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Alfonso VIII and the Jewess of Toledo: A Political Affair

David Nirenberg

"in toto morali negotio modus procedendi, secundum Philosophum, est figuralis et grossus." Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, I.i.1.

King Sancho IV (1284-95) was a dutiful parent, if not a faithful son. At some point not long after bringing the civil war against his father Alfonso X to its successful conclusion, he (or his ghostwriters) began to draft a manual of proper conduct for his own heir Fernando. Among the many moral and political lessons that Sancho hoped to impart to his child through the *Castigos* was a strong sense of the value God attributes to royal chastity. The lesson was often repeated, but in chapter 21 it took on a curious shape:

Otrosi para mientes, mio fijo, e toma ende mio castigo de lo que contesçio al rey don Alfonso de Castilla, el que vençio la batalla de Hubeda [Las Navas de Tolosa, 1212], por siete annos que visco mala vida con vna judia de Toledo diole Dios grand llaga e grand majamiento en la batalla de Alarcos [1195], en que fue vençido e fuxo, e fue mal andante el e todos los de su regno. ... E demas matol los fijos varones e houo el regno el rey don Fernando, su nieto, fijo de su fija. E se repintio de tan mal pecado commo este que auia fecho, por el qual pecado, por emienda, fizo despues el monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos de monjas de Cistel e el Espital, e Dios diole despues buena andança contra los moros en la batalla. E commo quier que y buena andança houo, muy mejor la ouiera si la desauentura de la batalla de Alarcos non le ouiera contesçido primero, en la qual desauentura el cayo por su pecado.¹

Here, anonymous and cramped into a handful of humble words ("he lived a bad life with a Jewess of Toledo"), we first encounter the most famous Jewish woman of Iberian letters. Her story will be written and rewritten for the benefit of audiences, early modern and modern, moved by *mesaliances*: Lope de Vega's *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*, Franz Grillparzer's *Die Jüdin von Toledo*, and Lion Feuchtwanger's *Spanische Ballade/Die Jüdin von Toledo*, these are only a few of the later works that animate our skeletal Jewess in order to explore star-crossed love.² We, however, shall stick to the medieval sources. And we shall talk, not about transgressive love, but about the politics of representing such love in medieval letters. Why did this story about Alfonso VIII's (1158-1214) affair with a Jewess of Toledo begin to be told in the late thirteenth century? What ideological work

did it do over the course of its belatedly brilliant career in the medieval Castilian chronicle tradition?

These topics are new, but they are not unrelated to, and can help illuminate, the most insistent question prior readers have asked of the Jewess: is her story true? Modern scholars have most often approached this question by scrutinizing the century of silence that separates the Jewess' alleged existence (sometime prior to 1195) from her first appearance in the histories (ca. 1292).³ This silence apparently concerned the early chroniclers as well. Already in the *Crónica de Castilla* (whose surviving Gallician-Portuguese version dates to 1295-1312) the story is attributed to the early thirteenth-century historian Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (c. 1170-1247). Later chroniclers deleted the attribution, perhaps aware that this august Archbishop of Toledo never mentioned the Jewess in any of his known writings.⁴ Rodrigo's *De rebus Hispaniae* was one of the pillars for the great historical edifice built by Sancho's father Alfonso X, whose pinnacle was the *Primera Crónica General*. That chronicle too ignored the Jewess, despite the fact that it happily embellished other accounts of interfaith affection (such as that of Alfonso VI's marriage with the Muslim princess Zaida), and that its chapter on Alfonso the VIII was probably redacted shortly after 1289 (that is, well after Alfonso X's death and at much the same time as the *Castigos*).⁵

Scholars also find reason for worry in the story's rapid expansion: in the few years that intervene between the composition of the *Castigos* and the *Crónica de Castilla* the tale had spread across three chapters. Chapter 502 of the *Crónica* blames Alfonso VIII's defeat at Alarcos on the factionalism and tepid loyalty of his vassals, but attributes that disloyalty to God's punishment of the king's youthful sin. Chapter 503 describes the expiation of that sin through the founding of Santa Maria de las Huelgas at Burgos. And Chapter 491 records the sin itself:

