non ouiessen quier fuessen cubiertas de concha quier de costra quier de corteza o de cuero o de qual quier otra natura. Uedo que los non comiessen njn los tanxiessen desque fuessen muertos. ca njnguno dellos non era limpio.

(GEI 1167)

Alphonso seems much more lax with regards to sea life. Fish, shellfish of any nature are permissible for consumption as long as they are not dead or unclean. However, we will briefly see more retrictions associated with seafood.

Land, “fundamento del cielo, yema del mundo, guarda et madre de los fruytos, cobertura del infierno, madre de los que nascen, ama de los que viven, destruymiento de todas las cosas, cillero de vida” is the last element, “a quien ueyen & sabien mas de su natura & de su poder que de los otros elementos” (EE 112; GEI 119). Alphonso lists the many attributes of this well-known element and why some pagans once believed it to be the most superior. The pagans speculated that:

[Q]ue la meior cosa que dios fiziera que la tierra era por que todos los cuerpos de las cosas que nascien & se criauan & cresciien salien de la tierra mas que de otro elemento. & que mayor natura auien todos los cuerpos con la tierra que con otro elemento & se tornauan en ella. & que ella los criaua & las gouernaua & las destruye. Encabo que todos los
cuerpos tornauan en ella & en ella fincauan. & por esta razon la aorauan.

(GEI 119)

The many creatures of earth that are born of and governed by her, including Men, lions, rams, other beasts and livestock, and “otra cosa saluage” such as dragons, slithering snakes, trees, and others, may leave land to enter other elements, but they always return to the earth at the end of their lives (GEI 884). Even in the afterlife some souls may find themselves returned to the earth in “el mas baxo lugar que en tod ell elemento de la tierra” where Hell resides (GEII 515). Because of its governance over its creatures and other attributes, land was once held by pagans to be the most powerful element.

The restrictions pertaining to land life are numerous and very detailed. Alphonso first prohibits those that only live in the element land, such as moles and worms. Next he labels those that “traen los uientres por tierra” (GEI 1164). Slithering animals like snakes and other reptiles that have feet but drag their chests on the ground are considered dirty. Lastly, he delineates the remainder by if they chew cud and how their hooves are formed. He specifies:

Que todas aquellas animalias que rumian & an la uña fenduda; eran limpias. & daquellas les mando comer. & dotras que ay que rumian & an uña mas non partida, como es el camello, & el coneio, & la liebre et otras tales que son y & aun an uñas en el pie & departidas unas dotras, mas njinguna dellas non fenduda, mando que non comiessen dellas. ca non eran limpias. De las otras animalias que uos contamos otrossi que auien la uña fenduda mas non rumiauan; como es el puerco, mando les otrossi que non comiessen dellas. (GEI 1164)
So, we may gather that those that chew cud with divided hooves are edible, including ox, sheep, goat, etc. However, those that chew cud with no cloven hoof, such as the camel and hare, are inedible. This rating is complex, so, for good measure, Alphonso also says when it doubt, don’t eat it and adds to the list of prohibited animals: rats, crocodiles, lizards, and anything of similar lineage (GEI 1164).

This is perhaps the most opportune time to mention the obvious influence of Moses’s dietary rules. With the goal of maintaining purity of body, Alphonso says, “la ley de las uianas de las animalias de la tierra & de las aguas todas et de las aues otrossi. & que ge las enseñara por que soshiessenque repartimiento auie entre lo bueno & lo malo, & lo limpio & lo suzio. et qual deuien comer & qual dexar” (GEI 1164). It is important, however, to realize that while Alphonso enters into this discussion based on Moses’s laws, he discredits it throughout the texts. Alphonso bases these ideas on the Christian diet of his day that was founded on testaments set forth after the Great Flood. He clarifies:

[Q]ue otorgó dios alos omnes que después del diluuio que comiessen carne. Lo uno por la tierra que non fincara tan plantia despues de las aguas como era antes. nin serien los omnes tan abondados de uianas. Lo al por que fueron los omnes dalli adelant muy mas flacos que antes otrossi. Onde despues del diluuio assi comieron los omnes las carnes. como comien antes las frutas & las yeruas. (GEI 60-61)

So, according to Alphonso, because of the scarcity of food after the flood, God “rewarded” humankind with meat. Jews, unwilling to acknowledge this gift, continue with the rigid pre-flood Mosaic covenants.
Quotes such as this one allow us to deduce that Alphonso explains the rigid food codes in his texts but discards a select few to further differentiate between Jews and Christians. One could argue that it could be seen as unnecessary and even ungrateful to ignore God’s gift of meat. The medieval Christian obsession with pork attests to the deviation from the old codes. However these mandates, even if not followed by the Christian population, are still felt on the cultural and symbolical level of the masses and still play to the ideas of order and purity.

The division of creation into rigid categories such as these testifies to the fact that finding order and forming hierarchies was vital to medieval sensibilities. Thus, any obstacle to defining the world was viewed as evil. For example, citing Lucan in Book V, Alphonso addresses infernal gods saying, “Vos eumenjdes & la jnfernal nemjga & las penas de los nozientes & tu caos que eres la mezcla de los elementos coobdicioosa de mezclar muchos mundos” (GEV 301). So, we see chaos, mixing, and confusion are all signs of evil that blot out divine knowledge and skirt God’s pure creative intentions.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Alphonso then speaks unfavorably about mixes between animals, “una animalia de estrana natura con otra otrossi de estrana natura” (GEI 1259). These sorts of mixes exist in water, air and land, but are abominable wherever they may be found. Speaking of a particular mixed sea creature some men, Alphonso says, “dubdan los omnes de comer del. nil comen. si non sil come alguno de uoluntad atreuuda & non de muy buen sentido. segund cuenta Plinio. & que combrie qual quier otra uianda” (GEI 1259). His unfavorable opinion of these mixes allows him to conclude that any man or woman with sense would not eat them. In Alphonso’s opinion, they are an aberrant because their lives not granted by God but rather by a freak twist of
nature. The consumer of such creatures would thus be polluted by a source of food that did not come from the Great Provider.

While Alfonso goes to a great extent ordering the levels from earth to the heavens, it is important to note that such a scale wasn’t limited to divine planes in medieval philosophies. Hell, although often defined as chaos, was orderly as well. To the left we see a drawing from Dante’s *Inferno* with its nine circles of hell filled with increasingly terrible creatures and capped off with Lucifer. This creates a biblical scale stretching from God to the Devil, or the two poles of the other planes.

Another example of ordering the world on this elemental plane has mythological roots. Alphonso relays the story of Saturn and his three sons, Pluto, Neptune, and Jupiter. Pluto was noisy, hard working, and just. Because of these qualities, Saturn gave him the power to punish the evils of the earth. He so aptly executed this task that he became known as “Rey de los Infiernos & de los Infernales” (*Gei* 327).

His second son was Neptune, who loved water more than anything else. He hunted and invented instruments so that he may even walk on the surface of water.
Saturn named him Admiral and he came to know more about water than any other creature. For this, his people called him “rey & dios de los mares & de las otras agues” (GEI 327).

The third and youngest son was Jupiter. At first he was unsure of his path in life, then he began to love birds. He raised and taught them to hunt. Focusing on such a high subject, literally and symbolically, made him “grand & fermoso et muy bueno en sus costumbres. & amador de todas las cosas guisadas et muy sabio & muy manso. muy mesurado muy franco & cobdiciado de toda apostura & muy doneador” (GEI 328).

Pluto reigned on Earth; Neptune was King of the Seas; and Jupiter controlled the air. Saturn, seeing his three sons, saw that Jupiter:

[T]rabaiaua de cosas mas altas & mas nobles quelos de las aguas como Neptuno. & quelos de las tierras como pluton. Et entendio con las aues & con los saberes dellas estrellas. et del quadruuio que son mas altas cosas que tod esto al. amol comol diesse el poder del ayre & del cielo. (GEI 328)

Air, water, and land are placed in order of importance by Saturn himself. He favors the son who focuses on the highest plane.

**Spiritual Mapping**

Besides a division based on the four elements, Alphonso makes general distinctions between celestial beings, humans, animals, and plants by the properties of their soul. Alphonso talks about the three qualities of a soul and which beings have
which. The three characteristics of a complete soul, according to *El Sabio*, include: “Poder veietatiuo, poder sensitiuo, & poder discretiuo” (GEI 1259).

The vegetative power of a soul is the power to make a being grow. Alphonso articulates that this power is commonly held by all creatures, including plants, trees, and creatures with “quatro pies, & demas pies & de njnguno” and even Pliny’s “omnes an un pie & non mas” (GEI 1259). This power is, essentially, the power to be. Thus all earthly creatures are inherently blessed with it.

The second power of the soul, the sensitive, exists only in humankind and animals. With this ability, “sienten el bien & el mal que dios & el temporal” (GEI 1259). Alphonso defines this power generally as the power to feel good, bad and the passage of time. He uses a reaction to pain as an indication of its presence. His example is cutting a tree branch. The tree does not react noticeably, except for drying out. Therefore the tree does not have the “poder sensitiuo.” A man or animal would flinch and try to avoid such actions and this substantiates the presence of the second power.

Finally, we come to the most important power: “el poder discretiuo.” Only gifted to men and angels, both good and bad, it allows them to distinguish “qual es la buena cosa & qual la mala et dezir lo por palabra” (GEI 1259). Perception, judgement, and language, are gifts encompassed within this sector. Thus, having a completed soul allows a being to see both sides of the coin and charges that they identify each (which, interestingly enough, Alphonso is doing in his texts). The reward of this calling is the possibility of eternal life, whereas other creatures, “que non a complimiento de alma de yr a mal, njn a bien, njn a pena, njn a gloria quando de los cuerpos salen” (GE 1 1259). It
is this ability that allows humankind to ascend into the divine realm or fall into hell, as we see in the 12th century graphic.

**Table 1: Beings and Qualities of Souls**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poder veietatiuo</th>
<th>Poder sensitiuo</th>
<th>Poder discretiuo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above illustrates the beings of creation and the qualities of their souls. The levels range from plants and animals to humans and celestial creatures. Delineating the world according to the properties of the soul in this method incorporates the scientific knowledge of the day with the tenets of Christian beliefs. This places humans and the divine, as possible inhabitants of heaven, above animals and plants.

As the principal works that we examine are deemed estorias we must consider how time is viewed in the texts. We see that Alphonso also chronologically delineates beings, specifically humans. For example, he uses a scale to speak of the history of humankind and its progression towards civility. He enumerates the stages below:

&Sobresto fallamos que cada unas daquellas conpanas de los omnes que dixiemos que orauan los unos a las piedras & los otros a las yeruas. los otros alos aruoles. los quartos a los peces. Los quintos a las aues. & assi subiendo toda uia. Non denauan njn matauan njn comien ninguna daquellas cosas en que auien su creencia. *(GEI 118)*

These companies of men first adored rocks, then plants, trees, fish, and then birds. In this example he shows (chronologically) how humans became more and more refined and they set their sights higher and higher (vertically) until looking up to the celestial in
admiration. If the history of mankind is seen as linear and progressive, the humans of now are more sophisticated than those of the past. The greater awareness that comes with this evolution (a precarious term for this study), therefore, is credited with the lauding of the Heavenly Father.

Meshing the Maps

Religion, science, mythology, history, and whatever other tools may have been at hand we used to create a hierarchy in the form of a Great Chain of Being. Alphonso defines a place for all creatures under God and the celestial space. With this tool in hand, people could see where they belonged, how they should act, and even what they should consume. With the purpose of forming a mappamundi based on food, the last kind of map in Alphonso’s texts could be said to take the shape of a food map that delineates a gastronomic code.

This kind of scaling is particularly intriguing for our study as it is ubiquitous in medieval European societies. Grieco in Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy even outlines his scale based on gastronomic principles in Italy. Although its focus is a different local than Iberia, the scale shares many cultural similarities with Mediterranean, and proves useful as a point of comparison. This scale is influenced by cultural attitudes regarding food that have a basis in various forms of cultural knowledge, such as what we have seen in Alphonso’s texts.

When reconstructing these norms into an image, the representation produced reconstructs social dietary norms that are mapped; therefore providing an intriguing link
between food and cartography. The Great Chain of Being found below plays to the concept of food and identity.

### Table 2: The Great Chain of Being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOD</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>Air</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Earth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salamander → Phoenix → Mythological animals living in fire</td>
<td>Eagles → Falcons → High-flying birds → Songbirds → Capons → Roosters → Chickens → Ducks → Geese → Other waterfowl</td>
<td>Veal → Mutton → Pork → Quadrupeds</td>
<td>Dolphins → Whales → Fish → Shrimp → Crabs → Mussels → Oysters → Sponges</td>
<td>Trees/Fruit → Shrubs → Herbaceous Plants (spinach, cabbage) → Roots → Bulbs → Inanimate objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through this chart, concepts of food symbolism perpetuated the ancient ideas of gastronomic otherness. Obviously stratification is evident in one’s menu as each food has a station that corresponds to its importance. As the chart illustrates, with God reigning supreme, nature is thought of as a divinely structured ladder and everything has an assigned place that was influenced heavily by Mosaic dietary laws. The modification shown on the chart from Classical ideals based on their social structure and value placement to one reflecting medieval ideals is to be expected. After all, the diagram functions as a mirror of cultural values, which change over time and space.

The medieval hierarchical society echoes this precept. This chained chart, therefore, "linked all of creation together in a grand design" where each element respects the ascending or descending order of supremacy (Grieco 308; Civitello 53). That is to say, each element knows and respects its station in relation to everything else.
At the bottom of the chart lay inanimate objects such as rocks. Just above these is the element encompassing "earth," which consists of many plants or *vegetabilis*. Each plant is assigned its own rank. In this scheme, the least noble plants of all are those that produce bulbs underground such as onions and garlic. Plants follow whose roots were consumed. These bulbous, rooty, or leafy plants are of less certain standing because they grow lower and farther away from God. Consequently, they are generally the staple of the peasant diet. This is not to say that nobles do not augment their diets with lowly vegetables. Studies reveal that they clearly do. Yet, in a noble diet, the presence of a vegetable is not typically a matter of life or death. The survival of higher classes simply does not hinge as heavily on the supply of vegetables as do the poorer classes.

At the zenith of the "Earth" element is fruit, the most noble of all plant life. However, similarly to vegetables, there also exists a division among fruits. Those growing higher, even on the same tree, are nobler than the others. As fruit is an edible foodstuff higher in elevation, it is suitable for those of higher class. Less noble fruit, perhaps those already fallen from the tree or less than ripe could be consumed by peasants.

Moving up the chart is the "Water" element within *animalis*. Within this realm there are many forms of sea life. At the bottom lay inanimate creatures like sponge and mussels. They are followed by ocean floor scavengers and fish. Dolphins and whales are higher on the chart because they seem to dwell closer to the surface of the water. With jumping they even surpass their natural element, water, to momentarily take flight into the next highest, air. For the medieval citizen, this indicates their desire to ascend into the higher strata and be closer to God, thereby signaling an advanced intelligence and self-
Other forms of sea life, like common species of fish, would be consumed by the lower classes in times of adequate food supply and by richer residents for a day to day meal.

