

Pedro de Corral's Reconfiguration of La Cava in the
Crónica del Rey don Rodrigo

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1

Preliminary Observations on the History of Reception of the Narratives of the *Destruyçion*

Contemporary literary scholars have shown only occasional interest in the narratives of what was called the *destruyçion* by Castilian historians of the Lower Middle Ages, who used the word to refer to the conquest of the Visigothic kingdom of Spain by the Moors in the early eighth century: the fall of Don Rodrigo, last of the Visigothic kings, and with his death the extermination of a dynasty; the loss of a bounteous land to overlords of a diabolical religion, bearers of sinful customs; the end of a period of triumph and prosperity; the beginning of centuries of suffering and humiliation.¹ Prose narratives of this catastrophe have survived from as early as the middle of the eighth century in the chronicles of Christian historians. They continued to be elaborated, reproduced, and consumed without interruption by Christian writers and readers for the next eight hundred years.

In the works of medieval Islamic historians, who embellished their narratives freely with fictitious episodes, as did their Christian brethren, the conquest of Visigothic Spain was shown not as a disaster but as a miraculous triumph. During the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Arabic historiography was frequently consulted by Christian scholars, in particular during the period of intense cross-cultural contact (from 1217 to 1350), which coincided in Castile with the rise of the vernacular as the written language of secular culture.² During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, motifs of Islamic origin were integrated into ever more elaborate vernacular prose narratives of the *destruyçion*, which told the legend of Don Rodrigo (*último rey godo*) and La Cava, the daughter of Count Julián, who like the La Malinche, of post-revolutionary Mexico, was held responsible by many Christian authors in considerable measure for the loss of the homeland to the infidel.³

¹ Valdeón Baruque & Martín Rodríguez use the term *Baja Edad Media* (Lower Middle Ages) to refer to the period comprised of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries during which the political and military history of Spain was characterized by the triumph of the *núcleos cristianos* of Hispania over al-Andalus (11).

² These dates are milestones in Castilian history: the first is the date of the ascent of Fernando III (*el santo*) to the throne of Castile, during whose reign Cordoba and Seville, the most important cities of Islamic Spain, were retaken by the Christians; the second is the year of the death of Alfonso XI, whose victory against the forces of the Merinids of Morocco in the battle of *el Salado* in 1344 marked the definitive shift of the balance of military power in favor of the Christian monarchs of Spain and away from an al-Andalus greatly reduced in territory.

³ William Bascolm makes a useful distinction between legends and myths: “Legends are prose narratives that, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today. Legends are more often secular than sacred, and their principal characters are human. They tell of migrations, wars, and victories, deeds of past heroes, chiefs, and kings, and succession in ruling dynasties.” According to Bascolm, myths recount the activities of the deities in order to explain the origins of the world, of mankind, the characteristics of animals, natural phenomena, and are often associated with ceremonial paraphernalia, ritual, or the need

Given the richness of post-Modern feminist scholarship, it seems particularly strange that the images of La Cava embedded in the multiple layers of literary sediment deposited over the better part of a millennium on the Iberian Peninsula have yet to be excavated and studied in detail. In many libraries the anthologies and studies of narratives about the demise of Don Rodrigo and the Islamic conquest of Spain assembled by Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara and the Menéndez Pidal brothers Juan and Ramón have been gathering dust for decades. To the best of my knowledge, none of the handful of contemporary literary scholars who have examined some aspect of this multi-cultural and multi-linguistic narrative legacy has devoted more than a few lines to La Cava. The relative neglect to which the narratives of the *destruyçion* and their characters have been relegated by students of literature since the publication in 1925-27 of Ramón Menéndez Pidal's three volume *Floresta de leyenda heroica* would seem to belie the richness of the material and to fly in the face of what was of self-evident importance to the generations of Spaniards who told and retold variants of the story across boundaries of territory, sovereignty, language, and religion.

In the present study I plan to examine the images of Rodrigo and La Cava in the two most extensive prose narratives of the *destruyçion*: the *Crónica de 1344* (Catalán & De Andrés eds.), a work of Portuguese origin of which the oldest extant versions are copies of a Castilian translation of the early fifteenth century, and Pedro de Corral's *Crónica del Rey don Rodrigo* (ca.1430) (Corral), henceforth *CR*, commonly referred to as the *Crónica sarracina*.⁴ By comparing the two I hope to shed some light on the ideological intent of Pedro de Corral's recasting of the legend in the *CR*, written during the turbulent reign of Juan II of Castile (1406-1454), more than seven hundred years after the Islamic conquest of Spain had taken place, and nearly one hundred years after the most dynamic phase of the Reconquest had been completed.

1.1 Pedro de Corral: The Author and His Time

It is highly significant that Pedro de Corral's name does not appear in any of the manuscript versions or early editions of the *CR*, several of which are attributed to Eleastras, a fictitious character created by Corral himself, who is appointed by King Rodrigo in the *CR* as his official chronicler.

for observing taboos (9).

⁴ Derek C. Carr has proven that the *CR* must have been completed prior to the death of Enrique de Villena on December 15, 1434. In an undated epistle written to Suero de Quiñones, Villena refers to the episode in the *CR* (I, ccl-cclii) in which a whirlwind descends on the meeting of Don Rodrigo's war council and carries off two bishops and the king's hooded cloak (*capirote*) (11).

The attribution of the *CR* to Pedro de Corral, about whom little is known, is due exclusively to his contemporary Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, who attacks him as a charlatan in an exposition on the proper methodology for the writing of history in the prologue to the *Generaciones y semblanzas*, calling him “un liviano e presuntuoso onbre,” and saying that the work that Corral called the “Corónica Sarrazina,” known to some as the “[Corónica] del Rey Rodrigo,” should more appropriately be called a “trufa o mentira paladina” (1). Pérez de Guzmán found Corral’s ingenious synthesis of the elements of historiography and romance highly objectionable because he believed that it could undermine the credibility of “truthful” historical narratives, like his own. What one infers by reading Corral’s work is that it calls into question the possibility of impartiality in the writing of history by suggesting the contingency of the truthfulness of all historical narrative, an idea held to be subversive by Pérez de Guzmán, hence the virulence of the epithets he attaches to Corral and his *corónica*.

By reasonable conjecture it can be determined that Pedro de Corral was born between 1380 and 1390 (Sartorre-Grau 159-62). Orphaned at a young age, he was a descendant through both his father and his mother of two of the patrician families of Valladolid, frequent residence of the kings of Castile during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, families from which the members of the city council had been chosen since the twelfth century. He lived during years when the re-feeding of Castilian society was rapidly eroding the autonomy of the city councils established under royal patronage at the height of the Reconquest. The councils had reached the apogee of their political power during the period that lasted from the last two decades of the thirteenth century through the turbulent regencies of the first two decades of the fourteenth. In Pedro de Corral’s lifetime, the councils fell progressively more under the direct control of the crown and of powerful magnates, while for the most part native sons of the cities of Castile watched their influence on local, regional, and national affairs evaporate, as power was concentrated increasingly in the hands of a few (Rucquoi II, 192-209).

As a second-born son who was unlikely to inherit his father’s estate, Pedro chose to use his mother’s patronymic, rather than “Villandrando,” his father’s, which was inherited by his older brother, Rodrigo. While little is known of the life of Pedro de Corral, his oldest brother’s life is well documented. The *primogénito* Rodrigo de Villandrando underwent a meteoric rise from comparative poverty to membership in the most elite group of the nobility comprised of the notables who formed

Juan II's inner circle.⁵ After a distinguished career as a mercenary on the side of the French in the One Hundred Years War, Rodrigo was granted the title of Count of Ribadeo by Juan II when he returned to Castile in 1434 at the head of the private army he had first offered for hire to the king of Aragon.⁶ Pedro de Corral is mentioned by the sixteenth-century Aragonese historian Gerónimo Zurita in his *Anales de la corona de Aragón* as an emissary sent by Rodrigo de Villandrando to offer his services to the king of Aragón in 1431 prior to his return to the Iberian Peninsula (tomo III, libro XIII, cap. lxxi). In this role Pedro de Corral would also have represented the interests of the patriciate from which he was descended. The concession of a title of nobility and a sizeable estate to Rodrigo de Villandrando by Juan II would have signaled a shift of Don Rodrigo de Villandrando's allegiances to the royalist party, and most probably put him at odds politically with members of the families of his mother and father, who were most likely supporters of the *infantes* of Aragon. How Pedro de Corral was affected by his brother's good fortune, we do not know.

Caught in a squeeze between the monarchy and the magnates who were competing to assert an ever greater measure of control at all levels of society, members of the patrician families of the cities of Castile were faced with two options: to climb into the upper strata of the aristocracy, or to be swallowed from below.⁷ Those fortunate enough to break into the most privileged echelon of the nobility, like Rodrigo de Villandrando, assumed the values of the magnates. Those who did not were not likely to share all the ideological priorities of their more fortunate family members.

1.2 The Dissemination of the *CR* and the Canon of Medieval Spanish Narrative

Pedro de Corral's *CR* was excluded --I would contend for ideological reasons-- from the

⁵ Rodrigo de Villandrando's *semblanza* is preserved in Fernando del Pulgar's *Claros varones de Castilla*, a gallery of short biographical sketches of the prominent men of the generations of Enrique III and Juan II, written toward the end of the fifteenth century (109-114). In addition, two biographies of Rodrigo de Villandrando were published during the nineteenth century: the first by Jules Quicherat and the other by Antonio María Fabié. For a general overview of the period, see Vicens Vives, Luis Suárez Fernández, & Ángel López Canellas. For a fascinating study of the rise and fall of Álvaro de Luna, see Round.

⁶ The king of Aragón was a key player in the league of nobles who opposed the partisans of Juan II led by the *privado*, Don Álvaro de Luna, with whom Rodrigo de Villandrando cut his lucrative deal. During the period from 1420 to 1438 the patricians of Valladolid took an open stand with the league of nobles against the royalists headed by Don Álvaro de Luna. The league of nobles was led by Juan II's uncles Don Enrique, *maestre* of the order of Santiago, Don Juan, king of Navarra, and Alfonso V (*el magnánimo*), king of Aragón.

⁷ In her two volume *Valladolid en la Edad Media* Adeline Rocquoi cites the example of the Corral family to illustrate how the families of the patriciate opened their ranks to new elements in the fifteenth century. Not only did the Corral family establish blood ties with members of the landed aristocracy, but by 1438 it had also produced at least three *universitarios* and a number of tradesmen: "Una lista de los miembros de la casa de Corral con fecha de 1438, revela así, al lado de los miembros de la oligarquía tradicional --caballeros, mercaderes, plateros y letrados--, la presencia de un

canon of medieval Spanish narrative as it was defined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by two of the patriarchs of modern scholarship on medieval Spanish literature, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo and Ramón Menéndez Pidal.⁸ Although Ramón Menéndez Pidal was highly critical of what he considered the excess of chivalric elements in the *CR*, he established conclusively that Corral's work is of fundamental importance for both those who wish to trace the genealogy of the earlier variants of the Rodrigo/La Cava story and those who wish to study its numerous progeny in the *romancero*, in the Spanish theater of the Golden Age and of the Romantic period, in the works of Sir Walter Scott and Washington Irving, and, one might add, most recently in Juan Goytisolo's *Revindicación del Conde don Julián*.⁹

The *CR* stands out among the narratives of the *destruyçion* on account of its monumental proportions and the longevity of its appeal to readers, which spanned a period of more than one hundred and fifty years, extending from about 1430, the presumed date of its composition, to the publication of the last known edition (Alcalá de Henares, 1587). Corral's work has survived in nine medieval manuscripts, several of them containing nearly complete versions, and in a number of early printed editions. The earliest of the latter, published in 1499, is preserved in a single copy owned by the Hispanic Society in New York. All citations from the *CR* in this study are from my edition of the work published in the Clásicos Castalia series (2001), the first edition of Corral's work to be published since 1587.¹⁰

tundidor, un barbero, un esgrimidor y un criado del mercader Alfonso Arias" (II, 192-209).

⁸ In his *History and Historians of Medieval Spain*, Peter Linehan describes the appropriation by the Franco regime of the vision of the Spanish past enshrined in Menéndez y Pelayo's *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, which "pugnaciously and confidently affirmed" the inseparability of the national identity and Catholicism as a constant in Spanish history. Shortly before his death, at the instigation of Franco's first minister of education, Sáinz Rodríguez, Don Marcelino was established as the regime's principal ideologue (15). The academic authority of Ramón Menéndez Pidal was also appropriated by the Franco regime to bolster its claim to legitimacy. Don Ramón's *España del Cid* (1926), which challenged the "interpretación laica" of the Reconquest proposed by the nineteenth century Dutch Arabist Dozy, was required reading for military cadets during the Franco period (Linehan 15 & 207). The selection of some works of Medieval Spanish literature for mass production, in the Clásicos Castellanos series for example, meant that others remained unpublished. The process of selection by which the canonical works were chosen, the ones on which I cut my first teeth in graduate school, was dictated by conservative Spanish ideologues of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁹ Ramón Menéndez Pidal's *Floresta de leyenda heroica: Rodrigo, el último godo* is a three volume anthology of Rodrigo narratives, each with a table of contents, which includes chronologically ordered excerpts from many works beginning with chapters 552-559 of the *Primera Crónica General de España*, which are listed in the table of contents at the end of each of the three tomes. It is particularly useful as a starting point for those who wish to study Christian variants of the story in the vernacular from the latter thirteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth. It does not contain variants of the story in either Latin or Arabic, but it does include a fragment of nearly one hundred pages in length from Pedro de Corral's *Crónica Sarracina* known also as the *Crónica del Rey don Rodrigo*.

¹⁰ In 1997, Sun Me Yoon completed a doctoral dissertation under the direction of Víctor Infantes entitled *Estudio y edición de los manuscritos de la "Crónica Sarracina" de Pedro del Corral*. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1997.

Like *Amadís de Gaula*, the *CR* owes its ample dissemination at the dawn of the age of discovery to the printing press. Published in at least eight editions during a period stretching from 1499 to 1587, it is part of the legacy of medieval narrative that continued to appeal to the reading and writing public of the sixteenth century.¹¹ Irving Leonard found it named among the shipping lists he inventoried of books bound for the Americas, by which he proved that, despite the Spanish Inquisition's prohibition of the exportation of *historias fingidas* intended to prevent the pernicious influence of chivalric romances on the presumably impressionable consumers of the New World, they were, in fact, read in Spain's American colonies, as well as in the mother land (97).¹²

Pedro de Corral's *CR*, by far the most extensive of the narratives of the *destruyçion* --more than 1100 pages in the two volume Castalia edition--, amplifies and reconfigures material derived indirectly from the Mozarabic and Islamic historians of al-Andalus, and from the Latin and vernacular chroniclers attached to the crowns of Asturias, Leon, Castile, and Portugal. Like Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo's definitive version of *Amadís de Gaula* published in 1508, Corral's work is a *refundición*, a rewriting of earlier narratives. It is the culminating work in a lengthy process of creation, synthesis and re-elaboration, such as the one that produced another of the classic romances of the waning years of the Middle Ages, Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, which reconfigures the Arthurian legacy of the previous three hundred years.

In his monumental narrative of the *destruyçion*, Corral makes use of the bipartite structure inherited from the general histories of Spain of the two preceding centuries, which linked the narrative of the Islamic conquest of Spain with that of the Christian Reconquest, a recourse first developed to its full potential in Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada's *De rebus hispaniae* (ca.1243). *El Toledano* joins the story of Rodrigo's fall with the story of Pelayo, the initiator of the new, presumably morally superior Spain of the Reconquest. In so doing he makes the moral derived from the accounts of the reigns of the two kings contingent upon the contrast between the two narratives. For *el Toledano*, the segments of the history of Spain immediately preceding and immediately

For a complete description of the MSS of the *Crónica sarracina*, see Cortijo.

¹¹ At least eight editions are known today: 1499; Seville, 1511; Seville, 1526; Seville, 1527; Valladolid, 1527; Toledo, 1549; Alcalá de Henares, 1586; Alcalá de Henares, 1587.

¹² In the prologue to his edition of *Amadís de Gaula* (1508: Zaragoza), Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo uses the term *historias fingidas* to distinguish works of fiction that aped the conventions from two other types of "history," what he termed the *historias de afición*, narratives written by partisan historians who embellished the truth, and the *historias verdaderas* or *de conveniente crédito*, considered strictly truthful because they were based on eyewitness reports and the careful scrutiny of the testimony of reliable witnesses (I, 223). For a detailed discussion of Rodríguez de Montalvo's three types of history, see Fogelquist 1982.

following the Islamic conquest comprise a unified story of death and redemption (Deyermond 345-347). Building on the rich legacy of narrative material bequeathed by the historiography of previous generations, Corral endows Rodrigo with a personal destiny that mirrors the bipartite structure of the history of Spain as he perceived it from the vantage point of the first decades of the fifteenth century. Rodrigo's story like that of Spain is a story of sin and redemption. In Corral's work, the figure of La Cava is also given a prominent position in each of the two panels that constitute what Alan Deyermond has appropriately termed a diptych in his article on the narrative of the *destruyçion* in Alfonso X's *Estoria de España* (345).

Each variant of the legend of Rodrigo and La Cava undoubtedly reveals more about the period in which it was written than it does about the events of the eighth century it relates. Soon after they occurred, the events surrounding the rise and fall of King Rodrigo, last of the Visigothic kings of Spain, were obscured by dense layers of legendary accretion.¹³ As the Middle Ages drew to a close, ever more elaborate variants of the story were shaped and expanded according to the conventions of dominant narrative prototypes: chivalric romance, hagiography, and the official historiography of the monarchs of the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. By tracing the evolution of the figure of La Cava through several of the earlier variants of the story, I will attempt to shed some light in particular on how Pedro de Corral appropriates and manipulates several of the dominant images of women found in the literature of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. I would argue that his characterization of La Cava can only be properly understood in the context of the highly polemical discourse on women peculiar to the Castilian society of the first half of the fifteenth century. Corral's monumental prose narrative can be read, therefore, as an example of what Hans Blumenberg calls "work on myth," the process by which the foundational narratives of one period are transformed and revitalized in a later one (112-45).