Poys que el rrey dō Afonso ouue passados todos estes traballos que uos dissemos, et foy casado, coño auedes oydo, foyse para Toledo cōna rreyna, sua moller. Et, estando y, pagousse moyto de hũa judia et oluydou a reeyna sua moller; et ençerrousse cō ela muy grã tempo, en guisa que o nō podiam partir dela por nemhũa maneyra, nē sse pagaua tãto de nēhũa cousa. Et, segūdo conta o arçebispo dō Rrodrigo, esteue ençerrado cō ela bem vij^{te} meses, assy que sse nō nēbraua de ssy nē de seu rreyno nen doutra cousa.

Et os omes boos ouuerō seu acordo coño p[o]sessem rrecado ãno rreyno, por rrazō daquelle feyto tam mao et tam sem Deus. Et acordarō que a matassem et (fezerōno) assi (et) cobrarã seu senhor, que tijnã perdudo. Et cō este acordo entrarō ala, dizendo que queriam falar cō el rrey; et, mentre os hūus falarō cō el rrey, os outros entrarō hu estaua aquela judia. Et

acharōna en muy nobles estrados, et degolarō ela et quantos estauã cō ela. Et desy forō su[a] carreyra.

Et el rrey, quando o soube, foy muy coytdado, tanto que nō soube que fazer, tã grande era o amor que dela auya. Et entō trauarō cō elle seus vasalos et sacarōno de Toledo, et chegarō a hũu lugar a que dizem Yliscas, que he a seis legoas de Toledo.

Et, el rrey estando y essa noyte, coytdando eno mao feyto da judia, apareçeuille hũu angeo, que lli disse:

-Aynda, Afonso, coytdando estas ãno mal que as feyto, de que tomou Deus muy grã deseruiço? Mal fazes et caramente cho demãdara a ti et a teu rreyno.

Et el rrey demandouille quẽ era. Et el dissolle coño era mandadeyro de Deus, que vijna a el cō seu mãdado a dizer[lle] aquello. Et el rrey ficou os geollos en terra et pedio[lle] por merçee que rrogasse a Deus por el. Et o angeo di[s] sollj:

-Tã grã sana a Deus contra tj, por este pecado, que o demandara a ti et a teu rreyno.... Et entō desapareceu o angeo et ficou a camara chea de grande olor muy boo et de grã claridade....

Here we have at last the drama that will attract Lope de Vega. The Jewess remains anonymous and un-described, but the power of her beauty is amply reflected in the king's lovesickness: his distraction during her life, his melancholy after her death.⁶ We even glimpse her briefly in her richly furnished chamber, surrounded by unnamed companions who will share her fate. The cast of characters, too, has grown, first by a band of nobles so concerned about the state of the realm that they agree to deceive the king and murder the Jewess in his court; and then by a sweet-smelling angel who visits and upbraids the disconsolate monarch.

Historians are generally suspicious of expansion, and this case is no exception. Diego de Colmenares in the seventeenth century, the Marques de Mondéjar and the Padre Flórez in the eighteenth, in the nineteenth Fidel Fita, all decried the affair as implausible legend. Others defend love but protest the details.⁷ Strangely enough it is not the angel but the barons who attract scholarly ire. In words penned by Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, "...lo que hay de más inverosímil y de más afrentoso en el cuento, no es que el Rey se prendase de una judía muy hermosa, sino que los ricos hombres de Castilla se conjurasen para asesinar a una infeliz mujer." The Jewess' most recent student concurs: historical material underpins Sancho's account. But the betrayal of the king and the murder of his lover, these must be the embroidery of overheated imaginations.⁸

