

Cantiga 328: The Town of Alcanate is renamed Porto de Santa Maria

*Pleasure it is to Holy Mary, in whom God for us was born, that her name should be heard throughout all lands.*

For it is no wonder that she wishes that her name and her Son's should be heard throughout the world, and Mahomet driven out and sent into exile, and with him the Devil whose spokesman he became.

On this theme the Mother and Daughter of God revealed a great miracle, exceedingly good to hear, close to Jerez in the kingdom of Seville, in a place which used to be called Alcanate.

This place lies in pleasant and fertile country, rich in bread, wine, meat and succulent fruit, and fish and game, for it is so full of delights that a whole day would not be enough to tell of them.

The town is a port lying between the two seas, the great sea and the one called Mediterranean, which divides many places in the earth. And both of them are joined by two rivers which make it a noble place .

One is Guadalquivir, which is a fine river with many tributaries, and along which great ships pass; the other is Guadalete, which runs with great force; and both are rich in fish.

Now King Alfonso came to stay in this good place on one occasion, when he sent his fleet to destroy Salé, that great and noble town – and the booty they brought back was too great to be counted.

While he stayed in that place, sending out his fleet and going back and forth to Cadiz, supplying the fleet with all it needed for the campaign to be carried forward,

he did not notice what was afoot until the Muslim *alguazil* of Cadiz, a rich and clever man, came to him in great indignation, saying, "My Lord, in this town of Alcanate where you are lodging, how can anyone be so bold as to give it a different name

and call it by another name which causes great dismay to the Muslims, as it is being called Santa Maria do Porto, which causes us great offence and for which they blame you. A wrong such as this must be condemned.

When the King heard this he was mightily angered and sent his officials to go at once around the troops, from billet to billet, listening carefully; anyone who was heard to utter that name was to be flogged.

In this way many Christians took heavy floggings, others were beaten and their ribs broken, and yet others had their ears cut off. And for all this he could not ban that name.

Rather, the more he strove to suppress that name, the more it was used, for it was the will of Holy Mary, the Glorious Virgin Queen of Heaven, that the place should bear her name.

The King was sorely troubled by this, fearing that it might cause discord and strife between Christians and Muslims, but the Virgin who is our aid had a different plan.

For she immediately made the Muslim *alguazil* seek audience with the King and ask and beseech him to take that fine place as a Christian town.

When the King heard this he was exceedingly joyful, for he realised that he would be able to settle Cadiz the more rapidly, but fearing that this might be a trap set by the Muslim, he gave no reply to anything he had said, at which the *alguazil* was amazed

and said to the King, in irate tones, "May I not live to see the end of this year if what I have asked you is any kind of trick – it is to keep peace in this land and avoid great harm which will come if we do not bring this about."

What is more he gave the King not only the town but the whole coast with all the villages that were on the great sea. This was the work of the Holy Virgin, our Lady of Justice, whose name I rejoice to see spread around the world.