1.3 Cervantes and the Etymology of "La Cava"

The legend of Rodrigo and La Cava did not escape the discerning eye of Cervantes, who

¹³ Roger Collins notes that the following events reported in the *Crónica de 754* (known also as the *Crónica mozárabe de 754*) (López Pereira ed.), the earliest surviving account of the Islamic invasion of Spain, are considered to be factual by the consensus of recent historians: 1) Rodrigo became king of Spain in 711 with the support of a faction of the Visigothic nobility by means of a coup, but he encountered opposition. 2) During the same year, Mūsā Nusayr, governor of Islamic North Africa sent an army under the command of Tārik Abū Zara to conquer Spain after some cities had been sacked during previous incursions. 3) Don Rodrigo met the invaders on the *Transductinis promunturiis*. 4) Defeated in battle, Don Rodrigo lost his throne and many of his enemies were killed (32). The earliest Christian accounts of the Moorish

evokes it briefly in the “Captive’s Tale” in Part I of *Don Quixote*. In the story he tells at the inn of his escape from the baths of Algiers (I, xli), the Captive offers an etymology for the toponym *la Cava Rumía*, the place on the North African coast where, on the insistence of Zoraida, he made landfall to put ashore Zoraida’s distraught father, Agi Morato, whom he had taken hostage in Algiers to secure their safe passage to Christian lands:

Mas quiso nuestra buena suerte que llegamos a una cala que se hace al lado de un pequeño promontorio o cabo que de los moros es llamado el de la Cava Rumía, que en nuestra lengua quiere decir la mala mujer cristiana, y es tradición entre los moros que en aquel lugar está enterrada la Cava, por quien se perdió España, porque cava en su lengua quiere decir mujer mala, y rumía, cristiana; y aun tienen por mal agüero llegar allí a dar fondo cuando la necesidad les fuerza a ello, porque nunca le dan sin ella; puesto que para nosotros no fué abrigo de mala mujer, sino puerto seguro de nuestro remedio, según andaba alterada la mar. (I, xli, 227-228)

Zoraida, the daughter of a wealthy Algerian, who has recently been converted to Christianity by a household slave, enlists the help of the Captive to reach Christian lands, driven by the desire to be baptized. In so doing she betrays the trust of her adoring father and renounces her native religion. Cervantes’s allusion to La Cava in the “Captive’s Tale” is intended to evoke a moral prototype against which Zoraida’s actions can be read. The virtuous Zoraida is the antithesis of the La Cava evoked by the Captive. Zoraida, a devotee by hearsay of the Virgin Mary, is of the moral progeny of her celestial patroness. Her betrayal of her father, of her homeland, and of her native religion is, paradoxically, an act of supreme truth, an exemplary demonstration of faith and devotion. One may infer by contrast that La Cava, whose legend is recalled by the place named after her, the *mala mujer cristiana*, is the Other, the woman of ill-repute: un-chaste, devoid of feminine virtue, a traitor to her homeland and religion. In Cervantes’s tale she is intended to embody the moral decadence of Christian womanhood as viewed from the perspective of the Islamic faithful. As her name implies, she is morally implicated, at least to some degree, in the loss of Spain.¹⁴

Etymologies, an instrument of historiography since the days of Herodotus, are invoked invariably in an attempt to recover origins too remote to be known conclusively by those of a subsequent period, who add stories corresponding to the meaning of names to fill the void created by

conquest of Spain are available in modern editions. See the following: López Pereira and Gil Fernández. See also Martin.
¹⁴ The etymology of the name “Cava” cited by the Captive in *Don Quixote* is corroborated by Cervantes’s contemporary Sebastián de Covarrubias in the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*: “Y su verdadero nombre dicen haber sido Florinda, pero los moros llamáronla Cava, que vale cerca dellos tanto como mujer mala de su cuerpo, que se da a todos” (288).

the absence of historical knowledge. According to Herodotus it was Hesiod and Homer who gave outward forms to the Gods who were unknown to the Greeks until a short while before (Blumenberg 35). Etymologies are often ideologically charged. They are used as tools to establish the legitimacy of gods, of dynasties, of territorial claims, of religious dogma, and of concomitant social orders. What does the etymology of La Cava's name evoked by Cervantes's *Captive* tell us about her origin and of the role she played in the earliest narratives of the conquest of Spain? Does it contain a cache of meaning deposited by an earlier narrative tradition with which Cervantes was conversant? I will attempt to answer these questions briefly in the pages to follow.

1.4 Count Julián's Daughter in the Early Arabic Variants

Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara's enumeration of the Arabic narratives of the Islamic conquest of Spain in the Appendices of his bilingual edition of the *Ajbar Mahmuâ* (Arabic and Spanish) is a logical starting place in the quest to recover the earliest surviving image of La Cava of Arabic descent for those who do not know Arabic. In his Appendices Lafuente y Alcántara includes the account of the conquest of Spain contained in the work of the ninth-century Egyptian historian Ebn Àbo-l-Hokum, who died in the year 257 of the hegira (870-71), presumably the oldest extant narrative in Arabic of the conquest story (208-219). The daughter of Count Julián (not yet called La Cava), is mentioned briefly in Ebn Àbo-l-Hokum's work, but she is identified only by kinship, not by name. She is a flat character, sketched summarily with a few quick strokes of the pen. Her appearance is momentary; her fate left unresolved: "Habia mandado Julian su hija á Rodrigo, señor de España, para su educacion, mas [el Rey] la violó, y sabido esto por Julian, dijo: 'El mejor castigo que puedo darle es hacer que los árabes vayan contra él'" (209).

According to Ramón Menéndez Pidal, the rape by Don Rodrigo of the unnamed daughter of Count Julián (Olián) constitutes the nucleus of all subsequent Islamic narratives of the conquest of Spain, from the most schematic ones to the more elaborate, novelized accounts, such as the one by al-Rāzī from which Pedro de Corral's *CR* is directly descended (1958: I, lxxxix). Menéndez Pidal assumes that the first Arabic accounts were based on the reports of Visigothic informants in particular of the *vitizanos* and their descendants, those who collaborated with the invaders in whose interest it was to defame king Rodrigo (1958: I, xliii).¹⁵ The *Ajbar Machmuâ*, an Andalusian work

¹⁵ Ramón Menéndez Pidal claims that the three sons of Vitiza retained positions of prominence under Islamic domination following the conquest of Spain. The youngest, Ardabasto, distinguished himself as a counselor to the first *valies* of

called a “crónica anónima del siglo XI” by Lafuente y Alcántara, concurs with the account of Ebn Àbo-l-Hokum; it gives no name to the daughter of Julián who is raped by Rodrigo when her father sends her to be educated in the court at Toledo: “Cuando Rodrigo fué declarado rey, prendóse de la hija de Julian y la forzó” (19). To summarize, in the earliest most schematic accounts in Arabic, presumed by Ramón Menéndez Pidal to be the least fictionalized, the unnamed daughter of Julián is the object of Rodrigo’s lust, the victim of an act of sexual violence: she is raped.

In this simple variant of the story and its derivatives, it is Julián’s passionate desire to avenge the rape of his daughter that precipitates the Islamic invasion; it moves him to strike a deal with the enemy of his lord Rodrigo, from whom he holds a vital strategic charge as gate keeper. The central theme of the story is the rupture of the relationship of trust between Rodrigo and his powerful vassal, who controls the sea passage between Spain and North Africa: Don Julián is the keeper of the key to the gate allowing access to Spain. The rape of Don Julián’s daughter catalyzes a radical shift in his loyalties: the breaking of his bond of fealty with Rodrigo, the Christian overlord of Spain, and the transference of his allegiance to Muça ben Nosair, Arabic overlord of North Africa. The victimized daughter is not implicated morally in this variant of the story; she is in no way held accountable for the loss of Christian hegemony in Spain.¹⁶ She is a voiceless victim.

It would seem that the Captive’s description of the etymology of *La Cava* has led us down a false trail in the quest for the origin of *La Cava*, since there is little in the earliest Arabic narratives that would lead one to associate the character with what Cervantes’s Captive identifies as the meaning of her name. As we shall see shortly in more detail, the name *La Cava* is an accretion that was probably attached to the character at a subsequent moment in her literary evolution. The idea of the *mala mujer* does not seem consistent with the minimal characterization of the daughter of Julián in the earliest Islamic narratives of the conquest of Spain, chronologically the oldest in which she first appears.

1.5 Count Julián’s Daughter and the Early Christian Variants: The *Crónica de 754* and the

Spain. He was named count of the Christians of Andalusia by Abderraman I, the first Spanish caliph. In the tenth century one of his descendants was count and another judge of the Christians of Cordoba (1958: I, xxi).

¹⁶ In his *Orígenes de la novela* Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo falsely attributes the supposed Arabic etymology of the name “La Cava” (“manceba,” “prostituta”) to the sixteenth century writer Miguel de Luna, Arabic translator of Philip II, who rewrote the legend of Rodrigo and La Cava in the fictitious chronicle he offers as a Castilian translation of the work of the early Islamic historian Abentarique. Menéndez Pelayo notes that the alleged meaning of the name “sólo cuadraría a la liviana heroína de *Anseis de Cartago*, de ningún modo a la desdichada hija de Julián, tal como aparece en las leyendas

Pseudo Isidoriana

According to the Menéndez Pidal brothers Juan and Ramón, who devoted their efforts to tracing the family tree of the principal motifs of the Rodrigo story, La Cava is a character of Mozarabic rather than Arabic origin, one who passed with ease the porous boundary through which many elements of Islamic culture were transmitted to the Mozarabics from their Islamic overlords. Ramón reasons that the earliest Arabic accounts of the conquest of Spain must have drawn on the testimony of Mozarabic informants to supply the details of the internal affairs of the Visigoths that had a bearing on the outcome of the invasion. As one might expect, Arabic historians were inclined to repeat the variant of the story told by their Christian collaborators, the *vitizanos*, the partisans of the descendants of Rodrigo's predecessor Vitiza, who attributed the rape of the count's daughter to their political enemy, Don Rodrigo. Ramón Menéndez Pidal also notes a variant of the story that attributes the rape to Vitiza, rather than Rodrigo, one that he claims reflects the partisan interest of the defeated followers of the last Visigothic king (1958: I, xvi-xxx).

The only Christian account of the invasion to have survived from the eighth century, the *Crónica de 754*, known also as the *Crónica mozárabe del año 754* (López Pereira ed.), dedicates a few lines to Rodrigo, who is said to have seized the throne at the urging of the senate, but it makes no mention of either Julián or his daughter (Menéndez Pidal 1980: 71). In the extant Mozarabic narratives of the Rodrigo legend, the Count and his daughter first appear in the *Chronica gotorum Pseudo Isidoriana*, a work written toward the beginning of the eleventh century by a Mozarabic from Toledo, in other words, at least three hundred and fifty years after the *destruyçion*.¹⁷

The stature of father and daughter as characters is much enhanced in the *Pseudo Isidoriana*, their roles more clearly defined, when one compares them to their counterparts in the early Arabic narratives of the Conquest. King Getico, a corruption of *Getiza* or *Witiza* according to Ramón Menéndez Pidal, plays the role as violator of Julián's daughter. In this narrative she is given a name for the first time, "Oliba." She is also assigned a stock feminine attribute, exceptional beauty. The fame of Oliba's beauty reaches Getico, who, consumed by lust, plots to take her. Getico leads Julián into a world of drunken revelry. When the Count at last comes to his senses, the damage is already

musulmanas" (II, 96).

¹⁷ The *Pseudo-Isidoriana* was included in vol. ii of Theodore Mommsen's edition of *Chronica Minora, saec. IV, V, VI, VII*, published in 1894 (Berlin: Berolini). The key passage of the *Pseudo-Isidoriana* is reprinted in Diego Catalán's edition of Ramón Menéndez Pidal's *Reliquias de la poesía épica española acompañadas de epopeya y romancero* (Menéndez Pidal 1980: I, 2-3).

done: he learns that Getico has forged his seal and name in order to deceive the Countess, who has delivered Oliba into his hands. Getico has already defiled her and held her captive for many days. To avenge the dishonor of his daughter, Julián offers the key to the land and sea to the Moorish king Tárec, sending his wife and children to his former enemy as security to close the deal. In the meantime, Getico dies, leaving two sons too young to rule, for which reason Rodrigo is elected king. Rodrigo, who is a character of minor importance in this version of the story, meets his death on the battlefield with many other Christians when he leads his army against Tárec's invading force.

The *Pseudo Isidoriana* is a tale of pervasive wickedness reminiscent of the days of Sodom and Gomorrah—the work of a cleric. Oliba's role here is a minor one. As in the earliest Islamic narratives, she does not share in the moral responsibility for the destruction of Spain, which is heaped in equal proportion on the shoulders of Getico and Julián.

1.6 The Count's Daughter Receives Her Name: "La Cava"

If not by the eleventh century, in which surviving work was Julián's daughter given the name *La Cava* by which we have come to know her? As Juan Menéndez Pidal concluded on the examination of the written evidence, it appears quite likely that it did not happen until the fourteenth century, and not in a work in Arabic, but in a work written first in Portuguese, the *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*, by the Conde de Barcelos, the father of Portuguese historiography in the vernacular (Cintra 121-22). During the first half of the fourteenth century, writers of prose narratives in the vernacular from the Iberian Peninsula, in particular historians, continued to labor under the shadow of Alfonso X, in whose *talleres* teams of scholars had forged Castilian narrative prose. Many of the fictitious prose narratives of the reigns of Alfonso X (1252-1284), Sancho IV (1284-1295), Fernando IV (1295-1312) and Alfonso XI (1312-1350) are profoundly affected by the contact with Semitic narrative: both historiography and short narrative fiction, most notably the *exemplum*. Such is the case of the *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*, a work that Diego Catalán has termed "la Crónica General de España más notable y de mayor influjo entre cuantas tomaron por modelo y guía la *Estoria de España* de Alfonso X" (Catalán & De Andrés I, vii).

The earliest extant version of the *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344* is a Castilian translation of the lost Portuguese original, known as the *Crónica de 1344*, preserved partially in a manuscript (M), the basis for the edition published by Diego Catalán and María Soledad de Andrés in 1970. Given the numerous defects of ms M, the editors include lengthy excerpts in footnotes from

mss U, Q, V, and S, copies of a Castilian translation of a lost Portuguese *refundición*, from around 1400. Like the original of 1344, the *refundición* has survived in its earliest form only in a Castilian translation (I, xii-xx & lxxxi-xciv). It is in this work that the daughter of Count Julián is first called “la Caba.” In ms M she is called both *la Taba* and *la Caba* (*alataba / alacaba*). In the extant Castilian versions of the *refundición* (ca. 1400), she is consistently called *la Caba*, the name by which she is known in all subsequent versions of the legend, including the *CR*. It seems likely the *t* of *Taba*, the form of the name that appears with the greatest frequency in M, resulted from a misreading on the part of the copyist.

The spelling of the name with a *c* is consistent with the moral attributes of the daughter of Count Julián as she is depicted in the *Crónica de 1344*; there is a clearly discernible relationship between what Cervantes centuries later identified as the Arabic meaning of her name, *mala mujer*, and the nature of her actions. Such a relationship was most certainly understood by the *refundidor*. In the version of the story contained in the *Crónica de 1344*, La Cava is not free of guilt, as she appears to be in the versions of the story we have examined thus far.

It would seem that the application of the name “La Cava” to the character was not the work of a Moslem, but that of a Christian. It is pertinent to recall at this point that the Archpriest of Hita gave an Arabic name to one of the more memorable female characters of the *Libro de Buen Amor*, a work of about the same period, to underscore the nature of her most salient trait. The nun courted by the Archpriest, the last of his affairs, is named *doña Garoça*, “desposada” in Arabic according to María Rosa Lida de Malkiel (55). In her good judgment and her compassion toward the Archpriest, she shows herself to be worthy of her monastic vocation; she does not succumb to the Archpriest’s desire.

1.7 The Genealogy of the *Crónica de 1344*: Gil Pérez’s Translation of al-Rāzī

A few words are in order at this point to clarify the genealogy of the *Crónica de 1344*. It is commonly accepted that an early fourteenth century Portuguese translation of the *Ajbār Mulūk al-Andalus* by Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Mūsà al-Rāzī (899-955), historian *par excellence* of al-Andalus, is the primary source for the narrative of the reign of Rodrigo in the *Crónica de 1344*, as it is also indirectly for Pedro de Corral’s *CR*. Neither the Arabic original, often cited by subsequent Islamic historians, nor the Portuguese translation, has survived. Our knowledge of the Portuguese translation of al-Rāzī’s history is due to the diligence of the sixteenth-century Portuguese historian

André de Resende, who claims to have had a copy in his possession. According to André de Resende the translation was the work of the Portuguese cleric Gil Pérez, undertaken by order of King Dinis (1279-1325) (Catalán & Andrés, et al. xi-xii).

Gil Pérez, chaplain of Pedreanes de Portel, claimed to have written neither more nor less than what he was told by Mahomad and others who read to him from the Arabic original --he apparently knew little Arabic. Can we take his word as conveyed by André de Resende at face value? Citing the studies of Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, Diego Catalán & María Soledad de Andrés accept the assertion, but qualifying it: “La versión de Mahomad y Gil Pérez nos conserva (con la fidelidad e infidelidad esperadas en una versión de su tiempo) la Historia de España que, en la primera mitad del siglo X, escribió Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Mūsà al-Rāzī” (Catalán & Andrés, et al. xii).

Just how faithful could one expect such a translation to be on the basis of evidence from other works of the period? What elements of the Rodrigo/La Cava story were, in fact, contained in al- Rāzī’s history? Although it is impossible to answer these questions with any degree of certainty, there is general evidence from the narratives of the period that might lead one to question the degree of faith placed by Diego Catalán and María Soledad de Andrés in the relative fidelity of the Gil Pérez translation. Ramón Menéndez Pidal is most certainly correct when he notes: “El armazón completo del relato referente al rey Rodrigo en la *Crónica de 1344*, sin duda procede todo de Rasis” (1958: I lxx). In other words we can assume that the *Crónica de 1344* contains the majority of the essential plot elements of the Rodrigo story derived from Gil Pérez’s translation of al- Rāzī. But to what degree were the component elements of the story elaborated or given new meanings when they were transmitted from the tenth-century Arabic original to the fourteenth-century Portuguese translation, the primary source of the story of the destruction of Spain in the *Crónica de 1344*? I suspect, as did Juan Menéndez Pidal, that they underwent a considerable process of rhetorical amplification, re-elaboration, and reconfiguration. Juan Menéndez Pidal’s words on the relation between the narrative of al- Rāzī and the *Crónica de 1344* are worth quoting:

Contaría Ar-Razi el caso de la hija de Julián y la participación de éste en la conquista del Andalus, poco más ó menos, como los demás autores árabes; y ninguno de ellos, ni las crónicas escritas en latín ó en castellano que se nutren de la tradición arábica, contienen las glosas prolijas, nombres propios, y escenas dramáticas que surgen en la lección del siglo *XIV*. (121)

Amplification and reelaboration of earlier material is the very process that produced the

prolific growth and subsequent evolution of the great narrative cycles of the Middle Ages. The first half of the fourteenth century was the period in which the popularity of the Arthurian prose romances reached its peak in the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁸ As we shall see, their influence on Pedro de Corral's *CR* was considerable, as were the narratives of the "Trojan matter."

Claims of historical veracity are a trademark of the prose romances of the period, of those that were commonly considered to be based on some element of historical "truth" (for example, those dealing with the Trojan War), and also those that contained no trace of historical fact called *historias fingidas* (like *Amadís de Gaula*). The boundaries separating history from romance were not sharply defined. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, a description of the transmission of the text, including mention of the translation, had become commonplace in the Iberian chivalric romances, which had derived many important elements from medieval historiography. Cide Hamete Benengeli and the Morisco translator of the "history" of Don Quixote de la Mancha are the descendants of a venerable lineage.

The preponderance of evidence from the first half of the fourteenth century leads one to conclude, in fact, that Gil Pérez's narrative of the conquest of Spain was probably not a faithful translation of the original at all, but rather an extensive amplification and rewriting loosely based on elements gleaned from the Arabic original. If Diego Catalán is correct in his belief, one shared by Filipe Lindley Cintra, that the *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344* did not submit Gil Pérez's text to a process of rhetorical amplification, then it is to Gil Pérez that the first extensive process of elaboration of the material derived from al-Rāzī must be attributed (Catalán & Andrés, et al. xix). It seems reasonable to conjecture, therefore, that it may well have been Gil Pérez who first gave the name La Cava to the daughter of Count Julián.

Before turning our attention to the characterization of La Cava in the *Crónica de 1344*, two or three brief observations are in order about the parameters of what I believe was Gil Pérez's elaboration of his source material. First, Gil Pérez preserved al-Rāzī's genealogy of the Visigothic kings of Spain, which contains fictitious names and episodes without precedent in the history of the

¹⁸ In *The Arthurian Legend in the Literature of the Spanish Peninsula*, William J. Entwistle attributes the first Castilian translation of the Arthurian prose trilogy entitled *Demanda del Sancto Grial* (ca. 1291) to the reign of Sancho IV (143). Pedro Bohigas Balaguer is less certain of the date of the Portuguese and Castilian translations of the *Demanda*. Although he says that the earliest translation must have been prior to 1313, the date indicated in the colophon of a sixteenth-century translation of the *Liuro de Josep Abarimatia*, the first part of the cycle, he says that there are convincing reasons to believe "que cuando menos, alguna de las partes del ciclo en la versión portuguesa, y tal vez también en la castellana, se hubiese hecho con anterioridad" (III, 193).