Quadrupeds did not much belong to any of the elements, which is considered a major flaw of this ideology. They were regarded as more worthy than the plant, but less than the fowl. Therefore, they are added between water and air. Although their position is perhaps precariously placed in the chart, within the meat of quadrupeds there exists a firmly delineated hierarchy. Scarcity played a pivotal role in the classification of meats; so veal is the noblest, followed by mutton, and concluded by the widely available salted pork. Nobles do partake of all meat, but they prefer veal. Salted pork is always available for consumption. So, peasants could have their share, provided they can afford it. And, nobles could alternate between turning up their noses and begrudgingly slicing off a bite.

At the apex of the chart, as far as humanly-edible substances are concerned, rest birds. Poultry is considered a fine substance to eat because of the birds' airborne nature and closer proximity to the heavens. They note that a bird can actually travel with dexterity between air, water, and earth elements.

The lowest regarded of birds are those residing on water, such as ducks. Next on the chart are ground-dwellers like chickens. Songbirds occupy the middle space and actually become a dining obsession in the Renaissance (Grieco 310). At the top of the bird scale are the highest-flying birds, such as eagles and falcons. One does not normally dine on these birds as they are used more as pets and hunting companions. Nobles enjoy

\[^{17}\text{Consequently dolphins and whales were considered the most dignified of sea creatures and, thus, were fitting for noble consumption. Indeed, during the Middle Ages these sea creatures were hunted and eaten more than any other time in European history (Grieco 310).}\]
poultry due to its high space on the chart, but they obviously preferred the more exotic varieties. Therefore, within poultry, the same precepts distinguish the elite and the commoners.

If we compare Alphonso’s texts to Grieco’s Great Chain of Being we can see many lines of similarity. First, the elements are valued in the same way: earth → water → air → fire. Also, the concept of vertical orientation as indicative of superiority is shared. Lastly, the base in the Mosaic dietary laws is evident in both ideologies. For this reason, it is logical to assume that if he were to have created a visual food map, Alphonso’s would have been similar to the one formulated by Grieco based on Italian ideals.

After reading this chapter it should be evident that the calling of Alphonso X was, in large part, to order the world along specific parameters. We have seen how we can extrapolate popular map images from the Middle Ages using the texts. These maps are in the form of a temporal zone map, a TO world map, and a food map in the form of a Great Chain of Being. Each of these cartographic endeavors attempts to define all of creation and put it in order. Having examined perceptions of foods as linked to the ordering of the world, in the next chapter we will see how exactly these conceptualizations of superiority/inferiority were played out using gastronomy and the inhabitants of the map.
Chapter 4:

Drawing the Map with Food

In Alphonso X’s works classical perceptions are perpetuated. The many authors he cites contribute to a world vision and a gastronomic culture suspended in a medieval Iberian framework. In the first chapter we examined the anthropological theories of food that define societies as we applied to the medieval Castilian culture in order to establish our baseline for observation. The second chapter explains the classical framework that is repeated in Alphonso’s texts with regards to world vision through cartography, and the treatment of diet and culture. The previous chapter discusses Alphonso’s cosmovision, or ordering of the world and all creatures in it through map and text. Finally, in this last chapter, we will examine specific examples of how food was used by Alphonso X to illuminate (and portray as inferior) the unfamiliar on the globe. The goal of the following pages is to delve into his construction of a mappa mundi based on diet. Such a map leans heavily on the connection between food and identity, a link that is much more pronounced when combined with cartographic theories of “here” and a distant “there.”

Obviously during the medieval period in Europe, knowledge of the world was limited to surrounding areas and scattered accounts (including biblical, mythological, and folkloric sources) of distant lands. In Alphonso’s texts, then, these spaces are painted with a sort of surreal quality. Taking the duality of a well-known “here” and a fuzzy “there” into consideration with regards to food, we will begin with an examination of gastronomy in Alphonso’s “here,” Jerusalem, the map center. We will then compare this ideal center with the peripheries of the medieval world such as Africa, the Fortunante
Islands, Thule, Scythia, Scancia, India/Asia, Aristotle’s antipodes, and even a cave system at the center of the earth.

As we undergo the analysis of food and identity in conjunction with cartographic space we must consider how food plays into culture. Food anthropology theories introduced in the introduction and first chapter and the application of these theories to common practices in medieval Castile will be vital to understand the food-based world that Alphonso is constructing. In order to forge this link between food and identity we will investigate geographic location in relation to specific tenets of gastronomic anthropology. These are: the existence of ritualistic food events, group eating, and the act of eating itself with regards to the particular food’s symbolism, the availability of foodstuffs, the variety of edibles, and the concept of consumption.

Jerusalem

To commence with our center here, we study Jerusalem and the surrounding Holy Land. Ideas of superiority of the sacred city predispose medieval European mapmakers to locate Jerusalem in the center due to its status as the sacred city of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam as we studied in the third chapter. Alphonso describes the beginning of history itself with journey of Adam and Eve, who are banished from paradise in the East and so head to Jerusalem. The route is:

[M]uy luenga la carrera por o ouieron de uenir del comienço de la tierra a parte de oriente fasta medio de ella. Ca iherusalem & ebron que es cerca de ella en medio de la tierra yazen lo al por muchos logares muy ásperos
& muy trauissos & muy malos por peñas, & montes, & aguas, & espantos de bestias fieras & serpientes que fallauan ya a logares. De más que non auie y aun carrera fecha ninguna ca nunca andudiera omne por y. (GEI 9)

After a fifteen year long journey, Adam, Eve, and their descendants arrive in Jerusalem. Undertaking such an arduous trek through rough inhospitable terrain permits one to deduce that, for Adam and Eve, Jerusalem must be the next best place to Eden. It stands as a central circle, a paradisical island, surrounded by ferocious lands all around it.

David Woodward, in his article, “Reality, Symbolism, Time, and Space in Medieval World Maps,” comments that this orientation of Jerusalem is present in the Hereford, Ebstorf y Psalter mappaemundi and within the 8th and 9th centuries and this trend continues into the 13th century (515). In Alphonso’s Cantigas de Santa María 383, the author describes the holy land as being located, “O fondo do mar tan chão faz come a terra dura...” and as “de los logares más santos de esa terra u Messias Jhesu-Cristo, Deus e ome.” It was indeed considered a sacred place and in the last chapter we noted how Jerusalem was endowed with other-worldly qualities being called the “casa de dios,” “ciudad celestial,” and the place of Jacob’s ladder.

As the ideal center and representative of the most civilized humankind, its sacred state is reflected in the depictions of the edibles. General Estoria focuses on in its description of the city. It is painted as:

[T]ierra rica de muchas riquezas. Es muy buena de pan, muy abondada de buenas aguas, & muy cumplida de bálsamos & de otros unguyentos & especias muchas & muy buenas. & tanto es y ell aer temprado & muy
Alphonso has thus created an image of a place that is geographically ideal, agriculturally blessed, and anthropologically supreme.

With the city-circle emphasized as the most important center to its surroundings throughout history, there is no doubt that Jerusalem, in the medieval context, is paradaisical. However, it is not the only blessed land in Alphonso’s texts. General Estoria continues revealing God’s splendor through depictions of the Holy Land in general, saying:

[A]quella era la tierra que les dios prometiera que manaua miel & leche. & mayor mentre por que les dixiera que dalli les auie a nacer el bien et la gracia porque los omnes auien arresucitar. & tal es tierra de Canaan o de Judea & Jherusalem. (GEII 950)

With the above statement, the promised land of milk and honey is encompassed by all of the Holy Land. Therefore, the land of Canaan, Judea, and the city of Jerusalem are considered the root of all good and grace in this world. What is very revealing in the citation is that it is the job of humankind in these regions to resucitate the good of these spaces. This reiterates Appadurai’s ideas of processing for superior product. To summarize, it is not just the grace and plenty of the land that makes it special, but the endeavors of humankind to reap of its benefits and “manufacture” goodness.

Throughout the texts we find similar descriptions of lands around the holy center. Arabia was described as “o son los aruoles en que nascen las muchas especias & de muy buenas oluras & de grandes uirtudes. & o dize plinio & otros philosophos & naturales que
mora ell aue fénix, que uiue daquellas especias & non de al” (GEII 161). Because of its geographic location in the center, or close to it, it produces spectacular crops of spices of great quality. This trait makes it the ideal home to the mythological phoenix, whose discerning taste is sated by the spices of Arabia alone.

Food events form the first tenet of anthropological food theories. The citations above do not speak of weddings or specific feasts, rather they emphasize the miraculous abundance of the center. So, then we could say that these miracles, the flowing milk and honey, the appearance of manna, etc., could be characterized as food events that each are received from the same host in celebration of the faith and unity between this host and his table members. The “integrated civilizing model” of receiving this culinary gift indoctrinates those who consume it to the value of Christianity (Schivelbusch 169; Goody 13). In Jerusalem and the Holy Land, then, each miracle, harvest or meal serves as the vehicle for (re)establishing God’s grace and their fortune at living in his “house,” the map center. Likewise, there is no mention of utensils or rank between diners. God is superior to all and there doesn’t appear to be any dithering in the text with regards to who eats where and with what. Such mundane matters, at least in the available citations, seem to be insignificant.

The next area of analysis is that of group eating. In Alphonso’s texts, at first glance it may appear as though there is not a specific dining group. Nevertheless, if we consider Jerusalem as the “Casa de dios” and note that God is providing the milk, honey, and manna, then we realize that God acts as “host” to the privileged guests at his table. In Alphonso’s histories, those who share the meal and blessings of God’s promises are Christians. We reiterate Smith’s insistence that sharing a table creates a bond, maintains
a social network, and positions that network in relation to others (9,10) and reinforces religious solidarity (Charsley 3, Douglas 52). Therefore, with God as the provider of food and commonality between table members, a group eating system is clearly defined in the map center.

Now, we must analyze the foodstuffs in the sacred city. Bread, water, spices, fruit, milk, and honey all count as mentioned staples in the Holy Land. Each mention of foodstuffs has a symbolic meaning. Decoding the social meaning of each food will reveal much about the ideas associated with Jerusalem and the surrounding Holy Land.

Jerusalem is first described as “muy buena de pan.” Bread, as we have seen, was quite an important foodstuff in the classical period and the Middle Ages. Of course, it is an indicator of civility as a processed food, which ties into the concept of a populace making the best of their god-given surroundings and higher abilities in order to manufacture items from these substances. It also has religious symbolism with the ritual of the Eucharist as the body of Christ. The repetition of this well-known motif in the description of the sacred city is no coincidence.18

The text touches on the “buenas aguas” of Jerusalem next. Chevalier and Gheerbrant explain that water as a symbol represents the fountain of life, a vehicle of cleansing and a center of regeneration (1081). They even investigate the specific relationship between water and the holy city. They have found that:

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18 Cannibalism was actually rumored to have occurred during the Crusades in Jerusalem. This would have been very well known at the time of the writing of these texts. It is conspicuously absent.
Jerusalem was lapped by the peaceful waters of Siloam, rivers were agents of God-given fertility, rain and dew provided their own fecundity and displayed God’s goodness. (1081)

We gather, then, that the city and its water in the form of rivers, rain, and dew are connected as the divine blessings of God. The divine city is continually cleansed of the mundane by the blessed properties of water.

The symbolism of the mentioned fruits in the passage must also be considered from a religious standpoint. We can see the religious association if we reflect on the story of the Garden of Eden. In this sense, the boundless fruit of the passage embodies the symbol of abundance similar to the overflowing cornucopia of plenty. Fruit can also be viewed symbolically as the egg of the world, or the beginning of everything as a carrier of its own seed and producer of its self-germination (Chevalier 412). In summation, it is the ideal product that the Heavenly Father sends to his faithful servants to secure their survival in the barren lands of Earth. Therefore, fruit is the fulfillment of a divine promise: the gift that keeps on giving.

In his description of Jerusalem, Alphonso mentions the milk and honey whose divine connotations are repeated throughout the Bible. Honey is seen as a primordial alimentary substance associated with richness, plenty, and sweetness. Honey is also the substance of truth as it permits its consumer to distinguish between good and evil (Chevalier 510). Although honey carries this strong Christian connection, it also has a noteworthy link to Greek mythology. It is the substance that gave poetry to Pindar and learning to Pythagoras (Chevalier 511). Thus, with its strong folkloric heritage as a giver of sustenance, richness, and knowledge, honey can be seen as the sweet nectar of life.
The milk mentioned in the passage also carries its own symbolism. We cannot deny the connotation that milk carries concerning the relationship between mother and the nursing infant. From its own body, the guardian sustains her offspring, the same as God, the shepherd, cares for his followers in the Promised Land. This, again, echoes the idea of God fulfilling his promise to his devoted followers.

Finally, to decipher any other attitudes in the text regarding the specific items, we must consider the adjectives connected with each food. In the gastronomic descriptions, colors, flavors, and textures are not accentuated. Nor are many adjectives employed to portray the experience of eating. The only mention is that of the sufficient quantity available to all who hail the city. We may deduce that in this central place, all revolves around God. Therefore, food and the act of consumption appear to become part of venerating God, or re-enacting a sacred communion instead of a gluttonous indulgence of the terrestrial senses.

Besides the symbolism evoked by the mentioned fruits, we are also called to notice the quantity or availability of alimentary substances in a place. In Jerusalem, the quantity is described as “abondada,” “llena” and “bastada;” which translate to abundant, full, and sufficient. These words signal no shortage of food, but they do not emphasize an overabundance. Alphonso only worries himself with mentioning that there is an adequate amount for all. This suggests a pious consumption or a minimal and constant amount above all. The idealized steady and unwavering meal forms a sharp contrast to the reality of other regions of the world where scarcity and unpredictability ran rampant.

Variety of edibles is also a significant point to consider when characterizing a populace. The citations above mention riches, bread, water, balms, ointments, spices,
temperate air, fruits, and full of all the goodness the earth has to offer can be found in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. It is blessed climatically with “aer temprado” due to its central location on the spherical belted earth. It is also agriculturally fortunate with “buenas aguas,” “especies,” “fructos,” and “todos los bienes del mundo.” Lastly, and most significantly, the land is lucky enough to be inhabited by people who make use of these idyllic traits through the manufacturing of “pan,” “bálsamos,” and “unguentos.” So, due to God’s blessings and the ingenuity of the people, Jerusalem and the Holy Land benefit from a plethora of culinary options.