Of course a great deal has changed over the centuries of critical engagement with the Jewess. Over the past generation of literary studies alone, focus has shifted from questions of truth and

transmission to questions of representation. "Even if the tales are not real, they are true in the sense that they mirror and heighten situations, perceptions, and tensions inherent in a society," as Edna Eizenberg put it in her study of the Jewess some twenty years ago.⁹ But for Eizenberg, as for many of the scholars working on literary representations of gender and sexuality in the Iberian Middle Ages, the task has been to demonstrate how, in Foucault's famous words, "power... dictates its law to sex." The Jewess' story now serves to illustrate, not the ideal of chastity, but the compulsion of the powerful to sexually objectify the weak. Like so many other peoples ravished in histories, she becomes a "tool for asserting in-group values and dominance, all the while affirming male supremacy." Such readings are both productive and ethically attractive, in that they turn our attention from the powerful to the oppressed. Yet insofar as they too forget the barons, they are reductive as well. In the reading that follows, "Fermosa's" story will emerge, not as an assertion and affirmation of in-group values, but as a representation, "figuralis et grossus," of political crisis.¹⁰ Power may dictate its law to sex, but sex takes only fractured note of the dictation.

Alfonso VIII and his Jewess are not alone in the *Castigos*. They appear in the midst of three chapters (19-21) that represent correct political order in terms of the proper sexual and feudal relationship to the sacred. Chapter 19, entitled "Commo non deue omne fazer pesar a Dios con mugeres con que non deue e o non deue," introduces the general topic. God takes special offense, the chapter begins by explaining, at sins committed with women in religious orders, married women, virgins, Jews, and Muslims.¹¹ In the case of religious women (who form the specific subject of Chapter 19), this is because a nun is "married to God." "[H]e who wants to take the wife of God, his lord, commits great treason." Just as it would obviously constitute "grand locura" for a poor man to fight with his rich lord, so it is folly to offend God by stealing his brides. The point is made through a political proverb: "En juego nin en veras, con tu sennor non partas peras." It is brought home (as are all moral claims in the *Castigos*) by a vivid example. A nun is sneaking out of her monastery to meet a would-be-lover. Passing the main altar she genuflects and whispers a furtive Ave Maria. The Virgin's statue begins to scream, the crucified Jesus jumps from his crucifix to give chase. Just as the nun reaches the gate he clubs her with his arm, driving through her jawbones the nail that had fixed his hand to the cross. Then he returns to his crucifix, leaving the nun impaled on the floor, nail sticking out of chin.

The denouement is predictable: the nun is revived and repentant, the knight becomes a monk, the crucifix displays henceforth a crooked arm. The moral, too, is near: if mute images, made of wood by the hands of man, take umbrage at such treason against God, how much greater must the anger of God and Virgin be? Because in the *Castigos* divine anger so often has military consequences, the chapter concludes with an account (and in

Manuscript C an illustration) of a contemporary battle in which Pedro Coronel defeats Juan Corualan thanks to the intervention of a (now spectral?) nun with whom the latter had once sinned.¹²

Sancho's Muslim and Jewish women moved in the same moral, political, and narrative landscape as these erotic nuns and their married (Chap. 20) and virgin (Chap. 21) Christian sisters. Of course sex with non-Christians offends God not because, as is the case with nuns, their love is pledged to him, but because they are His enemies. In the case of Jews, who rejected Jesus' kingship and torment him in the flesh, Sancho emphasized the disparity between religious enmity and physical love through a graphic image: "Otro si non deues en afazimiento llegar el tu rostro a la cara de la judia, que es de aquella generacion de los que escupieron a Jesu Cristo, tu sennor, en la faz."¹³ This imagination of disloyalty to God in terms of sexual intercourse with unbelieving women is part of an ancient sensibility: Jewish and Christian scripture often made claims about the exclusive nature of religious loyalties through stories of inappropriate love.¹⁴ Sancho chose only one scriptural proof-text, the popular Old Testament example of King Salomon, "que fue tan sabio omne, mugeres de otra creengia le tiraron de la su ley e le fizieron que dexase el al dios de David..." (p. 133), but he could have chosen many others. Seen from this discursive distance, the rejection of the Jewess in Sancho's story becomes a performance of religious loyalty, an assertion of "in-group values and dominance," and an account of the boundaries between competing monotheisms. Hence it is at this point in the *Castigos*, in a chapter ostensibly devoted to constraining princely libidos, that the reader is provided an account of the messianic errors of the Jews as well as a polemical history of Muhammad and the origins of Islam.