Goths by St. Isidore or in the works of his continuers. Salient episodes, chosen for their didactic value, are linked in the *Crónica de 1344*, by lists of kings similar to the genealogical enumerations of the *Old Testament*, an indication that the work is intended to be read as an insert in the context of sacred history. The story of the reign of Rodrigo is immediately preceded by a brief account of the reign of *Banba* (Wamba). The two narratives are linked by a royal genealogy containing both historical and apocryphal names. Wamba's successors (Rodrigo's predecessors) are Vrgeos, Agica (*hijo de Agica*), Vatizanos (*del linaje de los godos*) and Acosta, of whose reigns nothing at all is said. There is no reason to associate Acosta with Vitiza, the historical predecessor of Rodrigo. Acosta is a fictitious character who owes his existence to the apocryphal succession of Gothic kings described in al- Rāzī's history.

The episodes selected for elaboration by Gil Pérez were reworked to enhance their didactic value. I believe it likely that they were intended for use as material for sermons. Although they are not glossed, their value as *exempla* of sins and virtues is clearly evident. They are infused with a clerical ideology, which, as we will see, informs the vision of La Cava and the role attributed to her in the destruction of Spain in the *Crónica de 1344*. While the story of Wamba is told as an example of the manifestation of God's approval of Wamba's ascent to the throne by election rather than by inheritance, Rodrigo's story illustrates the disastrous results of the illegitimate expropriation of regal authority. Wamba, a man of exemplary humility, is elected king of Spain against his own will but according to the will of a God who makes his choice manifest to the Spanish people. Wamba consents to assume the throne only after God shows him a sign. His election is mediated by the Church. When his predecessor dies and the land is left without a king, the peoples of Spain ask the Pope to grant them a king, "pues que la tierra fíncava desierta sin heredero derecho."

The name and a sign of the identity of the new king are announced to the Pope in a dream by St. Peter and St. Paul: "Que auia nonbre Banba, que era labrador que arava con vn buey blanco e con vn asno" (87). Those who are sent to find Wamba discover him plowing with a white ox and an ass in a field between Villalba de Alcor and Valladolid. When they tell him they want him to be their king, he believes they are making fun of him; he is characterized by the humility so central to the monastic ideal. He replies sarcastically that he will believe them when the goad (*aguijón / aguijada*) he is holding in his hand turns green. He is immediately shown the requisite sign: "E estonçes tornose el aguijada verde, e tovo fojas e bellotas, e prendio en aquel lugar adonde el la tenia fíncada en el llano" (88).

This brief episode from the reign of Wamba, the only one recounted of his reign in the *Crónica de 1344*, serves as a thematic prelude to the much longer story of the reign of Rodrigo. It provides the reader with a paradigm of exemplary humility against which to measure the actions of Rodrigo. The situations of the two men are parallel: each is asked to assume the reins of power by assent of the people when the hereditary succession to the throne has been broken. While Wamba resists the call of his countrymen until God's will is made manifest, Rodrigo eagerly accedes to the request that he serve as regent in lieu of King Acosta's two sons, who are too young to rule on their own. To enhance the appearance that his assumption of power is a reflection of divine will, Rodrigo requests that his oath of induction as regent be sworn on the Holy Gospels: "Porque era ome muy sesudo fizo traer los Santos Evangelios delante del" (92). Rodrigo is a manipulator of signs; he fabricates a public image intended to suggest divine approval of his usurpation of the throne. Despite swearing to relinquish power when the legitimate heirs have reached sufficient age to rule, Rodrigo seizes them by force and kills those who are likely to oppose his assumption of the throne: "Y desta agusia se paro España e en tal manera que pocos y avia, si non los qu'el fiziera. E por esta rrazon finco el por rrei e fiziese onrra de si"(93). Rodrigo is guilty of the sin of pride; he oversteps his bounds.

1.8 La Cava in the *Crónica de 1344*: Eve's Descendant (*la mala mujer*)

In the *Crónica de 1344*, immediately following Rodrigo's ascent as king, he is approached by the twelve guardians of the palace of Hercules in Toledo, who request in accordance with the will of Hercules, Spain's founding father, that he journey to Toledo to place a lock on the door of the palace, as have all of the previous kings since the beginning. Rodrigo refuses to submit to the custom guarded by the twelve keepers of the legacy of Hercules, who by their number we may reasonably conjecture are meant to be understood as holy men analogous to the twelve Apostles. The sealed palace of Toledo is a shrine to the limits of human knowledge and power, a symbol of the absolute boundary separating the province of royal authority from the all-encompassing jurisdiction of God, represented by the Church on earth. It marks a threshold beyond which no man should transgress.¹⁹

¹⁹ Fernando Ruiz de la Puerta has studied in detail the motif of Rodrigo's violation of the custom that each newly crowned king place a lock on the door of the sealed palace of Hercules in Toledo. Israel Burshatin has noted the central importance of the theme of transgression in Pedro de Corral's version of the legend, an observation that applies equally to the *Crónica de 1344*: "In Corral's fiction, the symmetry of the last (Rodrigo) and the first (Pelayo) hinges on the rhetorical force of the episode in which Rodrigo breaks into the house built by Hercules, the dynasty's founder. It is that

Upon hearing of the ritual of the lock observed by all of his predecessors, Rodrigo declares his unwillingness to follow it: “Ante queria saber en todas las guisas del mundo que yazia dentro” (96). At this point in the *Crónica de 1344* the narration of the episode of the palace of Toledo is interrupted by the episode of Rodrigo and La Cava; the narration of Rodrigo’s entry into the sealed palace is postponed. In other words, the Rodrigo/La Cava motif is framed by the two segments of the narration of the violation of the taboo of the palace of Toledo.

The technique of interweaving or interlacing multiple narrative threads (*entrelacement*) is common to both medieval historiography and chivalric romance.²⁰ It is used in the histories of Alfonso X to represent relations of simultaneity; for example, in the *General Estoria* it serves to integrate the chronologies of Classical and Biblical histories into a single temporal structure. In the chivalric romance it is used to entwine the stories of multiple characters for the sake of variety and suspense and to enhance meaning. Interweaving frequently functions in chivalric narrative to establish a paradigmatic framework in order to underscore repetitions or variations on a theme. For readers of the middle of the fourteenth century, the interweaving of the episodes of the palace of Hercules and of La Cava in the *Crónica de 1344* would have signaled that they were intended to be read in relation to each other, that they are linked thematically. Rodrigo’s usurpation of the throne, his violation of the taboo of the palace of Hercules, and his taking of La Cava’s virginity are all acts of transgression against the will of God, symptoms of the abuse of worldly power, manifestations of the sin of *superbia*, the failure to observe sacrosanct boundaries.

In the *Crónica de 1344* immediately after we learn that Rodrigo sends the guardians of the palace of Hercules away refusing to promise to observe the ritual of the lock, without a chapter break, we are told that it was Rodrigo’s custom to send for the children of the prominent men of his kingdom in order to raise them with great honor in his household: “E como sabia elugar de algun onbre bueno que buen fiijo touiese o buena hija que la non mandase pedir, e tan bien los criava e tanta onrra les hazia que maravilla era. E por esta rrazon traya siempre muy gran casa e muy buena,

moment in the narrative -- transgressive, irreversible, and powerfully conveyed by the motif of the ark -- that will resonate in Pelayo’s exploits” (1990: 15).

²⁰ Eugène Vinaver treats the use of *entrelacement* in detail in the context of Arthurian romance. For the study of the fictional elements in Corral’s work, see Álvarez-Hesse. On the influence of Medieval historiography on Corral, see Ljiljana Milojevic and Lauzardo-Ugarte.

ansi el commo su muger” (97). That the two episodes are interwoven without a marked transition is a sign that the reader is intended to apprehend the two as variations on a common theme: Rodrigo’s abuse of his regal office.

Upon learning that Count Julián has a daughter of great beauty and virtue, King Rodrigo sends for her. He tells her father that a damsel of such virtuous repute should be nowhere but with his wife (the queen), a position from which he will be able to reward her with an advantageous marriage. Don Julián is jubilant with the news; he receives Don Rodrigo’s overture as a concession of extraordinary goodwill. Without hesitation he sends his daughter to Toledo, and with her he sends word to the king that he is grateful for the favor bestowed on him and his daughter: “Que le agradeç[i]a mucho quanto bien e quanta merçed hazia a el e a su hija” (97).

In the *Crónica de 1344*, the Spain of Rodrigo, whose lands, boundaries, and riches are described in detail in the geographic enumeration taken from al- Rāzī that precedes the narrative, the king is the ultimate dispenser of power and privilege, the ultimate source of all favors (*mercedes*), in a social world predicated on relations of exchange. Each transaction is mediated by an implicit contract of mutual obligation: in return for Count Julián’s military service as keeper of the gate, King Rodrigo promises him social and political advantage to be granted through the honorable marriage of his daughter. Marriage in Rodrigo’s world is a vehicle for the acquisition and the concession of power; women of the age to marry are a form of currency used in transactions of feudal allegiance.²¹

The power structure in Rodrigo’s world as it is represented in the *Crónica de 1344*, one from which women are ordinarily excluded as active participants, is based on interlocking grids of kinship relations, arranged by the king, symbolic father of the realm. In the context of the nuclear family it is the father who controls the fate of his daughters in the politics of marriage. His authority is absolute. Count Julián does not consult with La Cava before sending her to the court in Toledo, nor with her mother, nor does Rodrigo consult with the queen upon sending for La Cava: “E quando el conde le vino este mandado, [...] mando luego llevar su hija” (97). Count Julián’s immediate compliance with the king’s command is predicated on trust in the virtue of his lord’s intentions and on the

²¹ Duby & Perrot apply the idea of supply and demand to their treatment of the politics of matrimony and inter-family

promise of advantage. To entrust to the king the well-being of his daughter is to place in the king's hands the most valuable asset at his disposal for strategic deployment in the politics of inter-family relationships, one of the vital arenas of competition in the quest to accumulate honor, the social capital of medieval society.

In the *Crónica de 1344*, the didactic value of La Cava's loss of her virginity to King Rodrigo, and the disaster it precipitates, hinges on the magnitude of her virtue before the fall. In Toledo, where La Cava joins the queen along with the flower of the young women of Spain ("fijas de todos los mejores de España"), she stands above her peers in beauty and goodness, the most prized of feminine attributes: "Dizen los que de su bondad fablan, que ella era ha esa sazón la mas hermosa donzella en el mundo" (98). If La Cava is as beautiful and as good as any damsel can be, what is the cause of her downfall? How can she bear responsibility for the loss of Spain? Does she lose her virginity by choice, or is it taken from her by force? Does she, in fact, prostitute herself, as her name would suggest she does?

The king is smitten by desire for La Cava when he sees more of her body than he should. What is suggested, although not overtly stated, is that she is indecently attired. It is she who has exposed her flesh to public view. If she is indeed worthy of her reputation as the most virtuous of all the young women of the queen's household, we must assume that her behavior and her dress are by comparison as modest as those of her peers. In spite of her virtue, it is she who tempts the king, albeit without the intention of doing so, by exposing in a public place parts of her body forbidden to public view, and most particularly to the sight of men: "Acaesçio qu'ella andando vn dia trebejando sin anfaz ninguno e cantando con las otras donzellas muchas, paso por ay el rrei, e acaesçio asy que le vio vn poco del pie a vueltas con la pierna, que lo avia, tan blanco e tan bien hecho que non podria ser mayor" (98). She allows both her face and her foot to be seen: her face is not veiled (*sin anfaz*) and her dress is too short to hide the sight of her foot. Although the scene of Rodrigo's fatal attraction is not glossed in the *Crónica de 1344*, the strategic selection of the elements of the story is governed by the dictates of a clerical discourse on sin that preaches the fundamental weakness of women in the face of temptation and their particular susceptibility to sins of the flesh. The story is an

exemplum told with the intention that it be glossed by the reader.

One needn't look far in the didactic literature of the period to find moralizing comments on the behavior of women that could be applied without adaptation to salient elements of the Rodrigo/La Cava story as it is told in the *Crónica de 1344*. An example that comes quickly to mind is Alfonso Martínez de Toledo's description in *El Corbacho* of the exhibitionistic ploys used by women to provoke illicit desire in men:

A las vezes fazen como por yerro que alçan la falda por mostrar el chapín o el pie, o algund poco de la pierna. Miran luego como que la vieron e non se lo cuydava, e suelta la falda e abaxa los ojos de muy vergonçosa. Byen sabe, pero, qué faze. Sy por casa anda en saya, faze que se abaxa a tomar de tierra alguna cosa por mostrar los çancajos de grand forma de nalgas con loçanía e orgullo, por ser deseada de aquel que es mirada, o a quien tal muestra faze. (157)

Another example is the narrator's gloss on the episode of the meeting of Perión and Helisena in *Amadís de Gaula*, during which Amadís is conceived. The moral of the story as glossed by the narrator is that illicit desire is born in the household in which the strict segregation of the sexes is not enforced and the activities of young women are not subject to rigorous controls.²² In the same vein, the lesson concerning women suggested by the example of La Cava is that even the most virtuous of all *donzellas* by their very nature are inclined to fall prey to the temptations of the world, when given the opportunity or the incentive to do so. If a *donzella* famous for her virtue can be snared by the devil, how much more easily it can happen to a *donzella* of less resistant moral fiber.

In the *Crónica de 1344* Rodrigo seduces La Cava; she gives in to his persistent advances. He doesn't take her by force, as in the Arabic variants of the story. As previously noted, his desire to possess her body is born of the sight of her exposed flesh. There is no indication, however, that she intends to catch his eye. It is Rodrigo who first enters the forbidden realm of earthly desires. Initially, La Cava energetically resists his advances: "E tanto que la ansi vio, començole de demandar muy fuertemente su amor. E despues qu'ella vio que asi le demandaua, pesole mucho e començo de defender por buenas palabras" (98). In the *Crónica de 1344* La Cava's words are not

²² "Assí deven (las mujeres) con mucho cuidado atapar las orejas, cerrar los ojos, escusándose de ver parientes y vezinos, reconociéndose en las devotas contemplaciones, en las oraciones sanctas, tomándolo por verdaderos deleites, assí como lo son, porque con las fablas, con las visitas su sancto propósito dañan, do no sea assí como lo fue el desta fermosa infanta

reproduced, but we may logically assume that the reader of the fourteenth century would have understood her *palabras buenas* to be words infused with Christian ideals of feminine virtue: virginity, chastity, and fidelity. Although Rodrigo is clearly the initiator of the illicit relationship, it is by an act of her own will that La Cava falls prey to his words. Her resistance is feigned.²³ We are told that her virtue is insufficient to defend her successfully against temptation. She is shown to be the victim of the moral weakness inherent to the nature of women. It is her womanly nature that produces her fall; she is a descendent of Eve: “Pero a la çima, porque era muger, obose de vencer a que fizo mandado del rrei don Rodrigo, que atanto la acuytava e que tanto le prometia que maravilla era, e nunca se tanto pudo defender fasta que hizo su voluntad” (98).

The La Cava of the *Crónica de 1344* is not portrayed as an innocent girl, because she is shown to have mastered the prescribed discourse, the “palabras buenas” medieval women were instructed to use to ward off temptations of the flesh. She succumbs willingly to Rodrigo’s persuasive words: perhaps to his professions of love, or perhaps to his promises. The reader is not told explicitly what the king promises La Cava, but the presumed meaning of her name, *mala mujer*, suggests that what takes place is the exchange of sexual favor for material advantage. Rodrigo purchases her favor and she consents to the transaction; she prostitutes herself.

The social and moral axiom inherent to La Cava’s story as it is told in the *Crónica de 1344* is that since the sight of the female body arouses illicit desire in men and since women by nature are inclined to succumb to temptation, the female body must be hidden from public exposure through measures of control. The story is an example that could easily be used as a critique of courtly mores, which in the fourteenth century deviated radically from Christian orthodoxy, if one is to judge by the descriptions of court life contained in the *crónicas regias* of the period, a grave concern of the most conservative clerics of the latter Middle Ages, who saw it as their mission as agents of the Church to impose the Church’s moral authority on a sinful Christian flock.

The La Cava of the *Crónica de 1344* is also constructed to serve as an example of the

Helisena...” (*Amadis de Gaula*; Rodríguez de Montalvo I, 240).

²³ Alfonso Martínez de Toledo warns men of the frequency with which women mask their desire behind words of resistance: “Donde sepas que muchas vezes la muger disimula non amar, non querer, e non aver. Pyensa byen, amigo que caldo de raposa es, que parece frío e quema; que ella byen ama e quema de fuego de amor en sí de dentro, mas encúbrela, porque, sy lo demostrase luego pyensa que sería poco presciada” (174).

fickleness of women, a central theme of the misogynist discourse of the Middle Ages, for no sooner has she consented to King Rodrigo's proposition than she begins to regret the bargain they have struck. She upholds her end of the transaction, nonetheless, even though she recognizes, albeit after it is too late, that Rodrigo's actions can result only in the destruction of her honor: "Ca bien vio que de alli adelante nunca le podria fazer cosa que su deshonrra e su daño non fuese. Pero sufriose sin su grado e hizo quanto el quiso" (99).

Like the adulterous love of Lancelot for Guenevere, Rodrigo's for La Cava is born in a cocoon of secrecy. Although there are no witnesses to La Cava's loss of her virginity, her dishonor is immediately evident through her loss of beauty: "E desde alli ovo tan gran pesar en el coraçon, que començo a perder la fermosura muy desmesuradamente" (99). Since virtue and beauty are coterminous in Rodrigo's Spain, La Cava cannot hide her loss of virtue from those around her; what is evident to God is made manifest to the world of men as well: Rodrigo's world, as it is described in the *Crónica de 1344*, is one in which God's will is frequently made manifest through visible signs.

On the insistence of her friend Alquifa, with who she is in the habit of sharing her most intimate secrets, it is La Cava herself who reveals the specific nature of her dishonor. She is not publicly denounced as is Luz, the mother of Pelayo, in Corral's *CR*. She tells Alquifa the story of her dishonor with great shame ("aveyendo muy gran verguença"), baring her emotion and sparing her *amiga* no details. She begins her sad tale with the words: "Tal pesar tengo en mi coraçon [...] que maravilla es" (100).

The noun "pesar" has at least two shades of meaning, each of which may conceivably apply to La Cava's internal reaction to her shameful situation. The *Diccionario de Autoridades* lists the following definitions: 1) "Sentimiento u dolor interior que molesta y fatiga el animo;" 2) "el arrepentimiento u dolor de los pecados, u otra cosa mal hecha" (III, 240). There is nothing in the context of the sentence in which La Cava uses it to restrict the meaning of "pesar." Does she merely regret what has happened to her for the social repercussions it is bound to have, or does she recognize her action as a sin for which she feels contrite before God?

In the few words La Cava speaks to Alquifa, who recommends that she tell her father what has happened to her, La Cava does not acknowledge responsibility for her situation, at least not to

her friend. What she expresses is the fear that her story will not be believed by the king's counselors, who will ultimately have to pass judgement on her: "Mas mi padre es ome del consejo, e yo veo que todos los sesudos juzgan las mas de las mugeres por malas. E por esta rrazon yo non oso enbiar dezir a mi padre, por miedo que he que me lo non crea que en verdad por mi grado yo non lo fize, e rreçelo que me desanpare" (100). What she fears is the misogynist predisposition of the members of the king's council, whose ideas about women she has learned to accept. She has apparently internalized the dominant ideology about women, for she notes that it is the wise (*sesudos*) who judge the majority of women to be evil. Or perhaps there is irony in her choice of words. Whatever the case may be, she believes she will not get a fair hearing; that her professions of innocence will not be believed, as they should not be on the basis of what we are told by the narrator.

It is only when Alquifa calls to her attention the danger of getting pregnant that La Cava is moved to write her father of her shameful situation, following her friend's advice. What seems to motivate La Cava's actions in the *Crónica de 1344*, when all is said and done, is what might be termed a strategy of containment implemented to limit damage to her reputation, a cleanup operation after a nasty oil spill in pristine coastal waters; better to be judged the victim of rape than a consenting partner in an adulterous relationship.

When La Cava writes her father appealing to his sense of honor, she points an accusing finger at Rodrigo, denying her complicity in the *maldad*: "Ca el rrey, muy sin mi grado yugo conmigo" (102). She is a consummate liar.²⁴ She threatens to take her own life if her father does not come to get her. Count Julián comes immediately to remove his daughter from Rodrigo's household.