The last tenet of symbolic anthropology is consumption. As we noted, Phyllis Bober introduces the reciprocity of eating/being eaten that we investigate at each possible locale. The citations above all speak of humankind consuming foodstuffs. Stories of cannibals and man-eating animals consuming humans in the sacred city would obviously be unpopular. However, further research has uncovered an interesting idea. General Estoria Book I relays Benjamin’s prophecy during which he describes a fox, who “mañana combra la prea & a la uiespra partira los despoios” (563). Here Alphonso chooses to include speculations as to the meaning of the prophecy and the qualities of the city. He adds:

Unos dizen que este lobo, a quien Jacob robador llamo aquí, que fue dicho por la cibdad de Jherusalem que yaze en la suerte que aun estonces auie a auer beniamjn en tierra de promission. & departen ende los sabios que deue seer aquella cibdad Lobo Robador porque fue esparzida en ella la sangre de los prophetas & de nuestro señor ihesu xpisto. Assi como si los comiesse ella como lobo comedor. (GEI 563)
The impression of the city as “lobo comedor” is fascinating as it plays into the theories of consumption. Jerusalem swallows the great prophets and they rein from above, with the passage to Hell remains below thereby echoing the concept of Jerusalem as the passage between worlds. Also, through the act of sacrificing the prophets, their blood spills onto the streets and baptizes the stones with their holiness. It is a sort of parallel communion; the city eats the holy as the faithful consume Christ. Thus, cleansed by the blood of God’s chosen and the waters of Siloam, Jerusalem represents the purest of earthly places due to this sacrifice, but there is also the acknowledgement that the city has destroyed or “eaten” the most holy of prophets. Therefore the act of consumption in Jerusalem is treated with fear and reverence.

**Africa: Egypt**

After examining the perfect center we are called to travel to the map’s periphery, or the mischevious, rough, foggy spaces where scary beasts lie. To see how these peripheries compare to Jerusalem, the civilized center, we first go to the south\(^{19}\) of the center, Africa. Described as, “aquella tercera parte de la tierra porque es tierra muy uiciosa en muchos lugares de ella,” for many medieval Europeans the continent was a distant frame of reference because Africa, as a whole, was always shrowded in mystique and fantastical accounts (GEIII 628). Citing the “animalias estrañas & de departidas

\(^{19}\) Using directional terms can be confusing when describing a medieval map because they tended to locate what a contemporary observer would call “east” in the “north.” Basically, if we took a modern day map and turned it one direction counter clock-wise we would have a medieval map. However, when we say “south,” for example, we mean “south” as it is considered at present in cartographic science.
naturas” Alphonso quotes a common Greek anecdote, “Africa siempre suele dar alguna cosa estranha” (GEIII 612) and echoes another by Pliny himself, “Africa siempre nos da alguna cosa marauillosa” (GEII 1222). Strange and marvelous, fascinating and terrifying, these contrasting images are the model for medieval portrayals of the mysterious continent and its people.

By recycling classical accounts, such as those provided by Pliny and Ovid, medieval cartographers gradually unfold their own maps of Africa. As we see in the map to the left, the Atlas Catalán\(^\text{20}\) from the 14th century, a travel route connected much of Europe to North Africa during the late Middle Ages.

So, on many medieval maps the northern slice of Africa, including Egypt, was relatively well defined because of trade and its previous affiliation with the Greek and Roman Empires. Therefore, concerning Africa, what we will see in Alphonso’s histories is a very detailed account of the known northern regions, including Egypt, and a much sparser report of the southern countries, Mount Atlas, Libya, and also Ethiopia, which was considered sometimes southern Africa and others Africa as a whole. Lastly, we will examine a people located within the land itself, the Trogoditas.

\(^{20}\) The Atlas Catalán is oriented along standards familiar to the contemporary observer, although the scale is not precisely accurate.
As he elucidates the history of Egypt, Alphonso spends a fair amount of time concerned with the story of Cleopatra and Caesar. Alphonso describes the celebration upon their union. Cleopatra, in preparation for the match:

\[ T \]anto se compuso...que dize la estoria que non fue omne. Que a las piedras preciosas & al aliofar tan grandes granos auie y & a las otras cosas de uirtudes que ella tenie en sus adobios que precio les pudiesse poner por ninguna guisa. (GEII 227)

She surpasses humanity with her preparations. Such care goes into the dining event that, before the food itself can even be considered, we must examine the occasion itself.

This food event revolves around a marriage celebration. Of course, such an event is not reflective of every day standards of eating. Douglas would say that the very existence of an event of higher social importance of political unions celebrated by feasts and a highly developed system of gastronomic codes allude to the more structured Egyptian society. The orderly event and Cleopatra’s otherworldly attention to detail and her appearance reflect the importance placed on the ritual and event themselves. Further care and attention has been placed on the guest list, or the group selected to share in the event.

A particularly rich portrayal of members of the table is recounted of the feast of the union of Cleopatra and Caesar. In his version Alphonso details the guests, dress, utensils and the political aim of the meal. To share in the grandeur of the union, the invitees include, “todos los nobles de Egipto & muchos otros de sus fronteras. & uino y el su Obispo, el mayor que los gentiles dalli auien” (GEII 227) from within Egypt itself and beyond. However, guests from lesser known parts of Africa/Egypt were also invited.
These dinner guests, such as those from the “sona de la sangre quemada,” and their appearance receive particular attention. Alphonso describes them as, “muy negros & los cabellos torcijados & tan crespos que se tornauan de la fruente & cogiense al logar do nascien. Et muchos dellos castrados & los otros mancebillos que non aujen nada en tal hecho baruas ponjentes & mas fuertes” (GEV 558). The particular attention paid to the appearance of the southern guests, counterimposed to the utter ambivalence with regard to the aspect of Egyptian nobility, indicates that the presence of the “muy negros” was not the norm and that their attendance incited curiosity. Their presence at the table also indicates the political aims of the couple and the accord of the Africans.

Now that all the guests have arrived and been accounted for, their attitudes towards the event must be analyzed. It is, of course, a wedding where above all a union is celebrated. Much like the Cid’s wedding, attention to detail communicates status, wealth, and civility for the Egyptians. So, all who agree to attend are indeed blessing the union and interacting as a dining cohort that will share the table. However, we must remember the theories of Barthes about coded images or acts in a dining group that indicate status. Because of this, it is no surprise that question of dress is presented by Alphonso with concentration.

At this event, costume helps to define distinct groups. We may deduce from Alphonso’s description that the Africans from the southern regions were scantily dressed. Two observations lead us to this statement. First, he focuses on their peculiarities of hair and skin instead of other adornments. Second, he notes that the older members of the party are visibly castrated. Therefore, his view seems to be unobscured or distracted by attire.
Next we have the Kings of Egypt. Alphonso says, “Et todos los reyes en las cabezas coronas de nardo berido que huele muy bien a maraujilla & muchas rosas frescas que en aquella tierra ha todo el año. (GEV570) Crowns of expensive nard and roses, described as gifts of their temperate lands that produce such vegetation throughout the year, adorn their heads in celebration of the event, but there is no mention of other vestments. As such, their physical appearance goes unnoticed, but their attire receives more attention than those of the “zona quemada” Africans. Their wardrobes are not significant enough to merit more description.

Continuing along the gradient, at the other end of this spectrum from the males is Cleopatra. She arrives with her locks and gown of Nile silk perfumed with cinnamon water (GEV 570) and covered “de pies a cabeca” with:

[C]uantas noblezas se fallan en el mar bermejo. Et traye cleopatra en el cuello & en los cabellos las riquezas de la tierra & de la mar. Et tanto era el pesso de los paños preciados & del oro & de las piedras preciosas que muy grant trabajo se le fazie en sofrirlo. Et reluzien los sus pechos muy blancos entre los paños de sidon & la seda del njlo labrada con aguja & con peyne. (GEV 558)

With cinnamon from Egypt, treasures from the Red Sea, riches of land and sea, gold, precious gems, and cloth from the Nile, Cleopatra is dressed, and resolutely suffering under the weight of her attire’s splendour, for the dining event. One could also say, by covering herself in goods from various regions and enduring the weight of the responsibility, she declares her dominion over the lands of Egypt and the lesser dressed guests at the meal.
As the ritual of invitees and their dining attire has been examined, we now move to indicators of status at the meal itself. We have seen that seating plays a significant role in defining one’s place among a group of diners. Alphonso outlines the seating at Cleopatra’s table as the following:

Et estos eran más libres sergentes ally en aquellos estrados & en aquellas noblezas se asentaron los reyes a comer. Et el cesar como más poderoso en más alto & mas onrado estrado & ally seye cleopatra muy fermosa ademas & más noble mente asentada que avn los sus señorios. (GEV558)

So, the company is divided into levels or “estrados” by their title. First, sit the “sergentes” from the “zona quemada.” Then sat the kings of various regions. Next, in the highest and most honored dais sat Caesar with Cleopatra by his side. Alphonso specifies that she sat even higher than her nobility. The use of “aun” suggest that prior to the dinner, this was not the norm either for Cleopatra, Alphonso X, or both. If this arrangement was a breaking of the custom for Cleopatra perhaps a statement was being made about future political ambitions with the new allegiance. We could speculate, then, that the choice of her chair perhaps foreshadowed her reign of Egypt.

With the guests seated in their corresponding stations, the meal commences. Alphonso mentions everyone served on “escudillas de oro.” However, a distinction is made with hand washing. To Caesar they offered water from the Nile in “manjles de xristal.” As aperitif, wine was served, “en serujllas de piedras preciosas puras & non sola mente era el vjno de lo noble de la ysla de mareot que es vjno manso mas avn non abastaua esto que de lo cibdat de mareot añejo pero non de muchos años que dezien que
era fuerte & rrescuso” (GEV 570). Water from the Nile itself and a wine\textsuperscript{21} strong and aged provide the refreshment to commence the meal and discussion of affairs.

Now that the event and group have been studied, the meal enters the scene. The food itself came after the political goal for the assembly was met. Alphonso relays, “Et puesta la paz & firmada fue asy que era aquel ora tiempo de comer & fue tan grande el gozo de tan grandes dos cossas como el fecho desta paz & de Cleopatra que se mostro en los adobios de los manjares tonts fueron & de tantas maneras” (GEV 555). So, food is shown here as the close of a political agreement. And the food in its “tantas maneras” is seen to reflect the pleasure of Cleopatra as a gift to her guests.

Another excerpt paints the meal with more detail. The text first outlines the quantity and variety of food presented at the table. It says:

\begin{quote}
E de manjares fizo otrossi Julio cesar esse dia adobar tantos & de tantas maneras quantas la tierra & las aguas & el ayre pudieron dar & los omnes saber & assacar. de guisa que non fue y omne que los comer & las maneras de ellos pudiesse contar aquel dia. (GEII 227)
\end{quote}

Although the texts seem detailed, they make no explicit mention of any foodstuff and a symbolic analysis become problematic. Alphonso does mention that the foods took the forms of all that the land, water, and air could provide, which leads us to believe that many meats (in the form of landdwellers, fish, and poultry) were a part of the celebration. Of course, as we have seen that meats symbolize wealth, masculinity, and can also have

\textsuperscript{21} Here Alfonso seems to misquote Lucan in Pharsalia Book X. On line 192 Lucan says they drank “no juice of Mareot grape But noble vintage of Falernian growth Which in few years in Meroe's vats had foamed, to ripeness.” (Tennant)
undercurrents of indulgence and decay. But, as Alphonso says, no man could remember all the aspects of the feast. So, he does not go into detail on any particular food item.

Next we look at the availability or quantity of cuisine. Egypt is cited as being blessed by its temperate position, so Alphonso portrays the meal as limitless. The only limit imposed is that of human memory trying to recall the various dishes or identify them.

With regard to variety of edibles, again there seems to be no end to the bounty of Cleopatra’s table. Alphonso continuously emphasizes the “tantas maneras” of food that were presented. But, we have other evidence of the bounty of the land in Cleopatra’s rich trappings and the flowering crowns of the Kings of Egypt. Again, we have no detailed information on the specifics of the dinner, but it is clear that it was diverse.

This emphasis on quantity and variety of food without mention of particular cuisine is interesting. Certainly feasting to the point of excess was of course in celebration of the significant event of naming Cleopatra queen. But, on this day the Egyptians feasted par excellence as it was an uncommon food event. Of course even in the midst of culinary abandon, one must be careful to temper their appetites. As Bober outlined, this feast between Cleopatra and Caesar was first seen as gluttonous by the Romans. It was, in fact, this meal and subsequent gluttony that was cited as the reason for Caesar’s fall.

It is true that all of the considerations above delineate a very ritualized eating behaviour on the part of the Egyptians. Normally, such care and societal organization would be indicative of a people closer to the center. However, as we have seen in Bober, the Roman, and subsequently alphonsine, interpretation of this event between Cleopatra
and Caesar was negative. Take into account Henisch’s social judgement for excess and remember that these culinary immoderation was frowned upon and in the story of Lucullus, who lavished himself with culinary riches, from the classical period. Alphonso finds a way to echo these sentiments of disapproval of the event. He criticises the Egyptians as pagans marred by, “bollicio de grant cobdicia de abondo de buscar por todas las tierras” (GEV 570). He also references the statues and utensils at the meal, describing the “aduchas muchas aues & muchas bestias saluages que onrrauan los de egipto en logar de dioses. Et esto non por fanbre fuese fecho mas por estrañeza & mayor abondo” (GEV 570). This statement, painting an image of pagan excesses and worshiping of savage creatures, taints the meal. And, most importantly, the Egyptians, not out of hunger or ignorance, chose this animal-based pagan way of life over that of gods of Rome or the one God of Alphonso. Thus, Alphonso is establishing a sliding scale: he seems to relate much more to Greek Roman humanoid mythology as a precursor to Christianity while distancing himself from the more primitive worship of animals.

The result of the portrayal of the Egyptian people is a bit muddled. On the one hand, the detailed description of clothing, seating, foods, etc. reflects a certain admiration of the Egyptian food culture, but at the end Alphonso’s final judgement relegates the Egyptians to an inferior status to that of the Christian center. He even notes, “Ally aprendio el cesar commo gastase las rriquezas del mundo que el andaua despojando” (GEV 570). We may conclude, then, that the environment of excessive ornamentation with little substance had a negative influence upon Caesar who would later strip the world of its riches to satisfy his insatiable greed.
Africa: Mount Atlas

As we leave the land of Egypt and move to lesser known regions we note the well defined ritualistic food culture that was illuminated along with an image of copious quantities and varieties of edibles. Yet, its ultimate judgement through Alphonso’s texts was negative and primitive due to the gluttonous excesses and pagan underpinnings. The other regions of Africa will not benefit from such a detailed cultural account, as knowledge of their cultures was superficial at best.

We now move southwest of the Ahaggar Mountains and Sahara Desert where trade caravans that linked the continent to Europe rarely ventured. This region was known as “Black Africa,” and it was largely mysterious to medieval Europeans. To examine lesser-known Africa we will begin with Mount Atlas in the northwest, regarding which Alphonso cites Pliny’s *Natural History*:

Que en Africa cerca las arenas yaze la tierra de la yente aque llaman los autololos. & por la tierra destos uan al mont de Africa muy nombrado de que cuentan los omnes muchas marauillas. & los sabios que fablaron del en los escriptos departen ques leuanta este mont de medio de las arenas & ua suso en alto que semeia que contiene con el cielo. Ca dizen que más alto es que las nuues & de la part dallend como descende contra las riberas del mar Occeano aquien pusieron nombre otrossi desse mont ell mar athlan. (GEI 605)

Rising from the middle of the sands and contending with the sky itself in height, Mount Atlas becomes the subject of many marvelous stories.
We find many scattered accounts, generally by lost or wandering parties, of the landscape and life in this mountainous area of extremes. For example, a group of Roman soldiers chases fleeing barbarians from battle and ends up on the mountain, which they knew on sight due to “el grand nombre & las muchas marauillas que oyeran muchas uezes contar del en sus libros añales” (GEII 611). They do not discover all the wonders found in the annals’ descriptions of the mountain, but they do stumble upon the river described by Pliny with “agua tan amarga como es la de la mar” (GEII 611).