Yet no matter how much Sancho presents his tale as an account of the transcendent loyalties owned by earthly monarch to heavenly king, it is clear that more local politics and more local loyalties are at stake. As he explains in the case of Alfonso VIII, God punishes the transgressions of the ruler in the bodies of the ruled. The piety of the ruler is reflected in the political order of his kingdom. This ancient theme, central to the *Castigos*, emerges from the very beginning of the work: Adam rebelled against God, hence creation rebelled against Adam: "por tal commo fue rebelde a Dios, por tal se le rebello su carne propria, e todas las bestias le fueron rebeldes." The sexual foundations of these political disorders appear just as early. Adam's error began by wanting to please Eve, but in yielding sovereignty to his wife he sowed the seeds of the first, and paradigmatic, rebellion: "E en pena de aquesto ha querido Nuestro Sennor Dios que si el omne da sennoria a la muger sobre sy mesmo, que ela le sera todos tienpos contraria."¹⁵

This gendered political history of Eden serves as a template for the political history of Spain. Thus Sancho concludes the prologue, "I wrote this book in the year that with the help of God I won Tarifa from the Moors to whom she belonged, and who had held her in their power for more than six hundred years since the King Rodrigo lost her, who was the last king of the Goths, because of the evil and the abominable

treason of the bad count Don Julian, and I gave her to the faith of Jesus Christ, and there are in [the book] fifty chapters." The political and moral claim is clear. Spain had been lost because of treason and rebellion awakened by Rodrigo's sexual sin, and could only be regained by monarchs both pious and chaste. Sancho was not an obvious candidate. He had, after all, not only usurped the throne, but also abandoned his promised bride in favor of "marriage" with María de Molina, a woman he first met when she acted as God-mother at the baptism of his illegitimate daughter. (Their union was never sanctioned during his lifetime, nor their children legitimated, despite efforts that included the forging of papal bulls.)¹⁶ According to the logic of the text, however, Sancho's victory over the Muslims at Tarifa, like his authorship of the *Castigos*, proved him to be such a sovereign.

Alfonso's Jewess operates within this moral economy and this political project, but she does a specific type of work that other textual women, Muslim or Christian, could not do. Compare, for example, the often told story of Alfonso VI's relationship with the Muslim princess Zaida. That love, which resulted in Zaida's conversion and concubinage with the king, served not to reproach Alfonso, but to praise him. Insofar as royal intercourse with Muslim women implied (at least in the Castilian literary tradition) a domination of Islam, it expressed positive values of conquering Christian virility. The *Primera Crónica General* even uses the story of Zaida as the frame within which to narrate the arrival from North Africa of Almoravid armies toward the end of Alfonso's reign, representing his encounter with these armies as victorious vengeance for their murder of Zaida's father al-Mu'tamid, the emir of Seville. The fact that the Almoravids halted Christian expansion for a generation did not prevent the use of Alfonso VI's relationship with Zaida to represent the culmination, rather than the reversal, of his conquests.¹⁷

As for kings and Christian women, there were plenty of stories in which defeat was attributed to inappropriate sex. Jaume I of Catalonia-Aragon, for example, explained his father Pere's support for the Languedocian nobility during the Albigensian crusade as a result of his desire for their wives and daughters, and his death in 1213 on the battlefield of Muret as the consequence of exhaustion from too much intercourse with a courtesan the night before.¹⁸ But at the same time that they criticized royal sexual energy, contemporaries also understood it as a natural manifestation of power, and assigned unmarried sexual partners of the king an honorable and legally defined space.¹⁹ Alfonso's relationship with the Jewess of Toledo evoked no such understanding. Its consequences were not only defeat, but even more pointedly, rebellion.