At this point La Cava's role in the story of the destruction of Spain is essentially complete in the *Crónica de 1344*; her father now assumes center stage, moved by his thirst for revenge, which is predicated on his daughter's lie. When all is said and done, the La Cava of the *Crónica de 1344* is nothing less than a compendium of the sins and weaknesses attributed to the descendants of Eve in the misogynist sermons of the latter Middle Ages.

Although it would be excessive to see a fully developed Biblical typology at work in the La

²⁴ The ability of women to lie is treated extensively as a feminine attribute in the misogynist diatribes of Alfonso Martínez de Toledo's *Corbacho*: "La muger ser de dos fazes e cuchillo de dos tajos non ay dubda en ello, por quanto de cada día vemos que uno dize por la boca, otro tyene al corazón" (146).

Cava story of the *Crónica de 1344*, there can be little doubt that the author fabricated his narrative edifice out of recycled Biblical materials. Ramón Menéndez Pidal first noted the similarity between the story of David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, wife of Uriah, and the story of Rodrigo's lust for La Cava (1958: I, lxxvi). There are, indeed, clear parallels between David and Rodrigo, which we will examine in more detail later, but in the story of Susanna, wife of Joachim (*Daniel: 1, 1-64 [Biblia]*), one finds a feminine prototype more closely related to La Cava than is Bathsheba, albeit the relationship is one of opposition rather than similarity. At several critical junctures when La Cava has the opportunity to preserve her virtue, to act as does Susanna, a paradigm of feminine chastity, she makes choices that bury her ever deeper in sin. In other words, I believe her character to be constructed in opposition to the biblical prototype of the chaste woman exemplified in Susanna.

Two versions of the story of Susanna were widely disseminated in Castilian prose of the first half of the fifteenth century: Sancho IV narrates the story of Susanna in the *Castigos e documentos para bien vivir, que don Sancho IV de Castilla dio a su fijo*, in the context of his advice on the king's role as dispenser of justice (Rosell 1952: 101). The extant manuscripts of this work, written during the last two decades of the thirteenth century, are from the fifteenth century, evidence that it continued to circulate until the end of the Middle Ages. The story of St. Susanna is also narrated by Don Álvaro de Luna in his *Libro de las claras y virtuosas mujeres*, in a version that closely follows the content and phraseology of the *Vulgate*. While King Sancho tells the story as an example of divine intervention to thwart a miscarriage of justice --God intervenes to save Susanna from condemnation when she is falsely accused as an adulteress by two elders of the Jewish community living in exile in Babylon-- Don Álvaro offers the story of Susanna to exemplify the virtue of chastity in women: "Con grande razon deue ser fecha aqui mençion de la noble susaña, muger de ioachin, del pueblo de ysrael, por la su grand virtud de castidad, pues que aun el temor de la muerte, que es la postrimera cosa de las cosas espantosas e terribles, non la pudo corronper" (Luna 61-64).

Although Susanna and La Cava do not share similar roles as women --Susanna is married and La Cava still a maiden-- the situation of the two is similar: the chastity of each is put to the test by men of the highest stature who abuse their positions of authority. Like the two elders who sit in

judgement over the Jews in exile in the house of Joachim, Rodrigo has been entrusted the highest judicial authority in Spain following the death of Acosta. Like the Jewish elders of Babylon, Rodrigo is overcome by carnal desire. In the story of Susanna, as in that of La Cava as told in the *Crónica de 1344*, desire is born in the elders upon seeing Susanna, a woman of great beauty, in the intimate space of her own household. But while Susanna is seen by the judges as she goes virtuously about her duties as wife of Joachim, “andaba por su casa guisando su hacienda” (Luna 102), La Cava, as we have already noted, first attracts the gaze of Rodrigo when he sees her singing with the other *doncellas* of the court, her face and her foot exposed to public view.

One can find evidence in the *Espéculo de legos* (Mohedano ed.), a fifteenth-century Castilian translation of a late thirteenth century English repertoire of sermon motifs, the *Especulum laicorum*, most likely by a Franciscan, that the naked foot, the exposed face and the singing of secular songs are probably intended as signs of wickedness in the La Cava story. The sermon entitled “De las dançaderas” contains a veritable arsenal of citations from the holiest fathers of the church condemning singing and dancing among women: “Las dançaderas engannan a los próximos a manera de basilisco que mata por la sola vista” (89). “De las dançaderas” issues a stern warning to all men lest they be drawn to their deaths by the songs of the *dançaderas*, “a manera de serenitas que fazen a los mareantes que se allegen a ellas por la dulçedumbre del su canto,” and admonishes parents to control their restless daughter: “Afirma la guarda sobre la fija desasosegada” (89).

While Susanna is innocent of inciting carnal desire in the judges, in the *Crónica de 1344* it is implied that La Cava is responsible for provoking Rodrigo’s passion. She violates the code of behavior and dress prescribed for young women by the Church. In the story of Susanna, the Jewish elders attempt to satisfy their desire by coercion: they threaten Susanna with death and dishonor. In the story of La Cava, however, it is clear that Rodrigo uses promises rather than threats to seduce her. La Cava succumbs to her own moral weakness.

When Susanna is put to the test, she chooses to face death rather than to compromise her chastity. The judges tell her when they catch her alone in the garden of her house that if she does not submit to their desire they will bring false witness against her: “Diziendo, que la auian visto fazer adulterio con vn mançebo, dentro de aquel vergel” (Luna 62). They tell her that their word will be

believed on account of their stature, but that because she is a woman hers is of little value. Susanna does not give in to their threats: she chooses to face death and dishonor before losing her virtue in the eyes of God. When her screams bring the household servants back into the garden, just as they have threatened to do, the judges denounce her as an adulteress, an offense punishable by death. Without any human recourse at her disposal, Susanna calls on God to protect her. God hears her prayer. He sends the prophet Daniel to her trial to expose the perjury of the judges before the multitude. When each testifies to have seen the act of adultery committed under a different tree in the garden, Daniel convinces them to confess their sins before the people and he executes their death sentences summarily: “Luego fueron alli muertos” (65). When Susanna has been vindicated, we are led to assume that she resumes her role as the wife of Joachim: she disappears from view. While Susanna wins a place in Scripture as an example of feminine virtue and presumably her salvation, La Cava is immortalized in the tradition founded by Gil Pérez as an example of the curse of Eve: we may assume she is condemned to eternal damnation.

2

Pedro de Corral’s Re-writing of the Legend of Rodrigo and La Cava in the *CR*

2.1 The Generic Prototype: The *Crónica Regia*

While Filipe Lindley Cintra concluded that in the *Crónica de 1344* the narrative of the reign of Rodrigo probably compressed the story as told in the lost Portuguese translation of al-Rāzī, in the *Crónica del Rey don Rodrigo* Pedro de Corral realized a monumental amplification of the same source, casting it in a different generic mold. Both works are entitled *crónicas*, but they belong to different prototypes of that genre. As Diego Catalán has pointed out, the *Crónica de 1344* is the most important of the histories of the type termed *general* to be elaborated during the fourteenth century following Alfonso X’s model. In the *Crónica de 1344*, the Rodrigo story is but one of a number of stories integrated into a genealogically ordered narrative series that provides a broad overview of the succession of the kings of *las Españas*, for which reason such a work was designated in the terminology of the period as either a *crónica* or a *historia* “general.”²⁵ By contrast, the *Crónica del*

²⁵ According to José Antonio Maravall, by the latter Middle Ages the plural *las Españas*, which appears quite frequently in *eHumanista: Monographs in Humanities*, 3

Rey don Rodrigo, mimics the characteristics of the *crónica regia*, which was developed as an instrument of royal propaganda during the reign of Alfonso XI (1312-1350) by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, the king's chancellor. Chancellor Pedro López de Ayala further refined the prototype in the chronicles of the reigns of Pedro I (1350-1369) and Enrique II (1369-1379), in which the rhetorical potential of the genre was carried to new heights.²⁶

The *crónica regia* makes the king the true protagonist of a vastly expanded narrative, one that provides the space for more detailed characterization and an increased opportunity for the display of rhetorical skills. Fernando Gómez Redondo attributes the development of what he terms the *crónica real*, or *regia*, to the reign of Alfonso XI. The new generic prototype turned its attention away from the distant past in order to focus on the recent past, a shift dictated by a change in the mentality of the social groups for whom historical narrative was written. The new model was developed by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, who was given the task by Alfonso XI of completing the *crónica general* begun by his predecessor Alfonso X (the *Estoria de España*), a work that left incomplete the account of the reign of Fernando III, leaving a gap of nearly a century in the crown's narrative of the recent past. The *crónicas regias* minimize overt statements of judgement. According to Gómez Redondo, "se constituyen con el único propósito de dejar constancia de unos hechos, pero de los que no se va a extraer ninguna significación, al menos del tipo de las 'literales,' que permitían presenciar la unicidad de Dios, dispuesta en las edades del mundo" (6).²⁷

In imitation of the more contemporary prototype, the *CR* tells the story of the reign of a single king, Rodrigo, from his ascent to the throne until his death. Into the overarching framework constituted by the account of the reign of Rodrigo, three other narratives of some length are inserted: the stories of Sacarus and the Duquesa de Loreina, of Favila and Luz, and of Pelayo, Rodrigo's successor.

In his narrative of the reign of King Rodrigo, Pedro de Corral makes use of all of the central

in the *CR*, had become a traditional rhetorical usage. In most instances it conveyed no more than a vague memory of the ancient divisions of Roman and Visigothic domination. It was generally used, as a *cultismo*, not with the intention of conveying the idea of "pluralismo interior," but to lend prestige by way of the number of lands and titles to the one who ruled them (188).

²⁶ Germán Orduna has argued convincingly that López de Ayala's chronicles of the reigns of Pedro I and Enrique II are intended to be read as a single work (259-262).

²⁷ On the chroniclers of the Trastámara kings, see Bermejo Cabrero and Tate.

motifs associated with La Cava inherited from al- Rāzī through Gil Pérez's Portuguese translation, but he elaborates them in far greater detail, often giving them a new focus in order to enhance similarities he wished his reader to see with the Spain of his own period. In addition, he provides narrative closure to the story of La Cava, something missing in all the earlier versions. Pedro de Corral's La Cava is a character of far greater moral depth than is the *mala mujer* of the *Crónica de 1344*. Corral endows her with her own voice and he allows her to speak eloquently for herself, seemingly without the mediation of others. La Cava is, without doubt, one of the principal beneficiaries of Pedro de Corral's rhetorical amplification of his source material. He makes her a character for which the reader cannot help but feel sympathy, one of great emotional complexity.

It is important to note that in the *CR* La Cava is not the only significant female character. She is but one figure, the central one, in an ensemble of women characters, through whom Pedro de Corral projects a fascinating view of women against the background of the narrative of the destruction of Spain during the reign of the ill-fated Rodrigo. Corral's image of the social world of women in Rodrigo's Toledo draws on the portrayal of women in Arthurian romance, in hagiography, and on the conventions of the representation of women in the dominant genres of the historiography of the latter Middle Ages. It is an image intended to have a significant degree of mimetic currency, one meant to bear a recognizable, although stylized, relationship to real women of the Castilian aristocracy during the early decades of the fifteenth century, a period when chivalric literature exercised a powerful influence on court fashion in Castile.

Court ceremonial is given a prominent place in the *crónicas regias* of the reigns of the fourteenth and early fifteenth-century Castilian monarchs just as it was in the Arthurian prose romances still in vogue among Castilian readers of the period. The pageantry of the chivalric romance served as a model for the styling of the court ceremonial recorded in abundant detail in both the *crónicas particulares*, such as Díez de Games *Victorial*, and in the official accounts of the reigns of all the kings of Castile from Alfonso XI to Juan II, a period spanning most of the fourteenth century and the first decades of the fifteenth.²⁸ In Pedro de Corral's *CR*, the story of Rodrigo and La

²⁸ Teófilo F. Ruiz has studied the use of the tournaments and festivities organized in Valladolid by Don Álvaro de Luna at the end of April in 1428 on the occasion of the departure of Leonor of Aragón to marry Don Duarte, heir to the throne of Portugal. Through the manipulation of symbolism and gestures during the festivities, Don Álvaro sought to project an
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Cava is told against a richly embroidered image of Rodrigo's court in Toledo, where chivalry is upheld with unequalled magnificence and splendor, an image in which Corral intended his reader to see a reflection of the court life of the reigning Trastámara dynasty. In both instances chivalric protocol is a dazzling veneer that hides grave ills threatening the well-being of the kingdom and the monarch.

2.2 Chivalry and Ceremonial in Rodrigo's Court

Corral's Rodrigo, like the Trastámara kings, makes effective use of ceremonial as an ideological weapon as he seeks to legitimize his usurpation of the throne from Sancho and Elier, the heirs of his predecessor King Acosta. Rodrigo, who is elected regent by assent of the majority of the clergy and the *caballeros*, does not wait long to crown himself king in Corral's narrative. In so doing he flagrantly disregards the oath of induction he swears before God and his subjects to return the reins of power to the hereditary heir to the throne when he reaches majority, presumably to Don Sancho, the oldest of King Acosta's sons. After crushing the opposition in the siege of Córdoba, taking physical possession of Acosta's heirs and acquiring Eliaca by force as his queen (the daughter of the king of Africa), Rodrigo stages a lavish coronation to lend legitimacy both at home and abroad to his dubious claim to the throne.

It is in the context of this lavishly orchestrated display of his newly consolidated power that Rodrigo appeals to Count Julián, one of his most important vassals, to send his beautiful and virtuous daughter, La Cava, to be raised in the court at Toledo among the attendants of the queen. The coronation and royal marriage are attended by the flower of the foreign nobility and by Rodrigo's most important feudal dependents from his own lands: they are celebrations orchestrated as signs of his power and prosperity. From the standpoint of the king's vassals, for one's name to appear on the king's roster of guests is a sign of preeminence. Such lists appear frequently in the *crónicas regias* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: an example of Corral's conscious imitation of the conventions of the dominant genre in the historiography of his contemporaries.

Rodrigo's concern for the creation and control of the public image of his monarchy is

image of the primacy of Juan II and of the Castilian throne in order to call on the oligarchy to thwart the political

reflected likewise in his concern for the writing of the history of his own reign. After establishing his hegemony on the battlefield at Córdoba his first act is to designate Eleastras and Alansuri as his official chroniclers. Rodrigo is the self-conscious architect of his own public image, as were the Trastámara kings, who patronized the writing of the *crónicas regias*, the authorized narratives of the events of the recent past, which were by their very nature partisan accounts.

Rodrigo's request that Don Julián bring La Cava to Toledo to be raised in the company of the queen is made as part of the invitation he extends to the Count to attend the public festivities to be held in the capital city. Those who attend the festivities lend tacit approval to the legitimacy of Rodrigo's claim to the throne. Consequently, the invitation he extends to Count Julián is a gesture charged with political significance, one that is accompanied by a proposal offering an exchange of royal favor for loyal support. Rodrigo offers to place don Julián's daughter in the company of his new queen and to marry her off advantageously: "Ca no quería él que donzella de que tanto bien dezían como de su hija biviessse en otra parte sino con su muger, e que él le daría mejor casamiento que él pensava" (I, 175). In this description the author skillfully assimilates the voice of Rodrigo into the narrative discourse. Such *mercedes* as those promised by Rodrigo correspond in value to the strategic service performed by Julián, a skilled commander, on the first line of defense against the rising tide of Islam in North Africa: the exchange is one of supreme strategic value.

2.3 Courtly Love and the Politics of Marriage and Ascendance in Rodrigo's Toledo

In his role as symbolic father of the kingdom, Rodrigo extends his control over the nobility of Spain by arranging the marriages of the most eligible young men and women. Such was indeed the prerogative of the fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century kings of Castile and Leon. The coronation festivities in the *CR* culminate with the negotiation of a series of advantageous unions. The elaborate tournaments, banquets and soirees staged in conjunction with the royal marriage and coronation constitute a carefully designed venue for marketing the marriageable youth of the land. Rodrigo spares no expense: he gives lavish gifts to his most prestigious guests, who are lured to his court by his magnificence and by the splendor of his tournaments, events on which he spends the

ambitions of Juan II's cousins, the Infantes de Aragón.

accumulated treasure of all the previous Gothic kings of Spain. Rodrigo's marketing strategy accomplishes what he intends it to: he maximizes the value of the virgin daughters of the Goths to cement peaceful alliances through marriage with his Christian neighbors.

Courtly love does not motivate the actions of the main characters of the *CR*. In Rodrigo's court, love is subordinate to far more pragmatic concerns. By patronizing advantageous marriages for his most faithful followers, Rodrigo exercises control over the marital unions of his principal vassals, thus laying the foundation of his political power. His political enemies are not so rewarded. He sends them to serve on the North African front, where many are slain in battle. The chivalric pageantry of Rodrigo's court is, in fact, subordinate to political concerns; it is relatively untouched by the emotional world of romantic passion that is at the very heart of Arthurian chivalry. Rodrigo's world is cold and calculating. Although Sacarus, the most exemplary knight of Rodrigo's court, has some of the sentimental attributes of a Lancelot or an Amadís, his passion is by comparison subdued, and it always remains subordinate to the laws of the land. Sacarus courts the Duquesa de Loreina, a young widow to whom the deceased duke has bequeathed his estates, with the full blessing of King Rodrigo. Loyal vassal that he is, Sacarus always places the king's interest before his own. In Rodrigo's world there are no love-sick swooners.

As for Rodrigo, he is more barbarian warlord than courtly lover. He takes Eliaca, his queen, by force from the king of Africa and converts her by force to Christianity. His marriage to Eliaca is an act of aggression, an act of domination directed at her father, intended to strike fear in the hearts of potential enemies at home and abroad, those who might be tempted to test his grip on the recently acquired throne of Spain. It is a display of power calculated to send the message that he is the master of the *Españas*, a powerful king whose authority is absolute over both his kingdom and his wife. Eliaca has no voice in Rodrigo's court. It is only when word of the destruction of Rodrigo's army reaches Toledo, when Rodrigo is presumed dead, that her voice is registered by Eleastras, the historian, who is witness to both the destruction of Rodrigo and to the rise of his successor Pelayo, founder of the new dynasty, to whom the Trastámara kings of the fourteenth and fifteenth century traced their origins. Eliaca's discourse is cast in the mold of the *planctus*. It is at once the lament of all Spaniards over the imminent destruction of their homeland and Eliaca's expression of anxiety

over her personal fate as she helplessly awaits the arrival of the conquerors. She is a subaltern who is subjected by coercion to Rodrigo's authority as monarch and husband. For Rodrigo she is not the object of his respect or affection, but rather a requisite symbol of his dominance.

Rodrigo forces Eliaca to marry him not only to assert his dominion but for a second political reason as well. Advanced in years when he comes to power, he is neither married nor is he the father of a potential heir. To engender a legitimate successor is of the utmost importance to secure his claim to the throne.

Anxiety over the need of the king to produce legitimate offspring was commonplace among medieval royalty as is evident in many royal chronicles of the latter Middle Ages. For example, in the *Crónica de Alfonso X* (1252-1284), probably composed between 1340 and 1350 by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, Alfonso, shortly after inheriting the throne, sends for Christina, the daughter of the king of Norway, in order to marry her even though he is already married to Doña Violante, daughter of Jaime the Conqueror, king of Aragón. Much to Alfonso's embarrassment, shortly before his Norwegian bride-to-be sets foot on Spanish soil, Doña Violante bears him a child, the first of many. In order to avert the international fallout that was sure to result from his embarrassing reversal, Alfonso X arranges for Doña Christina to marry his brother Felipe, who leaves the clergy for that purpose.²⁹

Through the example of his predecessor Acosta, Rodrigo knows all too well that to die without leaving a successor of sufficient age to rule is to bequeath a legacy of chaos to the kingdom. From the outset Rodrigo feels an urgent need to father a child, in order to consolidate his power, but Eliaca does not provide him with a healthy son. The untimely death of their first and only child is one of the first in an escalating series of disasters that befall Rodrigo and his kingdom as he asserts his rule: first the massive carnage in the siege of Córdoba, then the destruction of the fleet sent to the aid of Count Julián in North Africa, next the loss of the anxiously awaited heir, and then the treacherous slaughter of Sacarus, paradigm of chivalric virtue, the most esteemed knight of the court.