Other accounts describe the land as “lleno de aruoles” with “muchas fuentes grandes & buenas” and year-long production of “fructos de todas naturas” (GEII 606). Of course there is a mystique to this land of plenty. It is described as “muy tenebregoso,” deviod of “omne njnguno” and eerily quiet (GEII 606). Alphonso, citing Pliny, describes the emotional states induced by this silence as “un pauor que les toma quando se paran de la parte de la tierra de los desiertos en que era este monte, que ue en alueñe muy grandes desiertos & todos yermos atodo cabo” (GEII 606-7). Therefore, on one side of the coin the mountain is all humankind could want for with trees, water, and abundant fruits. On the other side it is dark, hauntingly quiet, and completely deserted as far as the eye can see.

As far as inhabitants of Mount Atlas, there are few accounts. Alphonso gives two reasons for its uninhabited state. The first is because of the extreme heat. The text says, “serie marauilla como pudiessen alli morar njngunos ombres antel fuego del sol” (GEI 613). In another passage Alphonso describes a past presence of humans. He comments on the rumors of a fallen civilization remarking, “aun cuentan que fizo y aquel año muchas cibdades de que njn fazen los omnes oy emient. Njn ay aun señal dellas. ca diz
que se hermaron & se desfizieron por bestias fieras saluaies & otras asperezas dessas tierras” (GEI 608). Thus, the second reason for the scarcity of humans on the mountain is the general harshness of the lands, including being eaten by the savage beasts.

In other parts of the histories, we do find references to human occupancy. Book I of General Estoria says there are, “[U]nas yentes a que llamauan los canarios que morauan en unas sierras de cerca dalli. & aun que auie y muchos Elefantes, & muchas otras bestias saluages & serpientes de todas naturas más que de otras animalias. & que de las carnes destas animalias comien & uiuien los Canarios” (GEI 613)\(^{22}\). Alphonso justifies their survival, beyond eating what is found, by adding, “Et muestra aun ende mas que an aquellos Canarios unadas las entrañas las que son departidas en los otros” (GEI 613).

We also find Ovid’s contributions to the image of people of the mountain. According to him King Atlas himself made, “en un logar muy uicioso en el algarbe de Africa,” a grand tree with golden apples. He placed it in a garden and enclosed it with a high and strong wall. For good measure he also, “metio y una serpiente biua muy grand a marauilla que guardasse aquel macano & aquella huerta & diz que omne del mundo que se non osaua alla llega” (GEII 617). This event is indicated in many stories as the source for the name Mount Atlas.

The references above describe the gastronomy and the citizens, who were referred to as the “Canaries” or King Atlas. It points to the available foodstuffs as elephants, beasts, serpents, golden apples, and bitter waters. These strange edibles lead us to think of an unfortunate land that suffers from frequent droughts, infertile soil, and subsequent

\(^{22}\) Alphonso’s does not speak of the Canaries as if they are the Canary Islands. Rather, he locates this region as part of the African mainland.
alimentary instability. In the biblical sense, a drought is one of the disasters that God sends to lands to punish the unfaithful. Thus, we image in this stark land that they eat what they can.

There is also no mention whatsoever of an eating ritual. The image of Mount Atlas is not one that focuses on human cultures for probably two reasons. The first is that it is portrayed as scantily populated. Secondly, the people, Canaries, who do live there would have been regarded as primitive tribes with no higher food culture to speak of. Alphonso depicts the groups as eating for survival alone. They merely “biuen de” their food and, as such, have not had the luxury of defining high culture and social networking with regards to food\textsuperscript{23}. The Canaries are truly painted with a lack of organized food events. It is conceivable that Alphonso does not include this information because it is not accessible to him or because it does not serve his purpose. The primitive hunt for survival is all that we can garner from the information given to us.

As far as group eating, we have no indication of who ate with whom. Many accounts say no humans exist in the Mount Atlas regions, others say they did in the past but their civilization fell, and others say they exist through scraping by. The first book of General Estoria says that they eat and live off of the strange animals (GEI 613). This is the only mention of communal consumption and it seems to be merely in order to survive. They simply “live” off of their food, according to Alphonso. Yet again, the emphasis is on survival. Eating division by rank or in order to solidify group dynamics is completely absent from the accounts except for the reference to the groups of Roman

\textsuperscript{23} Of course, this was undoubtedly not the case. Many food anthropologists mentioned in this study have completed fascinating studies of the ritual food cultures of several tribal cultures around the globe. In Alphonso’s case, the lack of description is most likely due to lack of knowledge/bias.
soldiers who would not drink the water, eat the food, or linger in the area. They maintained their group by not venturing into the gastronomic realm of the other.

Beyond group eating and food events we can study the act of eating. The items on the table are elephants, generic “beasts,” serpents, golden apples, and bitter waters. Elephants are hardly considered a foodstuff. According to George Druce in his article “The Elephant in Medieval Legend and Art,” in medieval times elephants symbolize knowledge; Adam and Eve, when in pairs; and war, as they were used as caravans in battles. Elephants were considered sophisticated creatures that, with their knowledge and noble nature, were similar to humankind. So, the Canaries resorting to eating the elephant could be viewed as similar to consuming a near human or domesticated pet.

We cannot ignore the symbolism of the serpent. For medievals, this animal was the same from the Garden of Eden that seduces Eve, and thus flinging humanity from the terrestrial paradise. Adding to this perception, in the 5th century Prudentius, an Iberian poet, in his book El origen del pecado, writes of the serpent within all of us as the seed of sin. His theory, well-known in Spain at the time, was that through the process of eating and swallowing sin, the serpent lives within us and gives birth to vices that carry us to our graves (Chevalier 844). By connecting Prudentius’ concept of swallowing sin in the form of the serpent and the unfortunate snake-based diet of the Canaries, we can see how these people were labeled as inherently defective with sin. The text also presents the Canaries as mainly carnivorous peoples due to the lack of a vegetal aliment. Employing this mode of thinking gives birth to the idea of the Mount Atlas races as a diabolical and wild race due to their non-pious diet.
Now we come to the question of the golden apple. The apples of Mount Atlas are enclosed within a wall and guarded by a serpent. There is, of course, a biblical link between the serpent and the apple in the garden of Eve. Mount Atlas’s reference undeniably mirrors this account. The passage also echoes Roman tales of the Garden of Hesperides, Hera’s orchard of golden apples, guarded by a dragon Ladon, that bequeathed eternal life (Chevalier 35). In Greek mythology, Hercules steals the apples to complete his twelve labors. In one variation, he tricks Atlas into plucking the fruit for him and leaves him under the weight of the world. Lastly, there is the symbolism of the golden apple in the apple of discord given by Paris. Tempted by three goddesses, Hera (power), Athena (wisdom), and Aphrodite (love), Paris chooses to give the apple to Aphrodite and Helen of Sparta. Subsequently, the Trojan War begins (Chevalier 35). Each of these accounts portrays a decision to take the apple and the devastating consequences that follow: the fall of humankind, betrayal and imprisonment, and war. Chevalier describes the apple as the symbol of the decision between earth-bound passions (indulging in the fruit) and spiritual endeavors (abstaining). Therefore, encountering an apple places one, “under the obligation of making a choice” (Chevalier 37).

We must not forget the Roman soldiers who wandered and found nothing but bitter water. Numbers 5:18 proposes that bitter water carries a curse. Water here becomes the antithesis to God’s blessed living waters that he bequeaths his followers. Thus, the bitter water found on the mountain does not possess the qualities of the pure water of Jerusalem.

In these references to the mountain, the adjectives employed when the texts attempt to describe an aliment are scarce. Alphonso only illustrates a diversity of savage beasts
and the meat consumed from them. He signals that the Canaries eat “bestias salvajes,” which suggests a less civilized life. Again, without discretion, they eat what they can. And this less humane diet even causes them to be anatomically different from other humans. Essentially, he reveals to us that these people, as they are what they eat, are savages also in the medieval classical perception.

Concerning capacity of food in Mount Atlas, we find an interesting juxtaposition. In many accounts there is no alluding to a concept of abundance nor to a dietary stability that provides sustenance for everyone. Rather the image struck in our brain is that of inherent lacking, an image of competition for food with the Canaries fighting each other for each sliver of meat.

It is true that the excerpt mentions “muchos elefantes e muchas otras bestias saluages,” meaning numerous, but it appears to be more geared towards a variety of meats than quantity. Meat appears their only option in the form of creatures whose consumption seems strange or taboo for Europeans. In other words it indicates again, that they eat what they find- whatever that may be- not for pleasure or taste but because they must for survival.

On the other hand, we do have references to plenty. Expeditions and mythology have contributed tales with respect to abundant fruits on the uninhabited mountain and the enchanted tree dripping with golden apples. So, there is an alluring temptation of food for the hungry. What is intriguing about each of these offerings is the consequence of their consumption.

In the one instance, there is a mountain full of foods, but no one to eat them. It is earily quiet and an unsettling environment. As it is depicted as a veritable oasis in the
midst of a desert, it begs the question: why is no one there? Finding one’s self in such a locale would incite uncomfortable hypotheses. Is it cursed? Are there people here we can’t see? Are we being watched? Is it deserted because of some unseen danger? All of these conjectures tempt one not to stop and take a bite of fruit, but to leave...quickly.

In the second case, a high wall and dragon should be enough to warn one away. If not, the consequences of eating the golden apple itself have been perpetuating through mythology and folklore. One would know, then, that the fates of humankind and gods have been tainted by the fruit. Again, one best be on their way without sampling any of the produce.

Lastly, Bober and Mennell would prod us to consider the question of fear of consumption. It is evident that this fear permeates all accounts of Mount Atlas. Past inhabitants were cited as disappearing because they were eaten from the many savage beasts that call the mountain home. Also, there is an eery feeling just being present on the mountain not to mention dragons that would attack lest one pluck a golden apple from a guarded tree. For Alphonso, this area represented inherent danger of consumption and diabolical temptation.

So, compared to Egypt, Mount Atlas is a very different case. We notice a lack of detail with the descriptions of the foodstuffs and a few scattered reports that generally regard the mountains as, “llenas siempre de bestias fieras estrannas que se fazen en Africa” (GEII 609). Mount Atlas has two guises. Alphonso calls it, “una tierra muy fuerte et muy áspera lена de peñas & muy encastellada. & dotra guisa muy buena tierra & muy rica” (GEIII 612). It is strong, rough, and full of rocks, but it could be a good land-in the right (Christian) hands.
Africa: Ethiopia

While the descriptions of Egypt are very detailed and those of the Mount Atlas area are less, the last two areas of Africa, Ethiopia and Libya, are defined even less. Next, we travel south to Ethiopia,\(^{24}\) or the subsaharan regions of Africa. Alphonso enumerates:

> Et esta yente es señalada mientras de los Ethiopianos. & son unos de ellos a que llaman appartada mientras Peporsos. Et Peporso en el nuestro Latín tanto quiere dezir en el Castellano como aborrecient o aun aborrido. Ca tal yente como ésta & de tales usos & costumbres aborrida es entre las otras yentes o deuie lo ser. (GEI 614)

Besides the “boring” populace of the land, in book three of General Estoria Alphonso describes the animals saying, “las otras bestias saluaies’ brauas… son en las seluas; de tierra de Ethiopia, donde ellas an natura de se fazer & beuir” (GEIII 846). Those are some of the few references made to Ethiopia because, of course, knowledge of a land is acquired by traveling parties and expeditions. The Sahara proves so difficult to cross, that it becomes in both senses the border of medieval knowledge.

If we begin with eating events, like Mount Atlas, we see reference to none. However, Alphonso goes a step farther by characterizing the Ethiopians as boring with boring customs. He also says that their way of life is boring to all people, as it should be. A boring culture is a primitive culture with no food events or rituals to describe.

\(^{24}\) Saying “Ethiopia/Ethiopian” today can be confusing. In ancient times, the term did not indicate a defined country or region as much as it indicated the Sub-Saharan region of Africa. The location of the country today is of much reduced size and distinct locale than during the Classical or Middle Ages.
Alphonso effectively justifies his lack of information on the topic and discourages any future questions regarding the Ethiopian culture.

Group eating forms our next area of study. Once more, Alphonso has no such information to share. He does acknowledge the existence of two distinct groups. “Ethiopian” is an overarching term while “Peporsos” are a subgroup within the Ethiopians. As such, he is indicating a separation between groups of people, but we have no more information regarding their diet that reinforces that disconnection.

With regards to possible food sources, Alphonso counts the forests of Ethiopia, where savage ferocious beasts have the nature to reproduce and live. Ethiopia, then, is established as the source for the horrific beasts. The environment is such that it promotes their lives and supports their savagery. Thus, for Ethiopians, a diet of savage beasts appears to be what is on the table.

Savage beasts appear to be the standard for distant lands. We have heard of their existence in other parts of Africa. For more civilized areas, domestic beasts become the meal. However, in wild Africa, potential food sources are untamed and dangerous as the adjectives “salvajes” and “bravas” lead us to believe.

The quantity of foodstuffs is related to the availability of the wild animals of Ethiopia. Alphonso does suggest a certain accessibility to these animals. In the dense Ethiopian forests, they appear to thrive and reproduce.

Investigating the variety of foodstuffs is, again, a short task. The only possible source of food in Alphonso’s texts in Ethiopia is the savage beasts. While he gives no specifics as to what varieties of beasts there might be, all are vicious. Also, meat is the
only available option for edibles. Ethiopians, like residents of Mount Atlas, appear to be a carnivorous people.

Fear of consumption is the last area of investigation within Ethiopia. At each of our previous gastronomic analyses in this region, the presence of savage beasts has been emphasized. Alphonso paints the image of a primitive “boring” people, so we can imagine the hunting tactics that they might employ while trying to slay these animals. It seems then, that in order to sustain one’s self, one must continually face the danger of being eaten by their food source, an attitude which completely reflects Bober and Mennell’s theories regarding perceptions of distant lands.

**Africa: Libya**

Continuing through the African continent, we also see a few references to Libya. The term Libya in the historic tradition was either used to indicate all of Africa or Western Africa. Alphonso describes it as a land of sand, “tierra de las arenas” (*GEII* 847), wind and dust, saying “Et son siertes los peligros de las arenas de Africa en aquella tierra de Libia & lieuat ally esse viento abrego aquel poluo de vn logar & ponelo en otro” (*GEV* 30).

Concerning animal and human life in the area, the land is said to be dominated by monsters that affect Libya in various ways. First, “las gotas de la sangre que cayen de Medusa que se tornaron en culueuras & que enleñaron tierra de Libia” (*GEIII* 626) and second there are cave-dwelling giants that consume “las viandas que los otros omnes mas comje leones que tomaua a manos” and sleep on “tierra rrassa” (*GEV* 175).
Humans are scarce in the “tierra tan seca” (GEV 175). Those that are there, “non se faze lauor” (GEV 484). Nor have they “cuydado de labrar por pan njn de rronper la tierra para al” (GEV 484). Besides being slothenly, they are portrayed as ignorant to the species of trees around them and to methods of agriculture. As a consequence, they are “las sonbras dellos” trees, “cidrias,” which provide them sustenance. The sun and sand “quema las mjeses & afoga las vjñas.” Left to its will, the “perezosa” land produces “yruas mas pocas” (GEV 486).