With rebellion we enter peculiarly "Jewish" territory in the late thirteenth century. This "Jewishness" emerges sharply in the accusations made against Sancho's own father Alfonso X by those who resisted his rule. The aristocratic uprisings of 1270-1275, for example, complained of royal taxes (*servicios*), and of the use of Jewish administrators to collect them. Rebellious grandes claimed the revenues farmed on behalf of the king by his Jews and even took some

of these Jews hostage. With the suppression of the rebellion in 1275, however, Alfonso entered once more into arrangements with his Jewish administrators, granting extensive control of his financial administration to Isaac ibn Zadok (aka Çag de la Maleha) in 1276. By 1279, when a council of bishops met to complain about Alfonso's rule, "Alfonso X's accusers represented him as a barely Christian tyrant manipulated by Jewish counsellors, intent upon subjecting churchmen to an intolerable yoke of persecution and servitude." It is in this context of these criticisms, and of increasing tension between the King and Prince Sancho, that Alfonso ordered the imprisonment of Jewish tax farmers, and the hanging of Isaac/Çag. Sancho himself, unwilling to see the throne pass to the young children of his deceased elder brother, first flirted with and then espoused rebellion. He married into the aristocratic party (quite literally: María de Molina came from a powerful clan of magnates) and made himself the champion of their complaints, attacking the Jews and their royal protector.²⁰

We could therefore interpret the story of Alfonso and the Jewess as an oblique legitimation of Sancho's own rebellion, one that condenses the political anti-Judaism used against his father, retells it as a gentle tale of sexual rather than fiscal love, and projects it onto safely heroic ancestors. Yet the story describes Sancho's reign just as well as his father's. Consider Sancho's infamous relationship with Lope Díaz de Haro. Lope was head of a lineage that had sided with Sancho in his war against Alfonso X and those lineages (most notably that of the Laras) that supported him.²¹ Sancho rewarded Lope with the title of Count, with his own sister in marriage, and in June of 1287 with complete authority over chancery, treasury, and government. Lope granted the Jew Abraham de Barchillon centralized responsibility for much of the crown's income, and Abraham immediately began recuperating for the Crown revenues alienated during the civil war to nobility and clergy. Resistance was just as immediate. Convinced by his magnates (and by the queen) to reverse course, Abraham's actions were rescinded in the Cortes of July and August 1288. A ban was declared on the use of Jewish tax collectors, and the magnates rewarded with a distribution of royal revenues. Don Lope himself, however, suffered a more striking reversal, one that burned itself deeply into historical memory. He was murdered in the king's court at Alfaro on 8 June 1288.²²

Our story may therefore seem as much an apologetic allegory of Sancho's reign as of his father's. Regardless, we can agree that Sancho attempted to shape it to represent his own sovereignty, while at the same time repressing the potential for rebellious violence that accusations of royal philo-semitism authorized in his father's reign and his own. Alfonso VIII's error was characterized as infatuation and love-sickness, not corrupt materialism or tyranny; God, not the barons, punished the wayward king; and Alfonso (like Sancho?) went on to great victories despite early sin.

Notwithstanding Sancho's precautions, the political and moral implications of Alfonso and his Jewess could not be so easily denied. The *Crónica de Castilla* quickly articulated what the *Castigos* had left

unspoken: Alfonso's errant love must have been punished by rebellion. Not only did the king's vassals violate his court, murder his mistress, and drag him to Ilescas, they also failed in their duty to fight for him against the Muslims at the battle of Alarcos. In other words, the king's Jewish affair fomented treason, and that treason brought about the kingdom's defeat at the hands of Islam. The angel's speech in the *Crónica de 1344* expands the logic even further: the kingdom was punished, not merely because the king had sinned, but because the kingdom "had consented" to his sin: "Et el angel le dixo sed cierto que tan gra- saña a Dios de ti por este pecado que telo demandara y al tu rreyno porque lo consintio."²³ Kingdoms that indulge the deviant loves of their kings will suffer. The barons' only error was in not having rebelled earlier.