²⁹ "E porque el infante don Felipe, su hermano, que era electo para ser arzobispo de Sevilla, é era abad de Valladolid é Abad de Covarrubias é avia fablado con el Rey muchas veces que queria dejar la clerecía, commo quier que el Rey non gelo loase, mas ante gelo estorbase, pero el infante don Felipe pidio por merced al Rey que lo casase con esta Infanta, é él otorgógelo, que lo tenía por bien, haciendo luégo las bodas" (*Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla*; Rosell 1953: 5). Enrique Turpin has studied the representation of love in the *CR*.

In the *CR* Rodrigo's infatuation with La Cava coincides with the failure of his marriage to produce legitimate offspring and with the erosion of his military power through the loss of tens of thousands of his best knights. As is consistent with his pattern of abusing authority and violating taboos, Rodrigo takes possession of La Cava by force: he uses his power as king as an instrument of coercion to subject her to his will. Like the Jewish elders in the story of Susanna, Pedro de Corral's Rodrigo is overcome by lust, a lust that embodies his hunger for power. Rodrigo sees La Cava as a potential queen (and as the potential mother of the heir he has not received from Eliaca).

Like the *Crónica de 1344*, Corral's *CR* stresses La Cava's virtue from the moment she appears in his narrative. It is her reputation for good judgement that first brings her to Rodrigo's attention: "Ca era de buen seso e de quantas buenas costumbres que pudiesen ser halladas en una mujer." When Rodrigo places her in the service of the queen he describes her to his consort as "la más sesuda e conplida de todos bienes que en muger se sepan." When her father leaves her in the court in Toledo, La Cava quickly surpasses her reputation for goodness: "Començó de hazer bien sus hechos, e adornar su hacienda, e ser cortés e mesurada e comunal en sus maneras, que todos los que la veían dezían mucho bien della" (I, 176). There is no reason to doubt that she is truly good: her beauty is a faithful reflection of her moral character. Her reputation is untarnished in the eyes of those among whom she lives.

In the *CR* the account of La Cava's arrival in the court in Toledo is separated from the narration of the scene of her dishonor by more than 130 chapters, which describe the key events of Rodrigo's reign on three different fronts: Count Julián's brilliant rout of Muza in North Africa, the pageantry of Rodrigo's court in Toledo, and Sacarus's defense of the rights of inheritance of the Duquesa de Loreina, which culminates in his untimely death in France. When one boils Pedro de Corral's vastly expanded narrative of the reign of Don Rodrigo down to its essential plot elements, a significant inversion of the position of two key episodes is evident with relation to the *Crónica de 1344*. While in the *Crónica de 1344* Rodrigo's violation of ancient custom by entering Hercules' palace in Toledo follows the seduction of La Cava, in the *CR* the position of the two episodes is reversed. The inversion effected by Corral diminishes the importance of the dishonor of La Cava as the root cause of the destruction of Spain. In Corral's work, the rape of La Cava is reduced to one of

many symptoms of Rodrigo's abuse of authority; it is but one of many sins that stem from his *superbia*. Although the rape is the match that ignites the flames of revenge which destroy the kingdom, Corral does not present it as the origin of the disaster.

2.4 Rodrigo and La Cava the Biblical Prototypes of David and Bathsheba

In the *CR*, the scene in which Rodrigo's passion for La Cava takes hold is embellished with details suggested by the previously mentioned story of David and Bathsheba (*2 Samuel: 11 [Biblia]*), in particular details pertaining to the setting. In Corral's story of Rodrigo, as in the Biblical story of David and Bathsheba, the narrative focuses on the king rather than on the woman who is the object of his desire. Like King David, Rodrigo first casts his eye on La Cava from above as he looks down on an enclosed garden from his private chamber in the royal palace in Toledo, to which he has retired at the hottest hour of the day. From atop the roof of the royal palace in Jerusalem David sees Bathsheba, wife of the Hittite Uriah, bathing: "Viditque mulierem se lavantem ex adverso super solarium suum. erat autem mulierem pulchra valde" (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata 429*).

The angles of vision of the two kings coincide: they look down from an elevated vantage point. In each case, the king's view from on high is a sign of his omnipotence as earthly ruler. In each the king's gaze violates the privacy of the woman who undresses below. Smitten with desire, David wastes no words on Bathsheba: he sends for her forthwith: "Misit ergo rex et requisivit quae esset mulier. Nuntiamque ei est quod ipsa esset Bethshabee filia Heliam uxor Uriae Hetthei. missis itaque David nuntiis tulit eam, quae cum ingressa esset ad illum, dormivit cum ea" (*2 Samuel: 11, 3 [Biblia]*). Driven by lust, David then arranges for Uriah to be put on the front line in the campaign against the Arameans, (as Rodrigo does with his political enemies), where Uriah meets his death. With Uriah out of the way and the requisite mourning period over, David takes Bathsheba as his wife and she bears him a son and heir (Solomon): "Transactoque luctu misit David et introduxit eam domum suam. et facta est ei uxor peperitque ei filium" (*2 Samuel: 11, 27 [Biblia]*).

The story of David and Bathsheba is a parable about the abuse of regal power by a king, who, although a sinner, has many virtues. David takes Bathsheba by force; his act is a violation of God's law, one for which David, and David alone, is held accountable in the eyes of God. As for

Bathsheba, she is merely a victim. How she perceives her fate is not revealed. It is not of significance in the Biblical narrative, in which the moral of the tale has to do exclusively with David. The reader learns only that Bathsheba mourned her dead husband: “Planxit eum” (2 *Samuel*: 11, 26 [*Biblia*]), that she observed the protocol prescribed by *Old Testament* law. The reader is not allowed access to her mind.

By contrast, Pedro de Corral plumbs the depths of the psyche of both Rodrigo and La Cava. In the *CR* Rodrigo takes more than a passing glance at La Cava. As Madeline Pardo has astutely pointed out, in Pedro de Corral’s narrative Rodrigo engages in the pleasure of the *voyeur* (1983: 81). When his eye first catches a fleeting glimpse of La Cava’s legs “tan blancas como nieve, e así lisas que no es persona al mundo que dello no atalantase,” he hides himself from view in order to look more (I, 448). As in the *Crónica de 1344*, he watches the pubescent maidens of the court engaged in play, but both the setting and the play are of a different nature in Corral’s work. In the *Crónica de 1344* Rodrigo first sees La Cava in a public space, presumably in a public room in the royal palace, where he notices her singing with the other maidens of the court. By contrast, in the *CR* Rodrigo sees La Cava and the other *doncellas* playing a game of discovery of their nascent sexuality in what they believe to be a private time and space: in the walled garden at the hour of the *siesta*.³⁰ Since they presume the king to be asleep, they play openly, as if they were in the privacy of a chamber reserved exclusively for their pleasure: “E creció porfia entre ellas desde una vez gran pieça ovieron jugado de quién tenía más gentil cuerpo, e oviéronse a desnudar, e quedar en pellotes apretados que tenían de fina escarlata, e parecianle los pechos, e los más de las tetillas” (I, 449). Pedro de Corral’s scene exposes more and leaves less to the imagination than the *Crónica de 1344*.

Corral makes another significant addition to the episode in which Rodrigo is overcome by lust: he places the devil at Rodrigo’s side to fan the flames of his temptation: “E como el diablo no esperava otra cosa sino esto, e vio quel Rey era encendido en su amor, andávale todavía al oreja que

³⁰ In Chapter III (“Imagining the Self”) of the second volume of *A History of Private Life* edited by Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, Danielle Régner-Bohler devotes several paragraphs to the image of the walled orchard in her exposition on medieval literature. She describes it as “a private place as well as a place of sociability,” which reflects “an obsession with boundaries and their ambivalence.” It is a place of delights, the refuge where lovers conduct their love affairs in secrecy, but it is also a place for social gathering, usually reserved for small groups, especially of women. An enclosed space, it is a setting ideally suited for the exploration of sensuality, one that often attracts the gaze of hostile eyes (322-23).

una vegada compliese su voluntad con ella” (I, 449). The devil is the personification of Rodrigo’s illicit desire. Up to this point in Corral’s narrative, La Cava is viewed from without. The reader has not been made privy to her thoughts. As in the story of David and Bathsheba, the narrative concentrates on the actions and perceptions of the king. It is Rodrigo who falls prey to temptation. At this juncture in the story La Cava is merely an instrument used by the devil to induce Rodrigo to sin, but there is no suggestion that she is a conscious or willing partner to the devil in his plot to entice Rodrigo to commit sins of the flesh. Thus far, as we have seen, she appears as virtuous as a young woman can be.

But what is one to make of the game played by the *doncellas*, given the deeply rooted association in the Christian tradition of the naked human body with sin? To what degree, if any, does Pedro de Corral intend for his reader to hold La Cava accountable for the disaster that occurred when she revealed her dishonor to her father? These questions are not easy to answer, because in the *CR* Pedro de Corral hides his authorial hand masterfully behind a panoply of fictitious manuscripts and multiple narrative voices, a gallery of mirrored reflections, a topic that merits a brief digression at this point.

2.5 Narrative Voice and Ironic Distance

The *CR* is presented as the work of an unidentified author who has faithfully respected his primary source, a recently discovered manuscript containing the work composed by the brothers Eleastras and Alanzuri, who are named royal chroniclers by Rodrigo himself shortly after he comes to power. The unidentified author, who we may assume Corral intended for the readers of his generation to understand as their contemporary, includes in his work lengthy quotations from the long lost work of Eleastras and Alanzuri, passages that constitute glosses on the substance of the narrative. The narrator also occasionally includes his own commentary on salient events. The recently discovered manuscript presumably contains in addition to the work of Eleastras, witness to the demise of Rodrigo and to the coronation of his successor Pelayo, the testimonial narrative of Carestes, the hermit who prescribes Rodrigo’s penitence and is witness to his salvation. Corral’s elaborate imitation of the conventions of the historiography of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

and his inclusion of the theme of the writing of history in the story line allows him to incorporate a nascent perspectivism into his work, whose creative potential would be fully realized centuries later by Cervantes, a perspectivism that challenges the tenets of the official secular historiography of his day.

Corral makes his reader acutely aware that truth in historical narrative is highly contingent, that it is dependent on the proximity and accuracy of the act of witnessing, on the moral character and the party affiliations of the historian, on the nature of the relationship of patronage between the historian and the king, and on the potential for this relationship to be subverted. Corral's work is a critique of the underlying tenets of the official historiography of the Trastámara kings, that the truth of history could be captured in the narratives of learned men of exemplary moral character.³¹ Corral shows that this seemingly simple premise is highly problematic.

In Corral's version of the story of Rodrigo and La Cava, there is a clearly discernible rift between the deeds as they are reported by the anonymous narrator of the fifteenth century and the glosses on the narrative, many of which are presumably taken *verbatim* from the work of Rodrigo's chroniclers Eleastras and Alanzuri. The glosses appear to constitute a misreading of the story as it is told in what we are to assume is the most recent and presumably most exhaustive version. Eleastras's commentary on the episode of the sexual encounter of Rodrigo and La Cava, which apparently refers to a sinful La Cava like the one of the *Crónica de 1344*, seems oddly out of step with the La Cava of the *CR*, whose behavior seems as virtuous as can reasonably be expected of any young woman of her station.

Eleastras's voice is dominated by the misogynist discourse of the hard line medieval cleric, who saw in Eve the first example of the moral weakness of women and believed in the propensity of all women to pursue the pleasures of the world at the expense of the soul.³² Eleastras places the

³¹ In the prologue to the *Generaciones y semblanzas*, written during the reign of Juan II, most of them before 1450, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán prescribes the conditions necessary to guarantee the truthfulness of historical narrative: the historian must be learned, discreet, and possess a mastery of rhetoric; when possible he should be a witness to "los principales e notables abtos de guerra e de paz;" if this is impossible, he should receive information only from personas "dignas de fe;" the history should not be made public during the lifetime of the king or prince during whose reign it was composed (2-3). José Manuel Cacho Blecua has studied the image of the historian in Pedro de Corral's work.

³² Susan Haskins notes the repercussions for real women in the Middle Ages of a theory of salvation predicated upon virginity, the absolute embodied in the Virgin Mary: "Real woman, the sexuate feminine, was always equated with Eve; *eHumanista: Monographs in Humanities*, 3

weight of blame for the destruction of Spain on La Cava and on the unbridled anger of her father, while mitigating the severity of his reproach of the king's behavior. What is one to make then of this disjunction of text and gloss in Pedro de Corral's work, in which La Cava's actions as reported by the narrator seem to reveal a woman of discretion and moderation?

In the *CR* the undressing of the *doncellas* in the presumed privacy of the garden at the hour of the *siesta* does not function as a sign of their depravity; it is morally neutral. The young women compare their partially clad bodies without shame. They are not inhibited by the consciousness that they are violating either socially prescribed norms of decency or divine law. They are free of the awareness of any wrongdoing. Their game seems rather to be dictated by the role ascribed to women in Rodrigo's court, which is dominated by secular rather than pious concerns, where high esteem is attached to physical beauty. In Rodrigo's court, feminine beauty commands a high exchange value on the marriage market, where power is accumulated and enhanced through the forging of advantageous marital liaisons between prestigious families.

One need not look far in the royal chronicles of the Castilian kings of the Lower Middle Ages to find examples of the exogamous exchange of the eligible daughters and sons of the nobility for social, political and economic advantage. This is the role the young women of Rodrigo's court are groomed for, as were, in fact, their fifteenth century real-life counterparts, a role for which the game played by the *donzellas* in the *CR* seems a logical preparatory exercise. The young women of Rodrigo's court are fully aware that according to the political role for which the king has destined them, they are not intended to be hidden from his prestigious visitors, but rather put on view so that they may attract the attention of eligible suitors. As previously noted, Rodrigo's lavish ceremonies are designed to elegantly display the most distinguished maidens of the land in order to enhance their appeal in marriage.

In the *CR* it is Rodrigo, rather than La Cava, whose actions most clearly violate the socially and divinely prescribed codes of behavior. Rodrigo fails to avert his gaze from a view forbidden to the human eye after the loss of innocence: the unclad human body, one from which all men and

and, seen through the Church's eyes against an ideal of virginity, naturally to her detriment. Mary's apotheosis in the celestial hierarchy, her final triumph as Queen of Heaven, effectively removed her from the sphere of ordinary women" (138).

women are intended by the Creator to look away. God had expected the son's of Noah to look away when they discovered their father lying naked and intoxicated in his tent (*Genesis XIX: 20-27 [Biblia]*). He had rewarded Shem for looking away and had condemned Canaan and his descendants to eternal servitude for beholding his father's *verecundias*. Like the gaze of Canaan, Rodrigo's look pierces the veil of privacy, which by the standard of the *Old Testament* as it was understood by medieval clerics, dictated the segregation of the social spaces assigned to men and women. Rodrigo fails to respect the boundaries between the private and public spaces allotted separately to men and to women, spaces to which access was conceded or denied according to the criterion of gender. Rodrigo is not guilty by virtue of seeing the young women playing in the garden, something that occurs by chance, but rather by the manner in which he looks. Moved by lust, he hides himself behind a post to watch with the erotic pleasure of the *voyeur*, knowing from the beginning that what he's doing is wrong. He violates the private time and space reserved exclusively for the maidens of his household and of his court.

It is the repentant Rodrigo who is responsible for the inclusion in his chronicle of the details of his rape of La Cava, an incident one might otherwise have expected to be purged from the authorized account of his reign written by his hand-picked historians. At one point Rodrigo's chronicler Eleastras is, indeed, prepared to strike the shameful incident from his narrative, for fear of his patron's reaction. However, Rodrigo, who becomes increasingly more aware of the magnitude of his sins as the destruction of his kingdom approaches, knows that the inclusion of the story of the rape is essential to the truthful assessment of his reign. In the final analysis, it is he who requires that an account of his shameful deed be included in the authorized narrative: a sign of his repentance.

Corral's story of Rodrigo and La Cava is intended to teach the reader by negative example, one centered first and foremost on the king. Corral enhances the didactic impact of the Rodrigo of the *CR* by endowing him with considerable moral complexity. Like King David, Corral's Don Rodrigo is a character in whose actions the reader can identify examples of good as well as evil, and the concomitant concessions of divine grace and divine retribution. Like King David, Don Rodrigo is powerful and he is esteemed by many of his subjects: he restores order to his lands; he is valiant in battle; he rewards service generously. Like his Biblical prototype, he is the personification of his

kingdom. His fate is the fate of his land and of his people. If God sees fit to destroy King Rodrigo and his kingdom, an act Corral likens to the great flood of *Genesis*, as do the earliest Christian accounts of the *destruyçion*, what scourge might he cast down upon a greater sinner than King Rodrigo? But by the same token, if Rodrigo achieves salvation despite his great sins, as he does in the *CR*, Corral expects his readers to reason that salvation is also within our reach if we receive absolution for our sins.

2.6 The Voice of the Victim: La Cava Speaks for Herself

Like Corral's King Rodrigo, the La Cava of the *CR* is a character of considerable complexity whose image is portrayed from multiple perspectives. Through access to the testimony of those who are privy to Rodrigo's innermost thoughts by way of the confessional and the royal council chamber, we are allowed to see the image of La Cava created by Rodrigo's erotic imagination, in which she figures as the ultimate object of his sexual desire. Most importantly, however, Corral's re-writing and amplification of the characterization of La Cava allows his reader to see her from within by endowing her with a voice of her own, one unheard in the previous versions of the legend.

La Cava's voice introduces a feminine counterpoint that implicitly questions basic assumptions of the male-dominated historiographic discourse of those among Corral's precursors who had elaborated around the figures of Rodrigo and La Cava an *Old Testament*-like parable on the evils of the temptation of the flesh. Hers is an eloquent voice that challenges the dominant clerical ideology of the Iberian Peninsula articulated in the *Crónica de 1344*, which held La Cava, portrayed as a prototypical descendant of Eve, responsible for the loss of divine grace made manifest in the *destruyçion* of Spain.

La Cava's responses to Rodrigo's sexual advances can be read fruitfully in conjunction with an expanding *corpus* of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Castilian literature that engaged in an active debate over the inherent nature of women, and by extension over its implications for sexually based norms of behavior and control. Those who stressed the moral responsibility of Eve in the fall of mankind were likely to advocate strict measures of parental, spousal, ecclesiastical, and royal control to mitigate the dangers to society believed to result from what was seen as the inherently

corrupt nature of women and their propensity to commit sins of the flesh.³³ By turning several fundamental aspects of the misogynist vision inside out, La Cava articulates a subtly constructed response to several of the key elements of a view of women that had prevailed for centuries in the sermon, in vernacular historiography, in the narratives of the lives of the saints of monastic orders, and in popular lore.³⁴

One salient work that immediately comes to mind when one considers the Castilian literature of the fifteenth century defending women against the naturalizing discourse of medieval misogynists is Álvaro de Luna's collection of short biographical narratives of the lives of exemplary women, the *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mujeres*. Alvaro de Luna's work is by its very nature a response to the misogynist discourse pervasive in such works as the *Corbacho* by his contemporary Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, a work that contains a rich vein of antifeminist lore rooted in the popular language and culture of the period. The ideological opposition between misogynists and those who defended the moral integrity of women also underlies the debate between Tefeo and Leriano in Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de Amor*, in which Leriano counters the derogatory statements about women made by his friend with an exalted defense of women (155-171). Leriano's defense of women is derived from the storehouse of imagery of the courtly love tradition, in which the ennobling power of love for women constituted an important *topos*.