These clotheless, poor people who “njn saben quando se comjenca el año njn quando se demedia njn quando se acaba” are portrayed as barely surviving in their harsh lands (GEV 486). Interestingly, this is not due to their desert environs, but to their barbaric ignorance or laziness. Finally, Alphonso also notes that the dusts would also kill any attempt at cultivating wine.

There is another passage, concerning the journeys of Cato in Libya, that relates a similar perspective. Alphonso begins by describing the voyage and attitudes of the party. It commences, “Et seyendo aquellas tierras llenas de tantos peligros commo auemos dicho njn folgauan de dia njn de noche Caton njn su hueste tanto aujan que veer en guardar se njn sabien donde se asentar quando posar querien” (GEV 521). The many dangers create a restless state for the army; nowhere is fit to sit or relax, as death is lurking around every corner. This inhospitable environment leads the soldiers to speculate why this land is so unsuitable. They say:

Et esta tierra que tantos vestiglos engendra & cria tolliste la tu a los omnes ca non pueden y morar & distela a las serpientes. Et daña le tierra que non quiere leuar pan tolliendole labrador & non quesiste que omnes
What is striking about this passage is its intent to suggest the land’s state as a consequence of previous actions. Echoing the idea of a product of ignorance and laziness on the part of the populace, Cato’s description portrays the land as being “given” to the serpents; it was “hurt.” So, punishment was dealt in the form of a harsh climate and a life of restless strife.

With regards to food events, we only are given an idea of day to day life. Alphonso makes no reference to other gastronomic cultural life or high society. He does, however, characterize Libyans as stupid and lazy. If a populace cannot calculate when the year begins and ends, how are the supposed to coordinate an establish hour for eating. The only “event” for such people would be surviving from one day to the next.

Group eating does not receive much attention either. Instead of seeing eating as a time to commune with other humans and discuss life, the Libyans are the shadows of their food. They flock to the trees that provide them sustenance rather than to seek order and higher meaning and the dinner table.

Regarding the symbolism of the Libyan diet, obviously, snakes are the central motif. We have seen the symbolism carried by the snake in other parts of Africa. One passage mentions Medusa and her sisters, who were, of course, also of ill repute. Alphonso explains that, like snakes themselves, the gorgons focused on the terrestrial; “souerbias & otras malas costumbres que auien ellas en si; & en que fazien caer a los omnes por su poder & por so fermosura” (GEIII 626). Perhaps the spilling of Medusa’s blood infected the land of Libya itself because the Learned King speculates that, “Ca por
la mayor parte de todas las yentes de tierra de Libia auien las costumbres que estas hermanas auien” (GEII 627). So, we may gather that a land filled with slivering animals leads to people of low moral and religious character because the serpents there, “todas matan & sacan el alma” (GEV 517).

Concerning agriculture, Libyians unfortunately cannot cultivate wine, due to the harsh conditions and their ignorance. Therefore they are left without the prestige and “table talk” associated with the sophisticated drink. They do, however, have cider. These comes from the trees without effort and the Libyians are bound to them as a result. Lastly, scavenging for the few grasses yielded by the land would constitute their meal preparation, which hardly coincides with the notions of a thoughtful diet that is even more thoughtfully prepared or manufactured. Remember that agriculture, or bringing the food to one’s self, was seen as much superior (indicative of higher humanity) to “shadowing” or “scavenging” one’s meals.

Besides snakes and spontaneous vegetation, there is only another reference to diet in Libia. The cave-dwelling giants catch up lions with their hands and eat them. Lions symbolize power, brightness, wisdom, justice, father, master, and monarch. Christ is the “Lion of Judah;” so the lion can symbolize resurrection itself (Chevalier 611-613). Alphonso himself spends several pages is General Estoria Book I touting the lion as, “piadoso al qui se le omilla...& que quando mal quiere fazer, quel faze más ayna a los uarones que a las mugieres. & a los mocos nunca ua si non con grand arrequexamiento de fambre” and that, “entienden ruegos” (GEI 1226). In his description, Alphonso echoes Chevalier’s symbolism as he certainly depicts the lion as a compassionate judge, temperate and wise.
Considering the symbolism associated with the lion and the fact that it is consumed by the monstrous giants, leads us to extrapolate an image of the land or people. Based on the diet of the giants, who consume/remove lions from Libya, we can consider Libya as having an absence of the qualities associated with the lion. In a barbaric way, using their hands, the monsters grip a lion and swallow all justice, temperance, and hope of resurrection in Libya. Unfortunately, we see no change in the behavior of the giants after consuming the noble lion. Perhaps that is due to their unwavering monstrous state.

Besides the humans’ diet of snakes and the giants’ diet of lion, there is very little food mentioned in Libya. However, we do note reference to the absence of food. Although alternating between contradictory standpoints throughout the texts, at many points saying Libyans are without faith, at another point Alphonso explains how the Africans worship Saturn. He says, “Et por esta razón los de aquella tierra non comien carnero, njen oueia, njen njnguna cosa de su linage. & non amauan por y las oueias pero que los non desamauan de tod en todo” (GEI 528). So, because of their religion, they abstain from rams and sheep. This abstention, albeit from a pagan faith, could elevate esteem for the Libyans. However one could say that the last phrase, “los non desamauan de tod en todo,” could hint at an incomplete abstention from the meat. As Siete Partidas indicates, there is only one thing worse than a pagan and that is a bad pagan. Therefore, in spite of the vacillation between descriptions as non-believers or as pagans, the negative attitude towards Africans based on their diet could be reinforced by the admission of their lack of adhesion to the rules of their supposed faith.
We also find generalizations with regards to Africans as a whole. Alphonso speaks about the best asses of Friggia and Licaonia and how “los omnes de Africa mucho aman comer los pollinos destos. & estos asnos desta natura & mezcla uiuen mucho” (GEII 1250). Of course, this tendency to eat of a mixed animal was perceived as a negative quality as we showed in the third chapter that “uos auemos dicho de las mezcllas de las animalias que non eran njn son de comer et fazien las fazer los omnes” (GEII 1250).

Finally, in Africa, we are faced with the fear of being eaten described by Bober. References to the many “bestias saluages,” snakes, and man-eating giants leave no doubt as to the danger of being consumed. However, there is a very specific yarn that addresses this fear and the capacity of the locals to deal with it.

To begin the discussion, Alphonso mentions two peoples. Near the Nile\(^25\) on an island called Tiro Alphonso describes “yente pequeña” who have a “natura que con el su olor solo dellos se espantan las sirpientes & fuyen dellos. lo que non fazen ante njngun omne dotra tierra” (GEI 487). Others, “psillos,” “yaze enterrado en cabo de las tierras de las arenas. & diz que a estos psillos nasce por natura un uenino en los cuerpos. que si a las serpientes tañen con el que las matan. & otrossi que si ellas le uelen que con ell olor solo del se aduermen” (GEI 487-488).

The snake-like nature of the people of Tiro allows them to live among the crocodiles, but not without developing a manner of dealing with them. According to Alphonso, it is a regular occurence for a man of Tiro to be eaten by a crocodile (GEI

\(^{25}\) Alphonso also references Crates of Troy and a septentrional island “Ponton” where snakemen “Ophiogenes” reside.
When this happens a community member chases the crocodile into the Nile and uses sticks and grabs its tail to pull it out of the water. At that point, as “la cocadriz a por natura de temer las uozes de los omnes daquel linage,” the tribesmen scream. Finally, “la cocadriz con el grand espanto que a dellos. echa uiuo por la boca ell omne que auie tragado” (GEII 487-488).

Danger is nearly always apparent in Alphonso’s descriptions of Africa and the danger of being consumed is at the forefront. The passage above depicts a people who are eaten and regurgitated on a regular basis. Although it is true that in this instance the superficial danger is averted by a shared cultual knowledge and practice, if we consider the food-identity link perhaps the greater danger is not avoided. If “you are what you eat” then the link between serpent (as consumer) and man (as consumed) is well established. Perhaps this accounts for the blurred nature of the people of Tiro that seem to teeter on the edge with serpent-like qualities and those of humankind.

We must also mention the “Trogoditas,” who are listed as located in Africa. Alphonso says that, “moran en cueuas & non an otras casas. Biuen de carnes de serpientes & non an boz. & quando quieren fablar fazen un sueno como roydo o murmurio en logar de boz” (GEII 686). Of course, this description comes from the Greek monstrous races.

No events are described but one dining group exists in Alphonso’s description. The Trogaditos form a community that live in the darkness of caves and eat snakes. So, a dining group and a shared food source seem to exist. However, we can’t imagine much interaction of this group at the table as Alphonso describes them as having no voices. Thus, no “table talk” for them.
Again, we see a strange people with a diet of snakes, whose symbolism we have already examined extensively. It is portrayed as a grotesque and subhuman diet. This of course serves to portray the cave-dwellers as less human and merely sustaining themselves.

Quantity is also not well defined. They seem to survive on these snakes. But, their animalistic voiceless depiction indicates that their existence appears to be subhuman as well as subterranean.

Variety is nonexistent. In Alphonso’s story they eat snakes, and that is all. A people who live in darkness and partake of nothing but snakes, combined with Prudentiuses theories of sin forms an interesting image of these Africans.

**The Fortunate Islands**

Having analyzed Africa’s foodstuffs, we travel to the western edge on the map. Obviously, during this period, America did not exist in their mindsets. Therefore, the “Fortunate Islands” are the farthest western land, purportedly located near the Moroccan coast. The Atlantic Ocean, for its part, was home of these marvelous islands since the classical period. They had been the subject of deliberation since antiquity, described by authors such as Tímaiós, Diodoros, and Plutarch, who situated them farther west than Atlas. In their descriptions, the islands’ temperate climate, colorful gardens, and perfumed breezes combined with an abundance of natural goods to such an extent that men, because only men lived there, did not have to work (García y Bellido 50-52).
Antonio García y Bellido in his article “Las islas de los bienaventurados o las islas afortunadas” comments that:

La descripción de ciertas islas paradisíacas en el remoto y misterioso Occidente es un curioso fenómeno de la Antigüedad, en el que juegan papel preponderante la geografía, en primer término, y a su lado la investigación literaria, ambas, empero, íntimamente ligadas al ansia universal, nunca saciada, de creer en la existencia de aquel lugar soñado en el que sea posible gozar de felicidad sin pausas, de buenaventura sin orillas, de vida sin muerte: en suma, de un sitio alejado, recóndito, aislado, en el que sea factible vivir sin dolores ni preocupaciones, sin temores y sin penas, sin congojas ni angustias. (48)

The obsession of this hidden heaven on earth lasts for centuries. Even the 14th century Atlas Catalán situates them farther than Ínsula de Canaria, accompanying the drawing with a brief mention of its abundance and paradaisical character. Pliny, a source much utilized by Alphonso X, describes these same islands in his writing. He depicts them with “abundancia de frutos arboleos y pájaros de todas clases. Además, esta última es copiosa en palmeras datileras y piñas. Hay también miel en cantidad…” (Martínez 178). Much later when the medieval text Semejanza del mundo says “abondadas e llenas de todos bienes” (SDM
Thus, if one has the fortune to travel there, we can imagine eating delicate fruits, exotic birds, palms, pineapples, and more.

In paradise, every day is an event. The celebration of life is pronounced through daily feasting on limitless food items. This concept of daily merriment makes sense when one describes earthly paradise.

As far as group eating, descriptions of the Fortunate Isles tend to portray them as empty. Neither Pliny nor Semejanza del mundo mention people there. These islands were seen as a reward for valor. So, only the bravest, forming a valient food group, would grace their shores. However, we have no indication of differentiation between members of the group. This could indicate, at least among those worthy enough to find the islands, democratization in paradise.

Regarding the plethora of foods mentioned in the isles, during our description of Jerusalem, we already described the symbolism of fruit as the paradisiacal product and the honey as the promised food in the Promised Land. However, what is interesting in the description of the islands is that they point out very specific types of foods. The accounts name the palm and date tree, a sacred tree of Babylonia, as an available product to the appetite of the island. This plant symbolizes the just man that is enriched by God’s gifts. In Egypt it represents the column of the axis mundi that connects the sacred and terrestrial worlds (Chevalier 274). Also, in the book of Psalms we find the saying “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.” All of this is rationalized by the fact that these islands are supposed to be a gift reserved for the pleasure of the faithful and good followers, gentlemen of God and valiant in war. Only these men would be able to find
the islands. Once on the blessed shores under the sun, they would flourish without the anxiety of terrestrial worries plucking dates off the tree at their side.

On the same token, we should mention the symbolism of the bird, of the highest element air, that is mentioned here. This food symbolizes spiritual states as it is the messenger of God, and also, it travels freely between heaven and earth (Chevalier 87). Therefore, it repeats the transitory idea between this world and the terrestrial world of the date and the bird that they consume on the island. We should also realize that in these islands they eat both fruit and meats, meanwhile in the sacred center of Jerusalem and the barren lands of Africa people are limited to one or the other. It serves to emphasize the luxury of eating in the islands and the exotic and incredible variety of foods that are portioned to them.

In this terrestrial paradise, texts also employ many adjectives to specify the types of food, the flavor, or the act of eating. They emphasize the sensuality of the eating experience. That is to say, in the paradisiacal environment, eating is an indulgent pleasure and, therefore, in the description of these islands, the scene of gluttony is nearly set. However, what may normally be considered sinful, within the paradise context provided by God, there is no need to rationalize it in this manner. It is not gluttonous to accept God’s rewards for loyal service.

To consider the quantity of food in the island is another interesting endeavor. We know that they benefited from a plethora of aliments from vegetal and carnal bases, but also their diet is amplified by the overflowing cornucopia that we find. In contrast, Jerusalem only dares to be sufficient and Africa does not mention abundance by any means while the Fortunate Islands brim over with profuse descriptions of foods. The
account specifically utilizes descriptions of “abundancia,” “copiosa,” “en cantidad” and “llenas de todos bienes” to emphasize the innumerable quantities of goods that are found there. We are presented with a scene of banquet. It indicates the good life shared by the grace of God and his community of disciples.

Concerning the variety of edibles, we have vegetables and meats to choose from. This is of course contrary to depictions of both Jerusalem, which is vegetarian-based, and Africa, which is largely meat based. High growing fruits and high flying animals form the divine diet in the Fortunate Isles. This is not extremely varied, but all substances are high on the Great Chain of Being.

Interestingly enough, despite the rich classical heritage and the references to the Isles in other medieval texts, Alphonso makes no references to these pagan isles. When referencing one of his sources, he even omits the sections pertaining to them. For example, in Book V of Grande y General Estoria Alphonso is translating much of Lucan’s Pharsalia. Upon landing on the coast of Africa Caesar is presented with his rival Pompey’s head. In the original text, Caesar’s elegy alludes to the Elysian fields that Pompey will encounter. Many take this reference to mean the Fortunate Islands, where the valiant spend the rest of their days (or even afterlife) in paradisical splendor. We see no such option in Alphonso’s works. Speculating as to the reason for the omission of these mythological paradises, we could count their absence as the product of their pagan roots and the sacrilege of promoting the concept of an alternative to Christian heaven or a land that could rival Jerusalem as map center.

Despite the absence of the Fortunate Isles, Alphonso does mention an island at the most western point of the world to where Hercules ventures. He relays that Hercules:
[A]rribo a una ysla o entra el mar Mediterraneo en el mar Oceano. E porque semeio que aquel logar era muy uicioso y estaua en el comienço doccident fizo y una torre muy grand e puso ensomo una ymagen de cobre bien fecha, que cataua contra orient. E tenie en la mano diestra una grand llaue en semeiante cuemo que querie abrir puerta. E la mano siniestra tenie alc'ada e tenduda contra orient. E auie escripto enla palma, ‘estos son los moiones de hercule.’ E por que en Latin dizen por moiones gades, pusieron nombre a la ysla Gades Hercules. aquella que oy en día llaman Caliz. (EE 14)

Of course what this citation is referring to are the Columns of Hercules at the Strait of Gibraltar. The “island” is not an island at all and Hercules’ adventure is transferred from a mythical local to Spain itself.

Another source of Alphonso’s, Pliny’s Natural History, names one of the Fortunate Isles “Canaria.” Alphonso chooses to use this term, but in reference to a group of people associated with Mount Atlas, as we saw in our analysis of Africa. Despite Pliny’s Canaria as a rich place full of gastronomic delight, we saw how the diet of Mount Atlas was portrayed. So, in large part, Alphonso discredits the notion of the paradosical lands in island form or in Africa. Lastly, if we think back to the golden apples of the Hesperides, we note that the western islands typically associated with this myth have been transferred to Mount Atlas as well. Negating the presence of any islands in the western Mar Oceano, places Spain in the westernmost position.

Thule
Thule is a land to the far north. In many accounts it is a specific island and in others it means an unknown space in the septentrion. In Roman times knowledge was in large part limited to southern Great Britain within the confines of Hadrian’s wall. In Alphonso’s work, we see an extended vision of the world with references to unknown northern spaces. Alphonso describes the area as:

En el grand mar oceano de la parte de cierc'o ay muchas yslas. Assi cuemo Ingla Terra, a que llamaron antiqua mientras Bretanna la mayor. E es Ybernia a la que llaman Yslanda. E son y Escocia e Escancia a que llaman Nuruega. E es y thisia e otra ysla que llaman Cile. Todas estas son de parte de cierc'o las unas contra occident, e las otras contra orient. (EE 7)

He characterizes the people of the north as almujuces, who he later cites as invading Spain and thereby causing its fall to the North Africans.

Alphonso does include the existence of Thule in his world map, but he does not seem very knowledgeable on the topic. In General Estoria, regarding a place he calls “Thebas,” he says, “Thebas una ysla es del mar Occeano que es el mar mayor que cerca toda la tierra aderredor. Et que yaze entre septemtrion & la partida de Occident cerca Bretanna” (GEII 175) and “[S]o mar, assi cuemo cosa perezosa, & esto es que se non mueue. & aun diz que esta quaiado del frio que es allí grant además [y] a por fronteras de la parte de aquent las Islas orcadas que son traynta & tres” (GEII 176). The location given for the island seems to correspond to that for Thule. However, Alphonso continues, “Et ua de la otra parte el so Reyno cerca de Athenas & dell mont Elicon” (GEII 175).
Describing an island surrounded by a frozen sea and bordered on one side by the Orkney Islands that is near Athens, Greece seems ludicrous. This could be due to the mixing up the island of Thule with Thebes. Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Al-Makkari, in The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain shows that a mistake was made in Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Muhammad al-Maqrizi’s egyptian history, written in the XIVth century, where Thule was referred to as Tutti due to a very slight difference between the two words in Arabic (317). It is possible that Alphonso and Al-Makkari could have shared an Arabic source that made this error originally or perhaps the subtle curvature could have caused both to make a mistake in translating the word.

While Thule occupies a minimal role in Alphonso’s histories, Britain and its history form a significant part. This knowledge of British culture, as part of the Roman Empire, and proximity to the center hardly allow it qualify as a peripheral space. But, there is only one unique anecdote with regards to the English diet. Alphonso uses the English as examples saying, “del uino que an tomada que matan a los otros: dont es este enxienplo de deuer se ende guardar todo omne. Sobre que pone el frayre enxienplo que en Jngla tierra mueren por bebdos” (GEII 434). Urging soldiers to take heed and not drink themselves to death like the English, is definitely an interesting stereotype for Alphonso’s neighbors to the north.

The absence of food events and group eating mark this land of the north. Alphonso’s knowledge seems limited. Most lands are even portrayed as uninhabited, save somewhere farther south and close to the center, England. In Thule and the far north, there is also no reference to availability of food or variety of edibles.
There is no mention of foodstuffs. The only evidence to be gleaned involved drinking in England. In England, they drink wine. This makes sense considering its position within the Roman Empire. Wine denotes sophistication and attention to higher thought; of course, it is manufactured. However, this appears to be contradicted when Alphonso says that Englishmen drink themselves to death, an example not to be followed.

Bober’s fear of being consumed could be associated with two options. One can be consumed by the extreme and still cold in the far north. On the other hand, one can be consumed by drink in England.

**Septentrion**

Now we travel to the northeast of the map to the land of the Goths. In this septentrional region the texts emphasize the cold temperatures with the constant references to the frozen waters. Using the foundation laid by Greek Roman explorers, Alphonso describes the Goth’s lands on the island called “Scançia.” “Et segunt fallamos por los libros de las estorias, & por las cronicas. Estos Scitas fueron los Godos, & morauan en Septemtrion en la ysla de Ecancia. Assi cuemo cuentan las estorias” (GEII 247).

The isolation of this land is emphasized by reiterations of, “non anda nin passan nauios ningunos por ella, et este es mar elado” (EE 552). A lack of ships suggests a lack of humankind capable to navigate the frozen waters. So, the ice is functioning as a
barrier that separates more “developed” humans from accessing the barbarians of the frozen island.

Besides the state of isolation, Scançia is portrayed as devoid of aliments. General Estoria I explains, “Et tan gran es la friura de la partida de aquella tierra de Scançia que numqua fallan y abeias, por que las non dexa y criar el gran frio que las mata” (EE 553). We are called to the passage mentioned in the previous chapter, “Non uos cria tantas cosas nin tan a abondo como las otras tierras tempradas…echar nos ha daqui” (GEII 248). This empty land is obviously not fit for humans; those unfortuante enough to call the far north home are desperate to leave for “mas & meior temprada” lands (GEII 248).

In Estoria de Espanna Alphonso also states, “Non era tierra de grand plantia no abondada de las cosas, et conseio que a sus yentes ques fuesen de aquella tierra…et fizieron lo” (EE 554). The landscape is painted as devoid of bees and plants, among other things. This gives the impression of a land that cannot sustain the Goth’s population and, therefore, they must abandon it in search of a more hospitable domain.

Estoria de Espanna continues describing the people of Scançia as owners of beautiful horses. They also are impoverished, but dress well. These may seem to be complementary or neutral statements, however, they are quickly undermined by descriptions of their freakish giant stature and their barbaric behavior as they “lidiauan cruelmientre cuemo bestias salvajes” (EE 553). Considering that depictions alternate between civilized and uncivilized, it is suggestive to note that when they relocate to “tierra plantia” on the west of the island they appear less barbaric in their customs by engaging in agriculture (EE 553). And, as Aristotle suggests, their diet seems to change their level of humanity.
Events for dining are not outlined. The absence of a food source would of course preempt any such celebration or quotidian experience. The only event we could perhaps imagine is one involving fighting over food. This is the antithesis to the peaceful communal benefit that food is lauded to provide. When they relocate, however, some form of ritual might be cultivated.

Alphonso does mention groups of people. They seem to be united in their desire to leave their land, but on the other hand fight like savages. We could speculate that such arguments might involve access to food sources, as often occurs with “bestias salvages.” Reiterating the notion of gastronomic discord is the table-less nature of Scançia and the lack of the table’s friend-making quality. For lack of bread, Scançia is missing compañeros.

As far as specific animals, the text mentions bees that cannot survive under the extreme conditions of temperature and darkness that septentrional land provides. Desolate visions of the north are completely juxtaposed to that of Jerusalem, promised land of milk and honey. In Scançia, there will be no honey or any other similar substance. Therefore, when considering the symbolism of foodstuffs in the Goth’s land, we must conclude that it would be fitting to judge the land as the inverse of symbolism of the foods mentioned as absent or unable to thrive. We have already established that honey is the primordial food substance associated with richness, plenty, and sweetness that gave poetry to Pindar and learning to Pythagoras, and also allows its consumer to distinguish between good and evil (Chevalier 510-511). So, we can deduce that in the frozen lands of the Goths there is no richness, sweetness, art, or culture. Interestingly, the absence of the bee itself embodies the idea of the masses condemned to an unfortunate
destiny. According to Chevalier, “The bee was a creature endowed with fire…it cleansed with fire and nourished with honey: its sting burned and its glittering form cast light” (80). With fire and air as the top two elements, the bee seems to embody the antithesis of Scançia, a place well-known for its coldness and lack of light. So, it aids in the depiction of Scançia as inferior.

Adjectives that describe the gastronomy of Scançia are also sparse. The only entity that seems to benefit from much description is the temperature. The texts emphasize this trait repeatedly by characterizing the cold as “gran.”

Concerning the quantity of food in the periphery of the septentrion, obviously the texts signal that there is none. The passages accentuate the absence of any alimentary substance. If a bee represents protein or meat, there is none. If we logically assume the mentioned plants as a provider of vegetal sustenance, it does not exist. If we still doubt the dreaded straits of Scançia, the texts signal that “tampoco hay otras cosas.” All of these deductions lead to the conclusion that the presence of humans in this corner of the world is a defiance of natural laws.

Of course, variety of food also is non existent. The only mention of food is that of food that does not exist there. The Scancians say that there are not “tantas cosas” that grow there. Thus, there do appear to be a few plants that can sustain themselves in this colder climate. But, they are left surviving on the few unmentioned aliments that do seem to survive the extreme temperatures. This hardly paints a picture of thriving life.

Being consumed was feared in Scancia, but not in the form of savage beasts. The cold that kills the bees and prevents other forms of life from thriving is certainly a
preoccupation for the inhabitants. If it kills light and stills movement, it can surely consume the hearts of humankind.

To the northeast, at the “cabo a septentrion” (GEI 152), we come to a land known as Scythia, “elada” (GEV 289). It was another land defined as territory of the Goths. Alphonso describes Babylonia’s conquest of Scythian lands. In their “original” state, presumably before having contact with the map center, they were perceived as:

Barbaras aquellas yentes & pocas & esparzudas & flacas aun estonces quando a esta primera uez & sin batalla. & que nin buscauan nin fazien mal ninguno, njn otre a ellos. & estauan commo durmiendo en sus tierras. & esperto lo el & fizo los coñoscier las sus fuercas. & uiuien ellos dantes de leche de sus ganados. Mas de guisa los arrequexo el & los apremio, por quel non quisiern recebir queles fizo comer. non tan sola mientre la leche de los ganados mas ueuir de sangre de omnes. (GEI 152)

Later, Hircania, a northwestern land included within Scythia, is portrayed on one hand as “tierra aspera de seluas fragosas pedregosas & llena de grandes bestias saluaies como de tigres & de pantheras que dize el Latin por lobos ceruales & otrossi de pardos & de otras bestias muchas brauas de muchas naturas segund virgilio departe de aquella tierra” (GEIV 1216). On the other hand it is “departe de occident muchas tierras & es esto por la tierra que es plantia. & pero daquellas yentes las que son en la buena heredad labran la tierra & an quanto quieren. & uiuen daquello. Las otras yentes son estrañas & fazañosas & crueles como que diz la estoria que uiuen de carnes de omnes & de las sangres dellas” (GEIV 1215).
If we first consider temporal inclinations, we see a prehistoric view of the Scythians. They were barbarian, skinny, and sparsely scattered. They were not inclined to violence, but this is presented less as an admirable trait and more as the result of ignorance. They were portrayed as asleep on their lands; so agriculture must not have been employed. Lastly, their diet was so atrocious, that they had to be broken of it because the King Nino would not share their table when he conquered them. Their normal meals included milk from their livestock and human blood.

Later views of the Scythians characterize their land as savage and full of wild beasts, especially tigers. But, there is also reference to a particular area within the Scythian region: Hyrcania. In this land we have those residing in the west (closer to the center) and those of the east. The western dwellers, of good ancestry (Alexander conquered this area) have good fertile land and work it and have a good life. Those of the east (far from the map center) are strange and cruel beings who live off of human meat and blood. Indeed there is still architectural evidence of “Alexander’s wall” that separates civil Hyrcania from the savage eastern plains. Thus, we see that with time and “centralization,” the people of western Scythia adapt more civilized habits.

Food events should be analyzed first. Alphonso portrays the people of Scythia as workers of the land who have enough food on a daily basis, however primitive they may be. Nevertheless historically their practices were unpalatable to King Nino who conquered their lands.

But, in time we move from a table unfit to share to two principal groups being distinguished. Those of western Scythia are more civilized. They have “buena” ancestry and fertile land, which they cultivate for their food. Their diet is more similar to that of
the center. On the contrary, the eastern Scythians are savages; they eat the flesh and blood of humans. Diet is what distinguishes these two groups of people. Each cohort prescribes to its own food code.

The westward influx “woke up” the Scythians on the western side. They began to use agriculture, which symbolizes an advanced culture. However, those to the east, farther from the center, maintain the practice of cannibalism, which symbolizes the very antithesis of civilization. We will examine cannibalism in greater death when we discuss India.

Availability of food seems to be consistent, at least for the western region that practices agriculture. This gives the image of an orderly society where meals are doled out regularly and peace is maintained. To the east, conversely, this is not the case. We are left with the impression of low availability of food and violence and cannibalism as a result of its scarcity.

Variety of food is not indicated with either group. We are led to believe that agriculture has provided western Scythia with a strong vegetal base that could be punctuated by the occasional meat. The eastern Scythians only mention of foodstuff is human blood and flesh. They are portrayed as hunters who eat when opportunity presents itself.

Bober’s fear of cannibalistic consumption is felt in this region. The peaceful western Scythians appear threatened by those of the east. This threat does not take the form of plundering or crop stealing, but of being eaten by the uncivilized races. Such a characterization is common with reference to Asia and we will discuss it further.

The line between Scythia and Asia is not very clearly drawn. Scythians are also
sometimes referred to as Asians and the area is generally associated with the Persian Empire. Not surprisingly the lands of Asia are full of “barbaria” (GEV 4). Alphonso relates the story of King Perseus who “passo a Asia & gano tierra de barbaria & reyno en ella” (GEIII 654). As he was a wise man, he fought and conquered the people of this land. And, as a result, “aquella tierra que llamauan antes barbaria; tolliol este nombre. & pusol otro nombre del suyo. & llamaron la perssia, & a los barbaros Perssianos. Et maguer que estos nombres barbaros, & barbaria. los llamamos aun oy en dia a las uezes” (GEIII 654-655). Other accounts of Asia include Alexander the Great and the speaking trees and spirits and the phoenix perched in the leafless tree (GEIII 192).