In the *CR* the first verbal encounter between Rodrigo and La Cava is described in Chapter clxv of Book I. It takes place in the king's chamber, in other words, in the inner sanctum of Rodrigo's household, a space restricted to the royal couple and their immediate attendants. After seeing La Cava in the garden, Rodrigo invites the queen and her three favorite maidens to dine in his chamber, giving the excuse that he doesn't feel well. When they are through eating he sits on a window ledge to watch the queen and the three *doncellas* play. After awhile, Rodrigo calls La Cava aside from the game to remove a splinter from his hand, an act that requires her to touch him, and which gives him the opportunity to speak with her intimately, as he desires. Rodrigo initiates the

³³ Alfonso Martínez de Toledo entitles the third chapter of the Segunda Parte of his *Corbacho* "De cómo las mugeres aman a diestro e a siniestro por la gran cobdicia que tyenen" (132).

³⁴ Tapia's work is a useful survey of misogynism in medieval Castilian literature (Cáceres: Guadiloba, 1991). For a general treatment of the relationship between misogyny and love during the Middle Ages, see Howard.R. Bloch.

conversation by asking her if she would like for him to marry her, presumably to an appropriate suitor. She responds to his question that her father has put her in his hands: “Para me dar aquella honra que entendiédes que devía aver quando a vos, señor, plazería. Yo no he de contradézir lo que vós mandardes” (I, 450).

La Cava’s answer stresses her filial subservience to her father and by extension to the king, to whom Count Julián has conceded his most important prerogative as head of his household and as the most prestigious member of his lineage, control over the fate of his virgin daughter. Her answer reveals no personal preference. It is an unequivocal statement of her obedience to the will of her father and by transference to the king. One is led to presume, furthermore, that according to the value system to which she is expected to conform as a young woman in Rodrigo’s Spain, obedience is considered a supreme feminine virtue.

La Cava uses several strategies to repel King Rodrigo’s advances, which reveal that she is a young woman of quick wits and moral integrity. When the king broaches the subject of his desire for her, La Cava’s first reaction is to feign ignorance. She takes advantage of the fact that Rodrigo addresses her using words with double meanings that can easily be misread as completely appropriate. He tells her: “E otra cosa yo non codicio aver de que tanto plazer hoviese como es ser seguro de ti que me hovieses buen amor de aquella manera que yo te lo he, para que fueses plazentera de fazer aquellas cosas que yo quisiese” (I, 450). As any reader of the *Libro de Buen Amor* is sure to know, the term *buen amor* had meanings that were diametrically opposed in the contexts of the theology and of the common street parlance of the latter Middle Ages: in the former the term referred to divine love, the love of God, the love of the devout for Christ, for the Virgin, for the Saints, for one’s neighbor, for one’s family; in the latter it meant carnal love, what in the colloquial English of today we call “sex.”

The narrator tells the reader overtly that what La Cava intended by her reply was to feign ignorance of the true intention of Don Rodrigo’s words: “E no le quiso dar a entender que ella entendía que él era su enamorado” (I, 451). La Cava pretends to have understood the “buen amor” referred to by the king as the type of love appropriate between a daughter and her father or his surrogate, her father’s lord. She discreetly alludes to Rodrigo’s obligation to her father to reward his

service. She then tells him that there is, in fact, no man other than Count Julián whom she loves more than him. She reminds him, furthermore, that according to the exchange of service for favors explicitly negotiated with her father before bringing her to Toledo, she expects to be honored: “...espero ser honrada por vos, e que me faredes siempre gracias y mercedes” (I, 451).

Don Rodrigo gets down to brass tacks. He replies to La Cava in language that cannot be misconstrued that what he wants with her is sex. To fully describe the implications of Don Rodrigo’s frontal assault on La Cava’s honor as she understands it, I shall quote his words at length, because it is only as a response to Don Rodrigo’s acts of sexual aggression that one can judge La Cava’s words and actions:

-Amiga la Cava, no entiendes tú lo que yo te digo por la vía que yo te querría; ca si yo te quiero bien no es por cosa tanto como porque querría complir mi voluntad contigo, e tenerte en aquella manera en mi corazón que devo tener a la Reina, e por esto te lo digo que no por ál. E tú debes ser la más plazerera en lo consentir que nunca fue muger al mundo, ca yo terné atales maneras que no seamos sentidos e tu serás señora de mí e de mi corazón, e por tí tu padre será más onrado de mí, e ayudado más que hombre de toda España; e aun te digo más, que si en este tiempo la Reina muere que yo no avré ninguna otra por muger sino a ti; para ojo al bien que Dios te faze en yo me enamorar de tu fermosura. (I, 451-452)

The highly explicit nature of Don Rodrigo’s words leaves La Cava no alternative but to acknowledge directly that she understands clearly what he is asking of her. As a king who exercises absolute authority in his realm, fountainhead of all *gracias* and *mercedes*, Don Rodrigo offers her a position of supreme privilege under the cover of secrecy, one from which she can protect and enhance her father’s interests. He also offers her the possibility that she herself may someday be queen. Using specious arguments to endow his words with moral righteousness, he suggests to her that his lust is willed by God. What Rodrigo does is to try to seduce La Cava with promises of fortune and power and she clearly understands the terms of the offer.

For a second time La Cava replies to the king’s arguments with intelligence and moral integrity, by offering him a way to desist without losing face. She prefaces her reply by saying that surely the king must be making such offers only as a means to test her judgement: “Por saber el seso que avré por vos responder a ellas por aquella manera que devo” (I, 452). She then uses a rigorously constructed line of argumentation to reject don Rodrigo’s proposal by applying to herself one of the

fundamental premises of the misogynist discourse of the Middle Ages. She posits that since Don Rodrigo is aware of the inherent moral weakness of women, it is his obligation as a member of the morally superior sex to set an example of righteousness for her because she is a woman. Taking as axiomatic the idea of the moral inferiority of women to men, La Cava reasons, moreover, that it is men who are responsible for leading women astray, because women, due to their moral inferiority, are by their nature followers rather than leaders. She also challenges the king to think of the consequences of his action if he were to be successful in his attempt to seduce her. Once again, I believe it important to quote her response in its entirety.

-Ya sabedes, señor que las mugeres son de liviano seso, e no se pueden guardar que no yerren así como lo fazen los hombres que han mayor complisión, e no se mueven tan ligeramente, e pues vós, señor, sabedes que esto que yo digo es verdad, no me devíades provar por tal manera como ésta; e por ventura yo me cuidaría que me lo dezíades de verdat, e podría quedar engañada, e otorgarvos todo lo que me demandades. E, señor, podría ser pensar vós que yo lo fazía con maldad que en mí oviese, o que así como a vos lo otorgava, que así lo otorgaría a otro si se atreviese a me lo dezir; e por esta guisa yo perdería vuestro amor sin culpa mía, ca por el ligero seso que las mugeres avemos, e por ser requeridas por la vía que vós me requerides fazía yo el yerro si vós no me lo dixédes por me provar. Ca nunca puede fazer maldad la muger que non es seguida. (452)

La Cava's intelligent arguments, based on what she has learned by observation, for a second time make manifest her good judgement, but Don Rodrigo minces no words in his reply. His language is infused with the lexicon of commerce. He reiterates the value of what he is prepared to pay in exchange for what he wants: "E si por precio se oviese de fazer este fecho yo no preciaría todo el mundo cosa si mío fuese que yo no lo posiese en tu poder por que tú de buena voluntad fizieses lo que te ruego" (453). Again he reassures her that if she submits to his desire, nothing but good will come of it for her.

La Cava retorts with an expression of her supreme displeasure at Don Rodrigo's proposition: "Señor, ¡cómo yo só triste con tal razón ca me demandades que faga traición!" She goes on to explain that to consent to Don Rodrigo's desire would constitute an act of treason against the queen, to whom she owes fealty as her immediate dependent, and with whom she shares a bond of affection. She also challenges the viability of the king's guarantee of secrecy, noting that no wrongdoing ever remains undiscovered: "Que no es cosa al mundo fecha que no es sabida; e mucho más aína el mal"

(I, 453). She goes on to describe what she imagines would be the social repercussions for her as a woman if such an infamous deed were to become public. Her description evokes a gendered response to the revelation of an affair like the one proposed by the king: she offers her perception of how other women would be apt to react to such news. We may assume this is of great importance to her, for, after all, she is well aware that she is destined to spend the majority of her waking hours with women, not with men.

E como todas las mugeres lo sopiesen no echarían a otro culpa sino a mí solamente, ca podrían dezir que de mi propia voluntad pensando ser señora traxera tales maneras que por fuerça vos fiziera venir a ello; o por ventura dirían que tales melezinas a vos avía dado que vos quitara de vuestro buen seso, e fiziera caer en tan grand yerro como sería éste, e desta guisa sería yo mal infamada, e merescía ser muerta como persona que faze traición. (I, 454)

La Cava notes that it would be alleged (as it was indeed in the *Crónica de 1344*) that she instigated Rodrigo's adulterous passion; that motivated by the thirst for power she had forced his will, using a potion to alter his judgement. La Cava evokes the practice of administering potions (*melezinas*) to induce sexual desire in men, one of the many services purveyed by the *alcahueta*, whose mark is indelible in the Castilian literature of the latter Middle Ages.

Don Rodrigo uses words one last time in his attempt to break down La Cava's resistance. He tells her that her ultimate loyalty is owed not to the queen but to him, and that since the queen is also his dependent, if La Cava were to consent to his wishes, she would not be committing an act of treason against the queen: "E no es así ca tú no vives con la Reina, antes bives comigo, e la Reina también, e sodes como compañeras. E por esta razón tenuta eres de tomar la buena andança quanto te viniere, e no la dexar, ca así fará la Reina" (I, 454). His words suggest, at the very least, the tacit compliance of the queen with an extra-marital affair. Or perhaps what he has in mind is a *menage-à-trois*. Rodrigo concludes his rebuttal of La Cava's arguments by saying that he has at his disposal the power to impose silence on anyone who might consider revealing their secret: "E esto te juro que no ay tal en todo mi reino que en ello osase hablar que yo no le fiziese morir a mala muerte como aquel que no me podía fazer cosa que tanto me pesase como ésta" (454). In so doing, he stresses the absolute nature of his authority as king, to whom all others in his kingdom are subordinate, for fear of violent retaliation.

It is in the context of a clearly established pattern of abusing his authority that one must read Don Rodrigo's verbal assault on La Cava's honor, as well as her response to his spurious logic. In her replies to Don Rodrigo, La Cava appeals to a secular logic of the sort intended to engage Rodrigo's political instincts as a king whose eyes are focused on the things of the world. She evaluates Rodrigo's offer according to the social consequences it is likely to produce. She does not evoke divine law. Her arguments are intended to have the maximum effect on the king, whose priorities are not determined by deference to the sacred, but by secular passions. She ends her verbal defense by beseeching him not to command her to do something that she would rather die than do: "Señor, no me mandedes en toda guisa fazer tal cosa que ciertamente vos digo verdad que más querría ser muerta que tal cosa consentir. Señor, si vós entendiédes que avía mal seso vós me aviades de castigar antes que vós me mandar que cayese en tal yerro" (I, 454). La Cava makes it crystal clear to Don Rodrigo that she will not submit to his request of her own volition, while acknowledging, nonetheless, her obligation to obey his commands.

2.7 The Rape and Its Repercussions

The scene of the intimate exchange of words between La Cava and Don Rodrigo in the privacy of his chamber is followed in Chapter clxxii of Book I by the narration of the infamous deed. It is important to note that Corral's narrative compresses the representation of a time-span of unspecified length into a single sentence that suggests that La Cava resists the king's repeated offers over a significant period of time:

Después quel Rey ovo descubierto su corazón a la Cava no era día que la no requeriese una vez o dos, e ella se defendía con buena razón; enpero a la cima como el Rey no pensava tanto como en esto un día en la siesta enbió un donzel suyo por la Cava, e ella vino a su mandado, e como esa ora no avía en toda su cámara otro ninguno sino ellos todos tres, él conplió con ella todo lo que quiso. Enpero tanto sabed que si ella quisera dar bozes que bien fuera oída de la Reina, mas callóse con lo quel Rey quiso fazer. (I, 455)

Why does she go to the king's chamber at the hour of the *siesta*? Why doesn't she scream? Does her silence at the decisive moment truly indicate her complicity with the king, as the voice of the narrator suggests to the reader? Does she willingly accept the terms of exchange offered to her by the king as indicated in the *Crónica de 1344*? Does Pedro de Corral himself concur with the harsh

judgments toward La Cava pronounced by both the narrator and Eleastras?

What is most striking about the words and deeds of La Cava prior to her rape is that they are internally consistent. From the moment she first appears in the narrative, her desire to conform to the dominant ideal of feminine virtue permeates her words and her actions. She strives for perfection within the constraints of her prescribed role as a maiden destined for marriage and she wins fame for so doing. If she has a moral flaw it is her unquestioning obedience to patriarchal precepts, even when they violate a higher law. Filial obedience is for her the highest feminine virtue. She has been groomed in the court to fulfill her destiny as an object of exchange. What she has been taught is to accept passively the destiny prescribed for her by the *pater familias*, by the one of flesh and blood (Count Julián) and by the symbolic one (the king).

Pedro de Corral's La Cava is not a moral descendant of Eve because she does not tempt the king by an act of her own will. She is more akin to Bathsheba, who is brought by David's order to his chamber by his servant (as is La Cava by Rodrigo's *donzel*). Both women are victimized by men whose worldly power within their respective realms is absolute. We are never told in *Samuel II* how Bathsheba reacted to King David either before or after he slept with her. Did she remind him of his obligation to keep the seventh and tenth commandments? Did she try to claw his eyes out or kick him in the groin? We do not know. Neither are we told whether she loved her Hittite husband, who was sent to his death on the battlefield against the Arameans by David's order.

What the story of King David would seem to suggest when read out of context is that God is forgiving rather than vengeful. Did God use David's adulterous passion as a vehicle to execute his divine will? Did David commit adultery by the will of God? David prospered despite his sins: his worldly destiny was to establish the hegemony of the Israelites over their enemies. As for Bathsheba, David made her his queen and she bore him an heir to the throne, Solomon, who would become one of the greatest kings of the *Old Testament*. Nowhere is it said in *Samuel II* that David incurred God's wrath for his sins of the flesh. Appealing to such logic as this, Rodrigo offers La Cava what amounts to the possibility that she may someday play the role of Bathsheba in a story like David's, a story about divine selection in which La Cava might also someday be chosen by God to be queen and mother to the next king.

The narrator of the *CR* interrupts the telling of the story to inform us that La Cava was within earshot of the queen when Rodrigo had his way with her, and that she could have screamed. What is implied, though not explicitly stated, is a comparison between La Cava and Susanna, who chose to scream, rather than to remain silent, when she was threatened by the Jewish elders in Babylon. It is specifically Susanna's act of screaming that Don Álvaro de Luna in his *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mujeres* cites as an example of feminine virtue. For the Condestable the lesson to be learned from Susanna's story is that her righteousness is rewarded through divine intervention, that she resists her rapists before consenting to betray her fidelity to her husband and to the Lord. What is suggested by the narrator in the *CR*, in effect, is that an alternative course of action lay open to La Cava, one for which his readers were likely to recall an *Old Testament* paradigm. It is pertinent to recall, however that since the queen herself had been taken by force by Rodrigo, there was no reason for La Cava to have assumed that the queen would have been willing or able to prevent the rape.

Given La Cava's understanding that obedience to masculine authority is the highest feminine virtue, it is logical that she obeys the king's order to go to his chamber and that she does not choose to scream as did Susanna. I do not believe that her failure to scream is intended by Corral to suggest, however, that she complied with Rodrigo's wishes of her own volition. The narrator tells the reader specifically that she did not go to the king's chamber of her own free will, rather by the king's order: "E ella vino a su mandado." Furthermore, what the narrator tells us about La Cava's behavior immediately following the loss of her virginity is consistent with the reaction of one whose will has been violated. It is the reaction of a victim of rape: she attempts to hide her feelings of shame.

It is important to note that the rape is not realized in total privacy in the *CR*. It is witnessed by the king's attendant, whose presence is not gratuitous, but rather an instrument of coercion employed knowingly by Rodrigo to get what he wants. La Cava has been given every reason to believe that Don Rodrigo is willing to use violence to have his way with her. After all, he has usurped the throne, eliminated his opposition, and broken into the palace of Hercules, in so doing violating the laws and customs of the land and turning a deaf ear to the sound advice of his counselors. The presence of his *donzel* guarantees that it is useless for La Cava to resist her rapist by struggling to get free. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that she submits passively to her aggressor,

who we are told “conplió con ella todo lo que quiso” (I, 455). Rodrigo is by the standards of his own world, as well as by the dominant sexual morality of today, not only an adulterer, and a rapist, but also a practitioner of incest. For what Rodrigo does on a symbolic level when he violates La Cava’s honor, is to sleep with his own daughter.

La Cava’s loss of her honor is accompanied by the loss of her physical beauty, evident at once to those around her: “[A]sí como la Cava se sentió escarnida del rey de como compliera en ella su voluntad, tomó gran pesar en su corazón que comenzó de cada día a perder la fermosura que avía de tal guisa que aquellos que la conocían de ante veían claramente que ella no avía plazer, e que antes tenía algund grand pesar” (I, 455-456).³⁵ As she has accurately predicted, there is no way for her to hide her shame. The astonishing change in her appearance prompts her closest friend, Alquifa, to urge her to reveal her *pesar*. She does so reluctantly: “E como gelo contava llorava de los ojos de tal guisa como si delante de sí tuvieses a su padre muerto” (I, 456). Once informed of La Cava’s dishonor, in the *CR*, as in the *Crónica de 1344*, it is Alquifa who advises her to write to Count Julián, reasoning that King Rodrigo is likely to return for more and that she is likely to get pregnant, which would expose her dishonor despite Rodrigo’s promise to maintain secrecy.

La Cava carefully weighs her friend’s advice. She fears that since most men hold women to be corrupt by nature, her father is not likely to believe her. She is afraid that despite his discretion, he is likely to hold her responsible for her loss of virginity, and to believe her dishonor to have taken place by her own wish: “E echaría a mí toda la culpa, e diría que por mi grado lo oviese fecho” (I, 457). Having considered all things, La Cava writes her father of her situation.

The text of the letter to her father, reproduced *verbatim* in the *CR*, provides the reader with another view into the realm of La Cava’s most intimate secrets. In her letter La Cava expresses shame and despair over what has happened to her against her will: “El Rey sin mi grado me tomó para sí, e complió en mí su voluntad” (I, 458). She urges Don Julián to retrieve her from the court before her situation becomes public. It is essential to point out, however, that she does not call on her father to avenge her dishonor; she doesn’t advocate retribution against her rapist.

³⁵Ramón Menéndez Pidal notes that La Cava’s loss of beauty in the *CR* is deprived of “el algo sobrenatural” it has in the *Crónica de 1344* (1958: I, xcvi). In effect Pedro de Corral attributes the loss to a natural cause: to the “gran pesar” that takes root in her as a result of the trauma she has experienced.

2.8 Eleastras' Moralizing Gloss

In Chapter clxxix of Book I of the *CR*, Pedro de Corral inserts a commentary on the actions of Don Julián and La Cava in the form of an *exclamación del autor*, a standard means of glossing the narrative in the historiography of the latter Middle Ages. The *exclamación* was a stock rhetorical piece, a discourse directed by the real or fictitious author to one of the characters or to the reader. In this instance the gloss on the narrative is offered as a direct quotation from the work of Eleastras. In the voice of Rodrigo's royal chronicler, Pedro de Corral reproduces the diatribe against women characteristic of a misogynist sermon. As La Cava has predicted, once again with great accuracy, her version of her story is not believed by the fictitious chronicler because she is a woman. While her father does, in fact, believe her, and acts accordingly, Eleastras assumes that because she is woman, she is incapable of telling the truth.³⁶

Eleastras's remarks are directed to Count Julián, to whom he attributes the greatest share of moral responsibility for the *destruyçion*. Count Julián's unpardonable error, according to Eleastras, is that he betrays his lord, and that he does so foolishly, on the basis of the testimony of a woman:

E devieras parar ojo como las mugeres con falsedad que en ellas ay vencen, e vienen plazenteras de fazer tales fechos por la naturaleza gelo requerir, e que en ellas no ha poder para se poder servir de no caer en los vicios del mundo, e que toda su imaginación no es en ál sinon en dormiendo, e velando a los vicios mundanales, e deleitarse en ellos. E por el plazer que tu fija hovo, tú consentiste ser destruido e desonrado el mejor ombre del mundo, e que más te preciava, e fueste la causa e la razón dello... (I, 462)

I hope to have established by this point that Eleastras' interpretation of the events leading to the loss of Spain to the Moors is directly at odds with the conclusions the perspicacious reader is likely to draw from the sequence of events as it is told by the anonymous narrator of the fifteenth century. The striking contradiction between narrative and gloss exposes the partisan nature of Eleastras' vision of the reign of Rodrigo, whom the chronicler terms, despite the evidence to the contrary, "el mejor ombre del mundo."