India

Finally, we complete our circle in the east. In this peripheral region of the Classical Medieval world, the question of cannibalism becomes apparent. We must remember how John Friedman in his book *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* explores the topic of cannibalism always associated with the peripheries (Friedman 152). India, of course, fits perfectly into this framework as a remote land with an unchristian populace. Merral Price echoes Friedman’s sentiments concerning the Greeks, who:

[E]nvisioned rings of progressively more primitive social development surrounding a Mediterranean hearth; in the furthest ring, at the banks of the Ocean, social primitivism becomes absolute. As the archetype of (anti)social primitivism and the antithesis of culture, the anthropophagous
peoples were placed well beyond the oikumene, at the extreme edges of the known world-in the far north, such as Ireland, or Scythia, or well to the south or east, such as Ethiopia and India. (Price 5)

With Jerusalem in the center of Medieval Christian maps, India is certainly relegated to the unknown periphery. The fragment of text from General Estoria that we observe below is an excerpt from the tale of Gog and Magog. According to the legends, Alexander fights these men beasts and encloses them within a wall in the land of India. Alphonso specifies:

[Q]ue una manera de omnes fue en los postremeros cabos de los indianos & dizien les como por sobre nombre Gog & Magog. & todos los sanctos padres qui de ellos fablan & otrossi las estorias de los otros sabios & aun la grand sibilla; cuentan que fueron yent que comien las carnes de los omnes & los de los lobos, & de los canes, & las Ranas. & que todos comunal mientre aquellos de gog & de Magog comien los carcados de toda animalia muerta, & los padres a los fijos quando murien, & aun ellos a ellos, & las mugieres a los maridos, & ellas a ellos, & los hermanos, & las hermanas esso mismo fazien a los otros de guisa que dize ell autor que todos eran luziellos unos dotros. & cuenta otrossi que nin sabien que cosa era Rey, nin ley, nin cabdiello, nin alcalde, nin derecho nin uiuien por Regla ninguna. (GEIII: 1026)

An uncontrolled cannibalism is reflected in this paragraph. Men, foxes, dogs, frogs, and carrion are the items on the menu in India.
Dining events seem to be non existent. Despite punctuation with other vile sources of food, rampant and violent cannibalism seem to represent the everyday life of Indians. Higher thought and union around the dining table are voided. The table is not shared; there is neither gastronomic camaraderie nor an outlet for sharing reflections.

As they have no rules or cultural custom, there also appears to be no dining group solidarity. They eat of each other without discrimination. Father eats son, son eats mother, etc. Absolutely no borders exist between the people and there is no respect for laws and structure. This, of course, indicates a lack of social order and developed systems of governance, both of which required an intellectual ability that these tribes did not possess according to Alphonso. Also, remember that order is divine and chaos is diabolical.

Besides eating each other indiscriminately, the Indians eat foxes, dogs, spiders, that symbolize respectively “semper peccator, semper justus” and furtiveness, the deity of death and a vile creature (Chevalier 407, 300, 411). We may conclude that each element of their diet is a vice or repugnant act, which obviously creates many repercussions when compared to the Mediterranean populace. According to the information the text provides, they are not merely barbarians without culture, but they also partake in a custom that “civilized centers” had assumed were universally understood. Not only do they violate the code of decency by engaging in cannibalism, but they break even the most basic human prescriptions by eating family members. Price enumerates that:

These races are monstrous by virtue of their transgression of normally rigid categories-by their hybridity, their physical excess or lack, or their
moral and behavioral characteristics. One of the prime moral transgressions is that of consuming human flesh. (Price 16)

So, the Indians are morally inferior due to their transgression. If we are left with any doubts as to their civility, the text clarifies that they follow no King, nor law. As social heirarchies such as these are indicative of organization on a grand scale, we are left with an image of unorganized barbaric people.

With reference to the quantity of alimentary recourses, the passages do not focus on abundance, as we saw in Africa, but rather on a people who eat without prejudice of the available flora and fauna. They portray a sneaky untrustable people that rummage the land for anything they can swallow. Considering their indiscriminating appetite, it appears that food is never far away and the central dilemma for a cannibalistic society endures; the proliferation of their population is also the death of it.

In the same respect, the text does not utilize adjectives to describe the foodstuffs. To enumerate the experience of eating human flesh would be another moral transgression. Instead, to emphasize variety, Alphonso focuses on the multitude of reciprocal situations of eating. The people of India do not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, position, or anything else. What ensues from the description is an unceremonious banquet of human flesh where higher conscious never enters and a race that, due to consumption of a certain food, “deserves” subordination by Christian races.

**Antipodes**
Beyond what is typically considered as the medieval globe, if we took the circular world as a coin and flipped it over, we would have Aristotle’s antipodes. Alphonso does make brief mention of these mythical lands in his texts. In Book 5 of General Estoria it says that in Scythia:

[F]azen la ellas mouer quando quieren & el exe del firmamjento abrir se & quedar quando quieren & yr se & abrir se la carga de tamaña pesadunbre tañendola el encantamjento destas & dar por sy yuso la vista del firmamjento de commo se buelue enderredor & mostrar alla los omnes que dezimos antipodes & toda anjmalia poderosa de matar & nascida para nozjr ha mjedo a las mugeres de emonja. Et la muerte della es obra de las sus artes. A estas vienen falagar las tigres a estas los sañudos leones por sus encantamjentos. Por estas sallen las serpentientes & seles tienden delante en el canpo elado. (GEV 289)

So, in the north Alphonso speaks of witches who can turn the earth to reveal the antipodes. Concerning the antipodes and their diet, etc. we find nothing. Later, Alphonso describes that if we revolved with the earth and stopped with our backs to the cold, “puede seer que seamos nos ya con los pueblos a que los sabios llamaron antipodes. Et sy asy es ya esta rroma so los pies mjos commo dixe & estos son los conortes que nos buscamos contra nuestra muerte” (GEV 525). So, their existence is acknowledged, but too little is known to describe them.

As a conclusion, in spite of the preconceived notion that has been formed of the map as the product of purely scientific endeavors, our study hopes to show that cartography deserves to be studies from another angle. Even as readers and modern
cartographers we carry our own partiality upon seeing a map. We, too, tend to attribute certain characteristics to a land people merely due to their location on a map. We may guess that there are few who have seen the globe from the perspective of another hemisphere. For each time we turn on the television or other format of visual culture, we are bombarded by images of the United States oriented perfectly in the center. This ubiquitous bias causes, when we glimpse an image of the world from another direction, a reacción of shock and unfamiliarity. Because of such prejudices, our study of the linkage between map and meal as representative of a culture’s ideology deserves consideration.

Applying theories of cuisine and cartography is very appropriate as evidentiated by the strong Classical and Medieval inclinations to define a space, “over there,” on the parchment by what one is able to eat there and by differentiating it from the food of the center or “here.” We have demonstrated how we can link this alimentary concept with the map outside of the more conventionally studied domain, that of a scientific-cartographic, and approximate the cultural ideas that are present on a map. We have tried to combine cartographic studies with a gastronomic cultural precept in order to open both maps and food studies in literature to other possibilities of interpretation.

On medieval maps, frequently the line that defines the coasts is surprisingly accurate to today’s standards. Considering that the medievals, in many cases, depended on Classical accounts or methods of documentation less advanced than those of today, their precision can be surprising. However, there were many spaces that were not as well known. In order to define these distant lands, the cartographer employed many sources including legends, histories, and ancient accounts to capture and order the world. Yet, another tool used was gastronomy. Within this work we have seen that to detail to
corners of the known world those recounting these spaces applied types of food, symbolism, quantity, and adjectives to illuminate these places and their inhabitants. In this manner Alphonso judges the periphery in the form of Africa, the Fortunate Isles, Bretanna, Thule, Scythia, Scancia, India, and the Antipodes in comparison to the sacred center, Jerusalem. Concentric circles of “civility” form the globe where distance from the ideal is clearly marked by diet.

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Summary and Conclusions

In this dissertation the link between food and identity and cartography has been established. While the analysis was focused on Alphonso X’s histories, the first two chapters served to set the context for his interpretations by looking at the medieval Castillian framework, in Chapter 1, and investigating the classical foundations of the diet-identity union through maps, in Chapter 2, from which Alphonso wrote and used to assign meaning. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on medieval maps and Alphonso’s maps respectively. As we examined food events, group eating, the act of eating itself and the idea of consumption, these chapters provided us with a unique opportunity to understand better how Alphonso portrayed his world and the decoding of the food symbols helps us to understand why he structured the globe as he did.

Chapter 1 focuses on medieval Iberia. Through texts such as El cantar de mio Cid, Libro de Alexandre, images from the Cantigas, and others, we established a medieval Castilian substrate to analyze and used this as our baseline for the future chapters. By means of Henisch and the theory of food events, we analyzed the Cid’s daughters’ wedding to show how the meal reinforced the Cid’s noble nature. The Cantigas demonstrated Fieldhouse and Douglas’s concepts of group eating with regard to Christians and Jews; to save himself and become a Christian, the Jew in danger must change his diet first to fully pertain to the new group. Appadurai and Meigs took on ideas that centered more on the act of eating, which we saw with Libro de Alexandre when, as an infant, he refused to nurse from a lowly milkmaid. With reference to the idea of consumption with Salisbury, Counihan, and Freidman, we saw in the Cantigas the
image of hell as a mouth, waiting fitfully to consume sinners. These sketches helped to give us an idea of socially accepted norms that measured noble and devout appetites as the model by which all others were judged.

The second chapter shows us the gastronomic faculty for labeling a person/people in the Classical world, especially in conjunction with maps. This chapter was important to include because of the continuation of many of the classic Mediterranean gastronomic precepts and also because Greek and Roman cartography functioned as the main source for medieval mapmakers. Because of this we showed how food functioned on a daily level in Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. We viewed many instances of maps and travels. The example of the Odyssey illustrates the link between the map, diets, and identity with the Lotus-eaters and Laestrygonians. Bread was shown to be a diet and identifier staple. We also scrutinized food within the Classical Period by looking at the importance of the city as map center, class relations as group eating, symposia as dining events, and, briefly, religion, as another example of group eating.

Chapter 3 explored medieval cartography and scaling. We observed the heritage of Greek maps in medieval zonal maps, which label inhabitants/lands by degrees of civility. T-O maps were more centered on Christian theology with Jerusalem, the city, as the map center. We demonstrated how Alphono hybridizes the two maps into his histories as well as how he mapped the elements and all things by the properties of their soul and their relation to God. This chapter allowed us to gather information on the label of particular foods as less worthy and it also provided information on Alphonso’s general perception of the Earth and its different lands. These two labels were indispensable for Chapter 4, which pieced the map’s inhabitants and their diets together.
The culminating chapter of this dissertation was also the largest. In it we examined the foods of Jerusalem, Egypt, Africa, the Fortunate Islands, Thule, Septentrion, India, and the Antipodes. We began with the city nestled in the center of the Earth in what is portrayed as the ideal location, Jerusalem. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Holy City is blessed with the ideal foods and eating habits. As we move away from the TO map’s perfect center, we cross into the zonal maps levels. The remaining areas on the map reap a more and more savage foodstuff. Elephants, cannibals, starvation, snakes, human blood, and more compose the diets of (sub)humans in other parts of the world. This, of course, set Jerusalem and European Christians among the privileged beings, who were preordained to thrive and reproduce where they lived on Earth, and left the other inhabitants of the globe ripe for conquest or conversion.

So, these chapters come together to form the historical, social, and cartographic foundations for linking food with identity. Given the medieval tendency of scaling the world, our knowledge of medieval maps, and the contemporary practice of inserting a visual foodstuff over the place where it is produced/consumed, we can recreate Alphonso’s resource map based on food.

In this study, we have seen numerous examples of clues to deepen a character or a people’s description on the map within the texts. At the onset of this dissertation, I was interested in examining food in many social constructs. Although this would have been a mammoth task, it does illustrate the promising breadth of studies of food and identity and indicates many potential areas of future research. Some of these areas were urban versus country gastronomy, religion, class and food, and gender relations revolving around food.
If we continued with an analysis of urban fare as compared to that of other space, we would move from an analysis of the “edges” of the earth in the medieval mindset to the pinpoints of civility on the map, cities. In the Middle Ages, although many Roman cities were vacated, peace, excess of food, and the rise of the artisan all contributed to the re-ascension and expansion of the city. With this re-urbanization that was taking place in the medieval times, the distinction between the two areas became more vital. Following Greek/Roman precepts, the urban classes began to look to distinguish themselves from the country-dwellers. Importing very particular and fine products and bartering artistry for food contributed to this geographic and cultural divergence. Luxuries such as white bread were among those foodstuffs sent to the urban center; meanwhile, country folk could live on plain wheat bread. In the alphonsine texts, we see a certain attitude towards people of the country. More specifically, the texts exhibit an interesting outlook of mountainous regions far from civilization. A particular passage in General Estoria illuminates this distinction by describing a group of people who departed the city and thus became like animals. The text says:

se fincaron a andar se alla por los montes, errados & fechos saluages, como las animalias brauas & mudas que andauan all. & uiuien delas frutas que fallauan por los montes. & delas rayzes delas yeuas. que podien comer. Siguiendo mas las costumbres daquellas bestias saluages con quien uiuien en los montes, que non de los omnes. (GEII 135)

These people fled the city center, experienced a change in their diet, and lived like animals. The text suggests that their apparent lack of agricultural knowledge-perhaps because they did not learn to sow in the city- contributed to their barbaric ways upon
exiting it. They do not sow with higher reason, but rather eat what they find lying about; they eat fallen fruits and roots of plants. If we look back at the Great Chain of Being we see how this positions them in the lowest of all categories. Roots are the least thought of as far as edible substances are concerned; so, apparently these people who consume such pitiable victuals are not very admired either. The passage emphasizes that they follow animal customs, not human ones.

What is intriguing is that whilst in the city, we imagine these people to be refined or urbane. The passage indicates as much when it states that they were suddenly “fechos salvajes.” In spite of the fact that these people were once educated to the ways of polished life, they lost it all when they left the city life behind and headed to the mountains to live with animals. Upon their flight, their diet changed to that of a lesser animal and they became almost primitive.

This divergence between the two diets is a drastic example of the perceptions of the urban versus rural diet. Civility was definitely tipped in favor to city dwellers in Alphono’s depiction. A further study might show how some cities, particularly those located in “ideal regions,” were viewed as more urbane than others. In the future, a study of this area and the identities constructed within Alphonso’s texts or using other texts could be undertaken with fascinating results.

More than defining a space on a map, diet could also distinguished religions. A religious cohort, especially in a religious multi-cultural environment as existed in Iberia, used gastronomy to define it and indicate its followers. The emphasis on separate diet for distinct religions is reiterated throughout the Alfonso texts. At the root of the issue of dietary segregation lies a biblical passage. On page 60 of General
Estoria, Alfonso explains the dietary restrictions imposed in the Bible after the flood.