The fissure in narrative perspective in the *CR* opens a space into which Pedro de Corral

³⁶In the *Corbacho* there is a considerable amount of invective about the propensity of women to speak inappropriately, to

inserts diverging views of history as a dialogic counterpoint to the dominant historical ideology, contrasting views that I believe were intended to expose the partisan nature of the monologic, official historiography of Castile of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Through *La Cava*, Corral gives voice to a feminist critique of the stock Christian version of the legend of the loss of Spain to the Moors, which cast the story of the fall of the Goths according to two *Old Testament* paradigms: the stories of the loss of paradise and of the deluge. In the *CR* the reader who does not accept Eleastras' diatribe uncritically can only conclude that the primary responsibility for the *destruyçion* of Spain does not lie with *La Cava*, as maintained by a misogynist clerical historiography, but with Don Rodrigo. Corral's *La Cava* is not responsible for Spain's loss of innocence, a loss likened to the one attributed to Eve by the clerical mentality. As we shall see shortly, the clerical-misogynist version of the story, such as the one found in the *Crónica de 1344*, was questioned not only by Corral, but by other prominent readers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

2.9 The Commentary of Medieval Readers

In order to identify Pedro de Corral's ideological intention in rewriting the story of Rodrigo and *La Cava*, the comments about both characters made by some fourteenth- and fifteenth-century readers are illuminating. In the prologue to the *Crónica de Pedro I*, Pedro López de Ayala, Chancellor of Pedro I, attributes the loss of Spain exclusively to the treachery of Count Julián. He implies that the version of the story that *La Cava* was raped by King Rodrigo may have been invented by the Count or his partisans as a pretext for delivering Spain into the hands of the enemy. The Chancellor declares that the *destruyçion* was accomplished "por ayuda, e consejo, e trayción e maldad del conde don Illán que puso por la tierra Tarif Abencied, e a Musa Abennaicir, que eran cabdillos de los alárabes, [...] diciendo que el rey don Rodrigo le tomara una su fija que se criaba en su palacio" (1991: 47).³⁷ What is significant to Pedro López de Ayala is that it was the Count himself who probably gave rise to the story of the rape of his daughter. How is one to believe anything said by a man capable of betraying his king, his native land and his religion? The

lie, and to gossip (143-46; 162-165).

³⁷Germán Orduna and José Luis Moure have published the chronicles of the reigns of Pedro I and Enrique II as a single work entitled *Crónica del rey don Pedro y del rey don Enrique, su hermano, hijos del rey don Alfonso Onceno*.

Chancellor's commentary is logical given his aristocratic origins and the privileged position as a member of the inner circles of four Castilian kings during the turbulent years of the last four decades of the fourteenth century. His reading underscores the supreme value of loyalty to the sovereign by showing the destruction of Spain to have resulted from an act of treason committed by one of the king's most important vassals. It is hardly surprising that personal loyalty would be extolled by a member of the feudal aristocracy who was a personal servant to four kings during a period dominated by a few great lords of extraordinary power. Personal loyalty was seen by the ideologues of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century feudalism as the most basic bond governing the relations between the constituent elements of the body politic and the symbolic father of the realm.

Like Pedro López de Ayala, Gutierre Díez de Games questions the truthfulness of the attribution of the loss of Spain to the rape of La Cava in the *Victorial*, saying that this allegation was due to the interests of “los que abían voluntad de salbar al conde Julián de tan grand traición” (31). In other words, that it was a fabrication reflecting a partisan view contemporary with the events, created to save the Count from ignominy, not one rendered objective by impartiality and temporal distance. Díez de Games argues that even if the allegation were true, since Rodrigo's sins were those of a single man, they were insufficient to have brought on the destruction of an entire kingdom, a universal punishment, one which was not proportionate to an individual sin. Logically, such a collective punishment must have corresponded to a more general cause: “Los pecados que entonze fazian las gentes.” Virtually all of the Christian accounts of the *destruyçion* to be written over the centuries emphasize that it was collective wickedness that unleashed the wrath of God. Viewing the events from the perspective of his own historical moment, Díez de Games refuses to acknowledge the gravity of Rodrigo's infraction against social decorum and divine law, and in so doing he negates its importance as a causal factor in the history of Spain: “No fue aquéste tan gravísimo pecado en tomar el rey una moça de su reino, como las gentes lo notan, nin casada nin desposada.” In the final distribution of personal blame for Spain's disaster, Díez de Games coincides with López de Ayala in pointing his accusing finger primarily at Count Julián for his treachery, calling down upon him the curse of God: “Maldígalo Dios, que maldicho es.”

The anonymous author of a work entitled *Estoria de los Godos*, contained in an unpublished

manuscript of the fifteenth century that belongs to the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (MS T-282, fol. lxxx), praises Don Rodrigo, calling him “muy discreto Regidor e emperador de los Reynos.” He flatly denies that either Rodrigo’s fall from power or the destruction of Spain occurred on account of “el pecado que con la donzella fizo, nin ser ella causa dello” (Juan Menéndez Pidal 133). To support his claim he cites empirical evidence derived from the observation of the present and from the knowledge of history, and he evokes the authority of Biblical paradigms. He notes that sins like the one committed by Rodrigo with *la donzella* have always been and continue to be commonplace: “Ca de muy antiguo tienpo e aun fasta oy dia, ya es claro e manifesto que los Reyes quando menos fazen tales cosas e aun mas, pero no son destruydos ellos nin sus señorios por el semejante caso.” To bolster this contention, he cites two well-known examples from Scripture; he observes that David and Solomon “asaz en paz gouernaron e murieron, teniendo cada trezientas mugeres por su deleytación.” Speaking from the perspective of a nobility motivated first and foremost by political and social interests, one little inhibited by the sexual morality promulgated by the Church, the anonymous author of the fifteenth century concludes by means of his own experience: “Por vn rrey se pagar de vna gentil donzella non casada nin ordenada en alguna Religion, alegres deuiran ser toda su generaçion” (J. Menéndez Pidal 134).

There is considerable evidence in the royal chronicles of Castile of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that powerful nobles did on occasion exploit the sexual proclivities of the king for political advantage, by placing at his disposal (outside the context of marriage) a young woman of their lineage whom he found desirable. For example, in Chancellor López de Ayala’s chronicles of the reigns of Pedro I and of his half-brother Enrique de Trastámara, written to justify the legitimacy of Enrique II’s overthrow of his half-brother, Pedro’s sexual excesses are reported in detail. As Germán Orduna has pointed out, the chronicles of Pedro I and Enrique II are intended to be read as a single work, as the opposing panels of a single composition. López de Ayala depicts Pedro I’s sins of the flesh as part of a pattern of continuous, flagrant violations of the statutes of secular justice and of divine law. Enrique II’s fratricidal rebellion is thus presented as the necessary restoration of both worldly and divine justice.

López de Ayala shows Pedro I’s passion for María de Padilla to be a vehicle by which the

Padilla and Guzmán clans controlled the king, wringing from him extravagant concessions of *mercedes* for prominent family members. Pedro I's relationship with María de Padilla is shown to last throughout his adult life with the complicity of the leaders of the clan and of María Padilla herself. According to the Chancellor's narrative, Pedro I also takes at least one woman by force. In 1354 during a moment of separation from María de Padilla, while he was legally married to Blanche, niece of Louis XII, he compelled the bishops of Ávila and Salamanca to marry him to Juana de Castro, whom he had taken by force from her husband (1991: 101). In López de Ayala's chronicles, such actions, driven by the king's unbridled libido, are revealed to be symptomatic of Pedro I's abuse of royal authority. These examples would have been widely known to the reading public of the early fifteenth century. I believe Pedro de Corral is critical of such practices and places the blame for the *destruyçion* back on Rodrigo, hence attacking similar abuses in his own day, in particular the effort of the crown under the leadership of Don Álvaro de Luna to consolidate its power at the expense of the *cortes* and of the city councils.

2.10 Corral's Conclusion to the Story of La Cava

La Cava does not disappear from the *CR* when her father removes her from Rodrigo's court, as she does in all previous versions of the legend. Pedro de Corral allows us to witness her reaction to the vindictive actions of her father, her mother, their extended families, and their dependents throughout the kingdom. In the terminology of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century royal chronicles, the extended families and their clients and dependents constituted together what was called a *vando*, a family based-interest group able to wield political and military power throughout the kingdom. The term was usually used pejoratively by the royal chroniclers to refer to factions of the nobility that vied for political and economic control at the expense of the royal patrimony. Prior to removing La Cava from Toledo, Don Julián enlists the support of his wife's clan in Consuegra, where his brother-in-law, the Bishop Don Orpas, swears allegiance to the campaign against Don Rodrigo and his kingdom. Don Orpas advises Don Julián to call a meeting in Ceuta of those to whom the Count refers as "mis parientes e amigos, e todos los de mi vando." It is significant to note that in the *CR*, the family affiliation of the majority of characters appears frequently as an attachment to the proper

name when characters are introduced or reintroduced into the narrative: “Hornahec cormano de Arcanus;” “Fueles hijo de Sarus,” etc. Don Julián relies heavily on the advice and military assistance of Don Orpas (“hermano de su muger”), the leading male figure of his wife’s clan. Family affiliation in Rodrigo’s world, as in the political world of early fifteenth century Castile, was a defining social attribute.

Both of La Cava’s parents respond with extreme passion to their daughter’s dishonor, an indication that there is abnormality at the heart of the Count’s nuclear family, one that would seem to underlie La Cava’s passive acceptance of abuse, her predisposition to be victimized. Her mother, the Countess Frandina, is a domineering woman with a violent temperament who verbally abuses both the Count and her daughter when she believes them to be indecisive in their commitment to avenge their dishonor.³⁸ Her behavior contradicts the subservient role prescribed for wives by the dominant ideas of medieval moralists and political theorists. Her fiery oratory at the clan council in Ceuta is decisive in sparking fanatical dedication to the cause of bringing down king Rodrigo at any cost, without regard for natural loyalty, religion, or custom. She admonishes Count Julián in the partisan council that if he does not take seriously his role as avenger of the clan’s dishonor, she will act as his worst enemy: “E irme he para mi tierra onde tengo mi heredad e muchos castillos e lugares de mi padre e de mis hermanos, e començaré contra ti la guerra” (I, 473).

When the Countess receives Muça in Ceuta “como si él fuera su señor natural,” after the destruction of Rodrigo’s army, she reacts violently upon seeing that her daughter does not display public signs (*en plaça*) of hatred for the king: La Cava does not show sufficient enthusiasm for the destructive mission of the *vando*. When Muza has departed, Frandina interrogates La Cava without mercy about her feelings for Don Rodrigo, using abusive epithets, accusations, and threats of violence intended to stifle her daughter’s outward manifestation of her true feelings. Her mother’s words show that she exercises an intensely oppressive authority over her daughter:

Començó de la mal traer e dezirle palabras malas, demonstrándole e faziéndole entender que pues que le pesava del mal que venía a quien así la desonrara, que otra cosa non fuera sinon que ella fuera consentiente que el Rey fiziese con ella todo lo que era pasado. E dezíale que

³⁸As Ramón Menéndez Pidal has observed in his *Floresta de leyenda histórica*, Pedro López de Ayala was the first to give a name to Count Julián’s wife. In his *Crónica de Pedro I* he calls her Frandina, the name used by Pedro de Corral in the *CR* (1958: I, xci).

en oras estava de la matar luego muy vergonzosamente; ca el su corazón no le sufría que ella pudiese querer bien a qualquier que sentimiento mostrase por la malandança de su enemigo, e que se castigase dende en adelante que tal cosa ella no le sentiese. (II, 24)

The Countess wrings from her daughter a statement of approval of her father's quest to avenge her dishonor, but La Cava qualifies it with a profession of compassion for Don Rodrigo, which casts doubt on the sincerity of her commitment to destroy him and his kingdom:

Que no ha persona al mundo que así cobdiciase la muerte al Rey como yo era ni que tanto le plazze dello como a mí, aunque fago en ello gran maldad e desmesura en querer tanto de mal aquel que en otra persona deste mundo no tenía su corazón sino en mí, ni que fama de tan buen cavallero ora se fallase en moros ni en christianos como él era, del qual yo recibí muchas gracias e bienes, e no como de señor rescibe vasallos, mas como del padre rescibe el fijo, fasta la ora que el diablo lo engañó.... (II, 24-25)

La Cava's response to her mother is in the form of a lament. The prevailing sentiment conveyed by the words used by La Cava to respond to her mother's questions is one of guilt, despite her apparent innocence. She also expresses an overwhelming feeling of loss. It should be pointed out that La Cava's is not the only lament in the *CR*. The greatest one, one that left its mark in the *romancero*, is the *planctus* enunciated by Don Rodrigo on the eighth day of battle as he looks down from a hillock at his knights who lie slaughtered on the field below (I, 635-638). By endowing La Cava with formal discourses cast in traditional rhetorical molds, Pedro de Corral provides her with a dignity denied the nameless, voiceless character of the early versions of the legend in Arabic, in Latin, and in the vernacular. La Cava's dignity emerges more clearly by contrast with her mother's abusive rage and her father's unquenchable thirst for revenge.

Corral's narrator describes the outward signs with which La Cava's thoughts are visibly displayed on her face, as she listens to Muza tell and retell the story of Rodrigo's defeat. While the Countess savors the sweet taste of revenge, we are told that La Cava with eyes downcast thinks as she listens that with her own hands she has killed "tantos cuentos de gentes" (II, 12). In other words, both the internal and the external circumstances of her enunciatory act are made specific.

The prevailing mood in La Cava's three discourses of Book II, the first addressed orally to her mother in response to her interrogation (II, 24-25) and the other two directed in writing to her father (II, 26-27; II, 52-53), is one of despair and self-recrimination. She initiates her response to her

mother's questions about her feelings by expressing a death wish and by admitting her responsibility for the destruction of Spain: "Señora, lo que yo he es que maldito fue el día que yo nascí, e la ora en que fue engendada, que tanto mal por mi ocasión avía de ser; e yo nunca nasciera, pues que atanto mala ventura por mí en España es venida" (II, 13). She accepts personal responsibility for the disaster that has befallen the king, her father and her native land and its people, calling herself "comienço e fin de todo mal." The body of her lament is an enumeration of the things lost and yet to be lost that formed the social foundation of her world before the fall: she sees her father dead before her eyes, his name eternally cursed by all Spaniards; she envisions the king who had once honored her shamefully defeated, his kingdom lost to the enemies of the faith; she sees herself remembered in the future as "la más mala muger que nunca nació ni creo que ha de nacer" (II, 25).

The action to which she attributes the disaster is the act of telling her father of her dishonor. With retrospective vision she sees suicide as a preferable alternative to following her friend Alquifa's advice that she reveal her dishonor. She thinks that if she had committed suicide, only her life would have been lost and not those of so many others. She identifies as her fatal error the act of speaking up, of voicing her feelings, rather than remaining silent and accepting her fate without complaint.

What is one to make of the contradiction between her words as they are quoted and the narrator's description of her actions? Does she believe what she says? Are they, in fact, her words, or are they words put in her mouth by Eleastras or the narrator? If they are hers, is she telling the truth or is she merely pretending? Does she speak directly or are her words spoken with ironic intent?

I believe her words are meant to be taken literally, that they are not infused with irony, and that they are consistent with what the narrator tells us of her actions. I find them believable in the mouth of a victim who has been conditioned to accept blame for things for which she is not responsible. She is the living product of the misogynist world into which she has been born, taught to value obedience to authority above all else, and conditioned to assume guilt for the sins of the kingdom.

Despite the laudatory glosses of Eleastras and of the narrator that maximize Don Rodrigo's

merits and minimize his defects, as the events are recounted in the *CR* it seems that Don Rodrigo himself is the individual most responsible for the destruction of Spain. Although both Count Julián and his brother-in-law are damned by Eleastras and the narrator as traitors, in Pedro de Corral's version of the legend they are not presented as the underlying cause of the destruction of Spain, but as instruments used by God to punish the individual and collective sins of the kingdom personified in the king.

In the *CR*, despite the partisanship of Eleastras, the primary source of the narrative, the penitential episodes presumably authored by Carestes, clearly distinguish in the life of Rodrigo viewed from beyond his death the Christian paradigm of sin and redemption, death and rebirth. Carestes (and Corral) leaves no doubt that Rodrigo's sins were the match that ignited the destruction of Spain willed by God.

Pedro de Corral enhances the minimal characterization of La Cava found in the previous versions of the legend. He makes her a complex character, one for whom the reader cannot help but feel sympathy. At the same time, he clearly denies her historical agency. On this issue he agreed with the anonymous author of the *Historia de los Godos* mentioned previously, who said categorically that the destruction of Spain was not caused by the sin Rodrigo committed with the La Cava, "nin ser ella causa dello." What the anonymous author implies is that he takes issue with others who have maintained these to be the causes of the *destruyçion*. As we have seen, he identifies the treachery of Count Julián as the principal cause of the disaster, and not the actions of the king, as does the *CR*.

La Cava disappears totally from all previous versions of the legend of the loss of Spain to the Moors, but in Pedro de Corral's work we are told, although only briefly, how she dies. Her death lacks the drama one would expect of the death of a character intended to convey an example of God's power to punish the wicked, and it differs from those of several other characters of the *CR* who play important roles as bearers of the *destruyçion*: Count Julián is crushed to death when the tower of a castle falls on him without warning; the Countess Frandina is stoned by Christians in Seville by order of Alahor, successor to Abalagís, son of Muza; Muza, the leader of the invading army, dies of melancholy when the Miramamolín, his sovereign lord, fines him for stealing booty

captured in the conquest of Spain; Tárif is killed by a fall from his horse; the Moorish *caudillo* Magued is struck down by a bolt of lightning. Although the narrator of the *CR* does not intervene to moralize on the deaths of the major players in the drama of the *destruyçion* or identify them as examples of God's power to punish the wicked, at least two of them result from accidents that seem to defy the laws of probability: to die crushed under the weight of a castle tower that crumbles spontaneously, and to be struck by a bolt of lightning. By describing the deaths of these characters Pedro de Corral plays on the expectations of the readers of the early fifteenth century: swift deaths such as these were probably intended to suggest that they involved divine retribution. Death by stoning was a punishment prescribed in both *Testaments* for certain forms of wickedness, in particular for sins of the flesh.

La Cava's death differs in significant ways from those just described. We are told that she dies of an infection caused by the prick of a fish bone: "Murió de una espina de un pescado que le entró entre la uña e la carne, e hinchósele la mano e el braço e subióle a la cara la postema, e del dolor que avía se comía sus carnes con sus dientes mismos" (II, 348). It is a comparatively slow death accompanied by painful, degenerative symptoms. Its symptoms are described in the language of medieval medicine. The *postema*, like the boils with which God afflicted Job, is not only painful but disfiguring. La Cava's physical symptoms are accompanied by a highly unusual reaction: she seeks to relieve her pain by devouring her own flesh. In the realm of the symbolic, the consumption of her own flesh is consistent with her profile as a victim tormented by guilt. It is an act by which she attempts to alleviate her suffering by destroying the material substance to which she has been conditioned to attribute her tragic destiny, her womanly flesh. Her act of self-wounding is reminiscent of the penitential mortification through which the pious of the latter Middle Ages sought to expiate their guilt. What is not made clear by the author, however, is whether or not she is redeemed by her penitential act.

2.11 La Cava in the Penitential Episodes of the *CR*: The Prostitute and the Sinner's Redemption

La Cava makes a final appearance in the *CR*, but not as a creature of the flesh. After she is

presumably dead and buried, she returns to Rodrigo as an image conjured by the devil to tempt the fallen king while he is performing penance for his sins. The devil, master of disguises, offers the king the illusion that the fulfillment of his political aspirations and of his erotic desires is at his fingertips: that all obstacles to his pleasure have vanished before his eyes.³⁹ This is the third of three bouts with temptation Rodrigo endures while doing penance. In the first, he is tempted by the devil disguised as a holy man to break his penitential diet of dark bread made of rye flour and ashes: “E sacó dos panes bien blancos, e a una perdiz asada, e una gallina menos las piernas, e púsolo en la tabla. E el Rey en que lo vio arrasáronse los ojos en agua, e no pudo estar que no se recordase de la gran honra como así del todo abaxada, e nunca fuera su mesa tan pobre” (II, 381). In the second episode of temptation a repentant Count Julián offers to restore Don Rodrigo to the command of his army, a chance to drive the Moors out of Spain and to recover his earthly glory. In the third and climactic test of the sincerity of his repentance, power, wealth, and sensual pleasure are personified in La Cava, who beckons him seductively to father an heir to the throne with her. The three visions submit Rodrigo’s resolve to tests of increasing magnitude. The three are predicated on the contrast between the sweetness of his memory of worldly pleasures experienced in the recent past and his present of hermetic austerity.

In the third and final episode of temptation, the one in which La Cava makes her last appearance, Pedro de Corral realizes a brilliant hybridization of literary paradigms. He synthesizes elements derived from opposing medieval literary traditions: from the scene of temptation of the saint’s life, and from the erotic encounter of courtly romance. Corral fleshes out the schematic scenes of the short hagiographic narrative with a wealth of details of courtly inspiration. In so doing he produces an episode intended to play with maximum appeal on the masculine erotic imagination.

One can find numerous episodes based on the theme of the saints’ struggle with the temptation of the flesh in *The Golden Legend*, the widely disseminated collection of saints’ lives

³⁹ Weinstein & Rudolph Bell note that in the medieval stories of saints’ lives the devil uses “sexual temptation as the chief weapon of his arsenal” (83). Elizabeth Drayson has studied the penitential episodes in Pedro de Corral’s work.

written around 1260 by Jacobus de Voragine, a Dominican of Genoese origin. A brief consideration of the scene as it appears in the lives of St. Jerome and St. Bernard should be sufficient to distinguish how Pedro de Corral makes use of the building blocks of the hagiographic tradition. One must bear in mind that the lives of saints as told by Jacobus often compress lengthy narratives of earlier origin. Jacobus's work is a repertoire of short stories that could be readily used as material for sermons by the brothers of the preaching order. In hagiographic narrative the struggle with carnal sin and the remedy with which it is overcome provide the thematic framework for the conventional episode of erotic temptation. The object of the protagonist's erotic desire is only mentioned, but never described in graphic detail. For example, in the life of St. Jerome as it is told in *The Golden Legend*, Jacobus de Voragine quotes the saint's own description of his struggle with the sin of lust in the solitude of the desert:

All the company I had was scorpions and wild beasts, yet at times I felt myself surrounded by clusters of pretty girls, and the fires of lust were lighted in my frozen body and moribund flesh. So it was that I wept continually and starved the rebellious flesh for weeks at a time. Often I joined day to night and did not stop beating my breast until the Lord restored my peace of mind. (II, 213)

St. Bernard is tempted by a matron in whose house he is a guest, who is so impressed with his good looks that she burns with desire for him: "She had his bed made up in a separate room, but then, in the night went to him without a sound or a qualm" (II, 99). The minute Bernard feels her presence he shouts: "Thieves, Robbers." The matron flees. When asked why he has shouted as he has, St. Bernard explains that his hostess has tried to rob him of his chastity, "a treasure that, once lost, can never be recovered." In both narratives the description of the image of temptation is limited by a sense of decorum imposed by the aversion to the sins of the flesh preached by men who embody the Church's ideals. The reader is spared the sordid details. In both instances the aborted erotic encounter takes place in a place hidden from public view, in a private space belonging to the protagonist. In each instance the protagonist resists temptation through decisive action: St. Jerome beats his breast to distract his mind; St. Bernard shouts to expose the matron to public scrutiny. Like St. Susanna, St. Bernard does what La Cava fails to do: he calls attention to an act of sexual aggression. The episode of the matron's nocturnal visit to St. Bernard's private chamber is

reminiscent of the nocturnal seduction scene of chivalric narrative in which the knight is visited in the privacy of his chamber by a maiden smitten with desire. Amadís de Gaula is conceived during such a nocturnal meeting (Perión/Helisena), as is also Pelayo in the *CR* (Favila/Luz). In the chivalric variant of the nocturnal episode, the erotic anticipation of the young couple and the pleasurable fulfillment of their desire are the primary focus. In both the episodes I've just mentioned the woman is the instigator.⁴⁰

Pedro de Corral realizes a brilliant fusion of the hagiographic and chivalric prototypes of the erotic encounter. To accentuate the difficulty of Rodrigo's penitential ordeal, the magnitude of his resistance to the temptation of the flesh, Corral embellishes the description of La Cava with graphic details intended to maximize her seductive appeal, the details that are omitted in the context of the hagiographic episode of temptation. Rodrigo is distracted from his regimen of prayer by the arrival of La Cava, who orders that a luxurious tent be pitched adjacent to his rustic oratory, far from her entourage. In the privacy of the tent she proposes to revive in Rodrigo with "muchos manjares" the strength he has lost through his practice of abstinence. She tells him that it is his divinely ordained destiny to father an heir to the throne with her, who is to be named Felbersán. La Cava reveals to him that all worldly obstacles to the fulfillment of his desire have disappeared: Queen Eliaca, to whom she owes allegiance, is dead, and her father has sent her to Rodrigo with full knowledge of the purpose of her visit. What La Cava offers Rodrigo is nothing less than the opportunity to fulfill his erotic fantasy and at the same time to realize his dynastic aspirations: to continue the bloodline of the Goths and to recover Spain from the enemies of the faith, all apparently with God's blessing.

⁴⁰In the episode of the Dueña Rodríguez (*Don Quixote*, Part II, xlvi), Cervantes realizes a brilliant parody of this paradigmatic episode, which had long since become a cliché of chivalric romance. In Cervantes's comic rewriting, the demeanor, social class, and attire of the characters are calculated to defy the reader's expectations predicated on familiarity with the generic conventions.

As the vision unfolds, Rodrigo sees La Cava with increasing degrees of proximity, as the obstacles of distance, social decorum, religious law and clothing are peeled away. As the physical and social spaces separating the two are diminished, the strength of the vision overwhelms Rodrigo, leaving him unconscious. He awakens twice, but only to find the erotic appeal of the vision intensified: the first time he sees La Cava dressed in “una aljuba de escarlata apretada e corta por media pierna;” the second time he sees her in front of a bed (“una cama muy rica”), where she begins to remove her clothing: “E que quedava en camisa e en cabellos que le llegavan fasta los pies.” As she turns toward him exposing the most private parts of her body (“mostrándole los pechos e las piernas”), she calls on him to see in his possession what he had so wanted, her body: “Señor, catad en vuestro poder las cosas que más codiciastes en este mundo que vos esperan en esta cama” (II, 395).

It is only with the aid of the Holy Ghost that Don Rodrigo is able to resist the extraordinary power of these images. Each time he loses consciousness, the Holy Ghost warns him to resist temptation. Upon awakening the second time he remembers the words spoken by the Holy Ghost: “Que todavía oviese mientes el su nombre, e oviese verdadera esperança en la señal de la cruz” (II, 396). With these words in mind, with great contrition, his eyes filled with tears, he calls on Jesus Christ to free him from temptation and to save his soul from damnation. As he beseeches the Lord to save him he makes the sign of the cross:

E hizo esa hora la señal de la cruz en la frente e santiguóse. E en aquella hora se dexó caer la falsa la Cava por aquellas peñas ayuso escontra la mar que parecía que el mundo se venía abaxo. E del golpe que dio sobrepujó tanto la mar que parecía que allí do estava en el oratorio se mojó el Rey, e quedó muy espantado que dende a una hora non pudo entrar en su sentimiento. (II, 396)

The La Cava who tempts Don Rodrigo as he is struggling to win salvation has the attributes of a woman of ill-repute, who has a maximum appeal to the king’s erotic desire. As she is portrayed in Rodrigo’s diabolical vision, she shares an element central to the iconography of the repentant prostitute Mary Magdalen: the long hair with which Mary was reported to have wiped from Christ’s feet the tears of her repentance. In both contexts the long hair functions as a reminder of the erotic desire that leads to the commission of sins of the flesh. In the story of Mary Magdalen, however, the

hair, formerly a part of the carnal attraction of the prostitute, is reconfigured as an emblem of Mary's spiritual beauty, her rebirth in the love of Christ.⁴¹ It is the lesson of Mary Magdalen that Rodrigo (and Spain) must imitate to overcome the powerful temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It is not coincidental that we are told in the *CR* that Mary Magdalen and St. Michael, Archangel are the two saints to whom churches are dedicated in the Asturias, the refuge from which Pelayo initiates the Reconquest. The churches are built to house the sacred relics carried to the north by the Archbishop of Toledo as he abandons Spain in anticipation of the Islamic conquest.⁴² While Mary Magdalen is a symbol of Christian rebirth through repentance, St. Michael is the symbol of Christian militancy: "He is held to be Christ's standard-bearer among the battalions of the holy angels." At the sound of his voice "the dead will rise, and it is he who will present the cross, the nails, the spear, and the crown of thorns at the Day of Judgement" (Voragine II, 201).

The image of La Cava conjured by the devil to corrupt Don Rodrigo, to destroy his penitential resolve, maximizes her erotic appeal in order to play effectively on Rodrigo's concupiscence. While it reveals much about Don Rodrigo, it tells nothing about what is intrinsic to La Cava. It is an image that responds to Don Rodrigo's erotic imagination, an illusory image that is diametrically opposed to the La Cava of flesh and blood who first came to the attention of the king on account of her beauty and discretion, the one who eloquently resisted his proposition until he took her by force.

2.12 Thematic Variations: Rodrigo and La Cava, Sacarus and the Duchess of Loreina, Favila and Luz, Pelayo and the Merchant's Daughter

It is important to note that the relationship of Rodrigo and La Cava is paralleled by several others in the *CR*, against which the author undoubtedly intended it to be read, those of Favila and

⁴¹ Don Álvaro de Luna tells the story of Mary Magdalen in the *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mujeres*. He describes in the following way the incident that gave rise to the most characteristic scene associated with her cult during the Middle Ages, one in which her hair functions as an emblematic detail: "e non osando paresçer entre los justos, pusose detras, çerca de los pies del señor, e con grand fiuzia, lauole los pies con lagrimas, e limpiolos con los cabellos; e escriuese que los vngio con vnguento" (226).

⁴²Walsh has shown that the transporting of relics (*translatio*) northward from the threatened and defiled shrines of the south and their rediscovery along the routes of military incursion as the Reconquest pushed southward was of central importance to the Christian devotion of the medieval Iberian Peninsula (4).

Luz, Sacarus and the Duchess of Loreina, and Pelayo and the merchant's daughter. The first is a relationship through which God directs the historical destiny of Spain: Favila and Luz are destined by God to be the parents of Pelayo, the founding king of the new lineage born to recover Spain from the infidel, a latter-day Moses chosen to lead his people out of servitude. Their secret marriage, although illegal according to the will of an unjust king (Abarca), is consecrated in the eyes of God: they swear fidelity to each other before the image of the Virgin on the night of their first sexual encounter.

Pelayo, like the Rodrigo of the penitential episodes, is propositioned by the merchant's daughter, but remains resolute in his chastity.⁴³ In his moral righteousness he serves as the standard against which the Rodrigo who succumbs to the temptations of the world is intended to be measured. It is on account of Pelayo's militant Christian devotion that he is chosen by God to found the new dynasty. The dynasty founded by Pelayo, descendant of the Goths, was, in fact, the one to which the Trastámara kings claimed to belong according to the genealogical scheme outlined by Pedro López de Ayala in his prologue to the chronicles of the reigns of Pedro I and Enrique II. The idea that the origins of the Trastámara kings were located in their Gothic ancestry, that they were descendants of Pelayo, was axiomatic in the dominant vision of Castilian history during the lifetime of Pedro de Corral.

The relationship of Sacarus and the Duquesa of Loreina is one that infuses the romantic passion and pageantry of Arthurian romance with the pragmatic concerns of legality and lineage, which determined most real aristocratic marriages in the latter Middle Ages. Sacarus is the ideal knight: of an excellent pedigree, loyal to his king, an accomplished warrior, a champion of the defenseless. The Duchess of Loreina is beautiful, recognized for her expertise in matters of chivalry, a scrupulous keeper of tradition and social protocol in her dealings with men. She faithfully observes the terms of her husband's will by which she is entitled to inherit his estates. When her rights of inheritance are challenged by her brother-in-law, she is decisive and resourceful in her search for a champion to defend her interests. She follows the custom of her land in selecting a husband and protector of her inheritance: she requires that Sacarus maintain a *paso* for the requisite period of time

⁴³ This episode has been studied in considerable detail and with perspicacity by Madeline Pardo (1993). Israel Burshatin

against all comers. Although the relationship of Sacarus and the Duchess receives the blessing of the king and conforms to the dictates of custom, it is ill-fated. They and all of their companions fall victims to the treachery of the Count of la Marca. Although virtuous, they are not spared a violent death on earth. The narrator never reveals whether they are rewarded in the afterlife for conforming to the socially prescribed norms of behavior.

As is evident from the previous examples, the *CR* makes extensive use of variations on the theme of carnal love. Thematically related episodes are used systematically by the author to illuminate each other through relationships of similarity and contrast. Pedro de Corral often accents the difference between stories that share common elements of plot by representing them in different generic modes. The story of Pelayo, for example, in particular the description of the peculiarities of his birth and providential destiny as the savior of his people, is shaped according to Biblical paradigms: it shares a number of elements with the stories of Moses and Christ, elements common to narratives about the origins and destiny of a people or nation. By contrast, the story of Sacarus and the Duchess of Loreina is infused with the defining elements of medieval epic and chivalric romance, while the penitential episodes are cast in a hagiographic mold.

2.13 Conclusion: The *CR* as a Critique of Castilian Society during the Reign of Juan II

To conclude, I would like to pose several questions that arise from the preceding attempt to trace a genealogy of the most extensive variant of the Rodrigo/La Cava legend. The most obvious is why does Pedro de Corral tell the story as he does toward the beginning of the fifteenth century? What did he wish to say about the period in which he lived through his reconfiguring of the image of a decisive moment in the Spanish past? Why did he enhance the characterization of La Cava? What lessons did he want the contemporary reader to extract from his highly peculiar version of the story?

has also studied the Pelayo episodes in the context of hagiography (1990).

I would argue that Pedro de Corral wrote his version of the legend of the *destruyçion* from the margin of the power structure of his day. His is an oblique vision intended to expose the moral degeneracy veiled by the extravagant ceremonial of the Castilian court of Juan II. Although his mentality is decidedly secular, it is one infused with the spirit of popular devotion inspired by the oratory of the mendicant friars, who were strong advocates of the Reconquest, of the persecution of the Jews, and of the central role of penitential rights in Christian devotion.⁴⁴ What is intended by analogy to the story of Rodrigo as Corral tells it is a corrosive scrutiny of political practice, economic policy, and morality in the Spain of the time of Juan II, a reign characterized by interminable wars, constant hostility between rival parties (*vandos*), deficit spending, heavy taxation, sexual promiscuity, popular religious devotion of great intensity, and the pervasive involvement of members of the clergy in the affairs of the world.

The *CR* contains several negative images of the highest echelon of the clerical establishment of Rodrigo's Spain which are intended to convey a scathing critique of the hierarchy of the Castilian Church of the early fifteenth century: the traitor don Orpas who converts to Islam and persecutes his former Christian brethren; the Archbishop of Toledo who abandons Spain rather than rally his Christian flock to resist the invaders, and the bishops of Jaén and Liberia, who are whisked away by a whirlwind from Rodrigo's war council prior to the decisive battle against the Moors. When the two bishops turn up naked and shorn a short while later, they confess their sins before the king. The bishop of Jaén, Rodrigo's confessor, admits to being negligent in his role as Rodrigo's spiritual advisor: "E yo de cierto sabía que algunas cosas dexavas de dezir que non dezías. E que me negavas a las vegadas cargas de algunos que te servían, que dellos non curavas de les fazer bien, e yo no te estrañava las grandes fianças que fazías en algunos hombres que ál non curavan sinon de su provecho" (I, 612). The bishop of Liberia confesses to the sin of greed. He admits that although his income (*renta*) is so large that even living extravagantly he cannot spend half of it, he does not give

⁴⁴ Several of the Christian variants of the legend, including Pedro de Corral's, contain an account of the collusion of the Jewish elders of Toledo with the Moors in the conquest of Toledo, the capitol of Visigothic Spain. The twelve elders hold a clandestine meeting with Tárík, during which they promise to allow the Moors entry into the otherwise impenetrable city through a door in the city's walls leading into the Jewish quarter, in exchange for the guarantee that the Jews will be allowed to keep their properties under Islamic rule. The episode first appears in el Tudense's *Chronicon Mundi* (1236) from where it was transmitted to many subsequent versions of the legend. It was a story invented by a cleric at a particular moment to incite anti-Semitic sentiment in the Christian flock.

to the poor: “E veo andar los míos muertos de fambre, lazdrados, e cuitados, e tales que el mundo ha piedad dellos, e yo no me curo más que si nunca los oviese visto ni conocido, ni toviese cargo dellos” (I, 613). As a result “algunos cuitados” who serve him “no codician ál sino fazer mal, e viéenles pensamientos e codician de matar unos e robar otros, e nunca están sin pecado” (I, 614).

Most often by way of negative examples, in the *CR* Corral offers his contemporaries an image of the ideal monarch. Above all else, the ideal king must inspire his subjects to be virtuous by his own example, or as Sancho IV put it in his *Castigos et documentos*: “El rey es espejo en que todos los otros se catan” (Rosell 1952: 93). He must be virtuous if he is to expect virtue of his subjects. If he is evil, so will be his subjects.

The *CR* is an unsettling work written during a period of accelerating social, political, and economic change that challenges fundamental assumptions of the official historiography of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by reconfiguring one of the foundational Christian narratives of the medieval Iberian Peninsula. Written from a perspective sometimes at odds with the vision of Spanish history disseminated by the Church and the monarchy, it is not surprising that the *CR* holds Don Rodrigo accountable for violating divinely ordered laws and traditions. Similar abuses in the present, during the reign of Juan II, had stalled the progress of the Reconquest and had produced interminable civil strife, the intense suffering of the poor, and the increasing dominance in the affairs of the cities and of the realm of powerful members of the aristocracy, accompanied by a corresponding erosion of the autonomous rights of the urban patriciate.⁴⁵

Don Rodrigo’s rape of La Cava is one of a number of manifestations of his contempt for his subjects and for the laws of God. Although she is not the central character of his work, the monumental proportions of his *historia fingida* gave Pedro de Corral ample space to develop her character. Through his portrayal of La Cava he shows the reader what happens to a virtuous woman who is subordinate to the oppressive norms dictated by a misogynist historical vision of clerical origin, one that had permeated both the learned and popular cultures of the Middle Ages on the Iberian Peninsula.

⁴⁵ Inés de la Flor Cramer has concluded that Pedro de Corral intended his readers to establish a correlation between the final days of Visigothic Spain and the turbulent period of the reign of Juan II, during which the antagonism between rival factions of the oligarchy were producing disastrous consequences for the kingdom.

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