He articulates:

Et douos que de aqui adelante que comades de todo. como uso mande fasta aqui comer delas yeuas dela tierra & delas frutas delos aruoles. Mas una cosa les mando & defendio. que came con sangre quela non comiessen. segund dize moysen enel ixo. capitulio. Iosepho otrosi departe sobresto que sangre en que alma ouiesse. quela non comiessen ca esta es la sangre dell omne. &' segund diz mahestre pedro. por estas palabras paresce quelos omnes non comieran came nin aun beuieran uino fastal diluujo. &' departe gregorio enla glosa sobrel noueno capitulio del genesis. que otorgo dios alos omnes. que despues del diluuio que comiessen came. Lo uno por la tierra que non fincara tan plantia despues de las aguas como era antes. nin serien los omnes tan abondados de. (GEI 60)  

As we see, a lack of food after the great Flood perhaps helps to loosen God's dietary restrictions. The rules set forth here were put down by Moses. From this moment, man's gastronomic limitation was to leave the blood, for it was thought that the soul of humans and beasts was carried within it and the consumption of souls was the work of the divine.

For all people of the Book, this idea was pivotal. However, the Jews, more than any other, followed these dietary restrictions as articulated by Moses. This line of demarcation was well known; Alphonso continually refers to Jewish versus Christian versus Muslim diet. This alimentary segregation built solidarity; if one ate a certain food or at a certain time it served to spiritually define them. In Cantigas 85 of Cantigas de
Santa María we saw an interesting parody of this concept, with the Virgen Mary essentially saying to the unfortunate Jew, “Join us, eat our foods, and be initiated into our ranks.” The idea of group solidarity, food commonality, and specific preparation methods reinforce the group boundaries as indicated by Charsley and Counihan. Thus, it makes sense that the Virgin would use these to convert the Jew.

Also, we know little of the Jew’s past, but we may infer: 1) that he had something of worth to steal and 2) he ate goat meat. Both wealth and kosher foods are in line with traditional perceptions of the Jews. The text outlines that he was held against his will and kept within inches of his life. It is conceivable that, considering the period of near starvation and meager sustenance of bread and water, all of the Jewish alimentary substances must have been eliminated from his body. And if we follow Aristotle’s precept that a particular food perpetuates a specific life, it seems as though the diet of bread and water that the thieves fed him could have served as a sort of gastronomic cleansing that, perhaps, made him more open to spiritual suggestion. He no longer felt the effects of Jewish cuisine in his body. In this sense, it follows that the text could also suggest that he may be more apt to convert without the vestiges of his former spiritual diet influencing his decisions. When Mary comes to his aid he is, in a sense, a gastronomically clean slate ready to accept a new approach to religion. Of course, we must concede that the vision of other Jews suffering in Hell as Christians lounged around the throne of Jesus was without doubt another deciding factor for the wavering Jew. However, his diet also seemed to play a part. These ideas of dietary segregation illustrated here are made even more evident in the legislation of Siete Partidas.
At the closing of this anecdote we may gather a few of the ideas presented. For example, to be a Christian and go to heaven the Jew must, in descending order, believe in Christ; eat pork; and not practice the dietary habits of others. So, we may gather that another helpful tool to accomplish conversion, besides celestial/demonic visions, also appears to be a dietary influence.

However, besides noting a differentiation of dietary laws, observing religion and food would entail an arduous study. The question of the Eucharist would be, perhaps, one of the most recalcitrant undertakings therein. Is it bread? Is it truly the body of Christ? What does the author believe in this respect? If the point of view reflects that of consuming Christ’s flesh, is this then a cannibalistic act? The same could be said for the wine and oils for anointing. What is certain is that there is plenty of research that could be carried out in this area.

One could also examine in more depth the relation between class and food. With the emergence of the bourgeois class, an elaborate table and, of equal importance, not exceeding one's dietary rank became more pressing. Food kept people in check. As we have seen, in the words of Farb and Armelagos in Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating, “The quality of the meal and its setting convey a more subtle social message than anything that is consciously verbalized; attitudes that would be impolite if stated directly are communicated through the food channel” (4-5). This is completely in accord with the ideas of Douglas regarding group dining and foodstuff’s significance in groups to indicate hierarchy. Because of the message sent through food, people now dined to impress with intricate feasts and seemingly interminable noble appetites. Massimo Montanari states:
Medieval sensibilities were very strongly attuned to the correspondence between diet and "lifestyle," understood as the concrete expression of a specific social status that had to be clearly demonstrated by its possessor. Dietary behavior had an immediate significance, since it was the first way in which differences of rank were communicated and displayed. (179)

Along this line of thought, it was essential not only to display one's class, but also to stay within it. Excessive diets were not permitted to those below their station and a hefty fine was conferred to whosoever dared to surpass the imposed gastronomic limits. If we remember the words of Henisch in *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society*, “Lavish generosity was the hallmark of an important man. To err on the side of reckless extravagance might bring financial embarrassment; to err on the side of frugality could achieve nothing but contempt” (11), we can see that the social parameters for appropriate culinary display were established and judgment was conferred on a public level.

Social structuring based on diet and class was clearly evident as our example for *Cantar de mio Cid* illustrated. It was also important enough to make it into the law books. *Siete Partidas* includes chapters regarding what a King should eat and how he should be measured in his eating habits. There is even a separate chapter for nobles. Beyond Iberia, this phenomenon existed as well. “The Function of Food in German Literature” by George Fenwick Jones states, “class diets had become almost universally standardized in German literature. As we shall see, the gentry were divinely ordained to eat game, fish, and white bread;
and the peasantry were ordained to eat dark bread, porridge, turnips, and sidemeat” (79). An intriguing study would scrutinize this concept of class and gastronomic separation, both inside of Spain and out.

The last area that this dissertation originally sought to incorporate was that of gender and food. There was an obvious distinction between men and women with regards to their foodstuffs. Meat eating was seen as a more masculine activity. This affected women because of their higher needs for iron (due to menstruation and pregnancy), and thus they tended to be severely anemic (Bullough and Campbell 322). Because of this, medieval European women generally lived shorter lives than medieval men (Bullough and Campbell 325).

Women could also employ food differently. For one, women have historically been the cooks of the home and exerted control and power of the household in that respect. They were associated with food production and distribution (Bynum 10). So, then the woman takes on the mysterious air of chef or witch with her caldron and men are never quite sure what she puts in her dishes. A great more contemporary example of this image is found in Laura Esquivel’s Como agua para chocolate with the powerful female character, Tita.

Besides food preparation, consumption also played a role in women’s spirituality. There are many documented stories of women refusing food to reach union with God. In this manner of fasting, they could often subvert the male religious figure to reach God directly (Bynum 13). It was also a tactic used to deny an arranged marriage, a silent protest of starvation (Bynum 5). So, food was
power to many women and it is certainly an area of analysis that deserves more attention.

In this study we think that food is a highly noteworthy cultural dynamic. Unraveling an author's attitude towards gastronomy reveals much about codified social practices and forgotten culture. It adds a textual richness of symbolic undertones that may have otherwise gone unnoticed and it reveals many character descriptions previously encrypted in the passage of time. After having discussed how Estoria de Espanna, Cantigas de Santa María, General Estoria, Siete Partidas and other texts depict people of the world in the medieval period using gastronomy as a method of classification, we might ask ourselves if the map-based analysis is applicable to other times and cultures. The answer is yes. These same techniques of mapping humanity were used in the New World. Rumored cannibalism and grotesque diets fed the flames of conquest. And after conquest, when settlements were established, according to “Food Choice and Social Identity in Early Colonial New Mexico” by Heather Trigg, importation of European seeds, vines, and livestock were widespread (although these species were often wholly unsuitable for the varied American climates). So, on the American front we see the repetition of Greek/Roman culinary conquest, “where wheat, vines, and olives grow” and the symbolic carrying of the home hearth’s fires.

With all of the other possible areas of analysis involving food, I hope to have helped to open the academic sphere of literature to other interpretations that consider the study of food as a central contributor to civilization and art. Using gastronomic ideas to decipher texts will allow a deeper, or at least very different, analysis of the lives lived during the text’s inception. Food analysis is particularly useful when the text is separated
from its readers by the passage of time, space, or vastly different cultural norms. For that reason, medieval literature especially merits analysis through food.

To conclude, we have very briefly touched on a few of the ways food defined social relations on the world map. Throughout the years, the majority of studies dedicated to medieval texts, and specifically to Alphonso X, have not concentrated on gastronomy as a significant factor. Often times, it is overlooked as nothing more than an inconsequential anecdote. As humans with our own deeply embedded food norms we may read a text and experience the foods without putting much thought into them, other than whether they sound appetizing to our biased palettes. We take them for their face value and forget to look behind the use of specific foods and codes. To understand what the food symbols mean, as symbolic anthropology emphasizes, we must submerge ourselves in the culture of consumption to uncover hidden meanings and forgotten practices.

In conclusion, food's omnipotence in the gamut of human relations cannot be denied. Through the analysis of General Estoria, Cantigas de Santa María, Estoria de Espanna, and Siete Partidas we examined all of the social ramifications of a meal in medieval Iberia. It discerned "we who eat this" and "those who eat that" to classify people through diet. Through the formation of a medieval resource map that characterizes the world’s places and people, I hope to have established classical and cultural precedents to food attitudes and to have demonstrated how gastronomy figured as a definer of center and periphery relations in cartography.
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Vita

Dianne Burke Moneypenny
04/14/1980
Lexington, KY

EDUCATION:

Franklin College  French  2010
Middlebury College  Summer Language Program  2005
University of Louisville  MA: Spanish  2005
Universidad de Salamanca  Cursos internacionales  2003
Indiana University Southeast  BA: Spanish  2003
Indiana University Southeast  BA: Biology  2002

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Indiana University East  May 2011-present  Spanish Instructor
Courses: Elementary Spanish

Franklin College  August 2009-2011  Spanish Instructor
Courses: Elementary Spanish, Intermediate Spanish, Advanced Grammar, Conversation, and Writing, Business Spanish, Senior Year Experience, Faculty-led Spanish immersion study abroad course, Survey of Hispanic Poetry.

University of Kentucky  August 2008-May 2009  Graduate Teaching Assistant
Courses: Commercial & Technical Spanish, Conversational Spanish, Elementary Spanish Labs.

University of Kentucky  August 2007-May 2008  Part-Time Instructor
Courses: Elementary Spanish & Labs I/II, Accelerated Elementary Spanish Lab I/II.

University of Kentucky  August 2005–August 2007  Graduate Teaching Assistant
Courses: Elementary Spanish I/II, Intermediate Spanish.

Northaven Elementary School  January 2003-June 2005  ESL Teacher
Courses: Served as teacher for K-12 ESL students.

Indiana University Southeast  August 2001-May 2003  Supplemental Instructor
Courses: Elementary Spanish Tutor and Instructor’s Assistant for Accelerated Intermediate Spanish.
CONTINUOUS EDUCATION:

2010-11 Faculty Development Seminar Franklin College
-Weekly seminar dedicated to enhancing student learning and navigating the field of teaching.

2010 Writing Across the Curriculum Seminar Franklin College
-Weekly seminar that shares tactics to improve the teaching of writing in all disciplines.

2010 AP Exam Grader AP College Board
-52 hours of professional development evaluating AP essays to award college credit.

2009-10 Faculty Development Seminar Franklin College
-Weekly seminar dedicated to enhancing student learning and navigating the field of teaching.

PUBLICATIONS:


FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS:

2011 Phi Delta Theta Professor of the Semester Nominee Franklin College
2011 Student Congress Faculty of the Month: March Franklin College
2010 Pi Beta Phi Professor of the Semester Nominee Franklin College
2010 Student Congress Faculty of the Month: October Franklin College
2008-9 Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship University of Kentucky
2005-7 Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship University of Kentucky
2003 Waggoner Outstanding Spanish Student Award Indiana University

GRANT WRITING:

Franklin College: Modern Languages Dept. Technology Grant $300
Franklin College: January Term Rinker Scholarship Award $1,300
Cedar Ridge, Inc: Cralle Foundation Grant $14,000
Cedar Ridge, Inc: Jacob C. Koch Foundation Grant $1,000
Cedar Ridge, Inc: Horne Foundation Grant $8,000
Shively Area Ministries: Kosair Children’s Charities Grant $1,500
Cedar Ridge, Inc: Kentucky Colonels Grant $7,000
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

“Comida y Cartografía: Los otros en el mapa medieval.” University of Kentucky Graduate Student Congress, March 31, 2008.
“Blurring Boundaries and Mixing Faiths: Penn State University Religious Hybridism in Medieval Spain.”
Graduate Student Symposium, October 6, 2006.
“El otro: Los latinos en el cine de EE.UU.” University of Louisville Graduate Student Conference, May 5, 2005.

COMMUNITY & ACADEMIC SERVICE:

2011 Franklin College: Coordinator of Spanish Immersion Weekend
Coordinator Spanish Write Place
La Casa House Advisor
Academic Advisor
Greek Week Judge
History Search Committee
St. Rose of Lima: Outdoor Science/Community Garden leader

2010 Franklin College: Spanish Write Place Initiator/Coordinator
La Casa House Advisor
Step Enrichment Scholarship Founder
Liberal Arts Curriculum Assessment Committee
Academic Advisor
Franklin College: Blue and Gold Day
Spanish Search Committee
Spanish Immersion Weekend
Ben Franklin’s Day for Scholars
SPA 111& 210 Mentor Supervisor
Student Move-In Day

2009 Cedar Ridge Camp and Retreat Center: Autumn Under the Cedars
Franklin College: Blue and Gold Day
Student Move-In Day
Kentucky Foreign Language Conference: Registration Volunteer
Kentucky World Language Festival: Event Judge

2008 Cedar Ridge Camp and Retreat Center: Autumn Under the Cedars
University of Kentucky Stuckert Career Center: Student Internship
Kentucky Foreign Language Conference: Volunteer: Registration
Kentucky Refugee Ministries: Relocation Volunteer.

2007 Office for International Affairs: Louisville WorldFest 2007
Cedar Ridge Camp and Retreat Center: Muscular Dystrophy Camp
Kentucky Foreign Language Conference: Session Chair, Registration Volunteer
2006 University of Kentucky: Committee for the Recruitment of Graduate Students. Graduate Student Association: Workshop: Fiscally-Surviving Graduate School Teacher’s Assistant Orientation: University of Kentucky Volunteer: Microteach

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

MLA: Modern Languages Association
TESOL: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

TEACHING INTERESTS:

Elementary Spanish Intermediate Spanish Conversation
Hispanic Culture Composition Film Studies
Medieval Literature Golden Age Literature 12th-18th Century History (Peninsular/Colonial)
Transatlantic Studies Colonial Literature Colonial Images
Food in Literature Cartography Folklore Studies
Epistolary Novel Beginning Linguistics Study Abroad Courses
Business Spanish Chicano Literature Service-Learning with Hispanic community
Medical Spanish Literary Analysis

LANGUAGES:

Spanish-near-native proficiency (reading/writing/speaking)
French-fair speaking ability, good reading ability, good aural comprehension
German-good reading translation ability
Latin-fair reading translation ability