Over the course of half a century the humble Jewish concubine of the *Castigos* had been transformed from a representation of the sovereign's special relationship with God, into an exemplary tale of monstrous monarchical affection justifying revolt. The representation drew its power from (at least) three inter-related phenomena. The first was the increasing weight of the fiscal and administrative practices that supported the expansion of royal power beginning with the reign of Alfonso X. The proportionality of the role played by Jewish administrators in this expansion is a matter of irresolvable (given the nature of the evidence) debate.²⁴ My own sense is that it has been much exaggerated.²⁵ What is clear is that complaints about Jewish influence and charges of royal philo-Semitism became a preferred weapon in the increasingly sharp struggle to resist royal fiscalty or to appropriate its profits. We have already seen examples of this from the reigns of Alfonso and Sancho. The idiom became routine in those that followed, and the accent thickened in open rebellion. The aristocratic factions that deposed and murdered King Pedro I "the Cruel" (1350-1369) in the mid-fourteenth century justified their actions by portraying him as a favorer of Jews, and even claimed that he was a cuckoo, the son of a Jewess adopted by the queen mother to conceal her inability to provide an heir. Much as Sancho had done a century and a half earlier, Prince Enrique (IV) rebelled against his father Juan II and his "Jew-loving" minister Alvaro de Luna, charging that they empowered Jews over Christians. He himself would later be ritually deposed in the "farza de Avila," accused of sodomy, favoring Jews, and living like a Muslim. Even the "Catholic monarchs" Fernando and Isabel, conquerors of Granada, founders of the Inquisition, expellers of the Jews, were said by some of their subjects to be descended from Jews and to benefit them in their policies.²⁶

This increasingly "Judaized" world of political revolt provided one part of the impetus for the redaction and expansion of our tale about Alfonso and his Jewish concubine. The increasing administrative importance of queenship and concubinage provided another. Sancho himself had solidified his leadership of the aristocratic factions arrayed against his father through his union with María de Molina. Her attempts to maintain her position despite the flimsiness of her

"marriage" contributed to the fall of Lope de Haro and to that of the *privado* that preceded him, the abbot Gomez García.²⁷ Later she served as regent during the minority of her son Fernando IV (from 1295-1301), defending his rights to the throne against a series of well-armed rivals alleging the illegitimate nature of Sancho's own accession. After the deaths of Ferdinand and his wife (in 1312), she again exercised guardianship of her grandson Alfonso XI (1311-1350), while a swirl of competing aristocratic factions contested the regency and divided amongst themselves the spoils of government.

Queens as regents were not news. More innovative was the politics of concubinage developed by Alfonso XI (and later his son Pedro I) during the same decades that the story of our Jewess was growing. *Barraganas* had long been part of the sexual lives of kings: nearly every monarch of Castile from Alfonso X until Isabel made provision in his testament for the maintenance of his concubines and their children.²⁸ Alfonso XI and Pedro, however, confronted a particular dilemma: their emancipation as rulers required that they dislodge the rival factions that had gained control of the resources of government during their minorities. Marriage was here a tool of limited utility. If they wished to increase their autonomy from the great nobility kings could not, as the rebellious Sancho IV had done, marry into it. Not surprisingly, both were betrothed to foreign princesses: Alfonso XI to María of Portugal, Pedro I to Blanche of France. But such marriages did not bring with them what kings most needed: a loyal faction of one's own. From 1329 until his death the young Alfonso XI depended, not just on the advice of his mistress Leonor de Guzmán, but also on the service of members of her family, whom he placed in positions of authority and power. Like his father, Pedro was 18 years old when he met a young woman from the lesser nobility named María de Padilla. Like his father (though less successfully) he ennobled and enriched her relatives, assigning to them the most sensitive posts of his administration.²⁹

The moral valence accorded to a politics of concubinage in literary representations depended, of course, on the outcome of that politics. Chroniclers looking back upon the reign of Alfonso XI, for example, explained Leonor de Guzmán's influence over him in the traditional terms of beauty and virtue: her children, after all, were eventually victorious in founding a new dynasty. The posterity of Pedro's affair was quite different, left as it was to the creative mercy of Trastamaran propagandists. According to them, María de Padilla gained her ascendancy over the king through magic. She commissioned a Jewish necromancer to enchant the jeweled belt Queen Blanche gave Pedro on his wedding night, so that it turned into a serpent and frightened him away.³⁰

The literary life of our Jewess owes something to this sexual politics of queens and concubines, but it is even more closely intertwined with the rise of another form of "governing affection," that of the *privado*, or beloved councilor, who enjoyed the special favor (*privanza*) of his lord. Though the *privado* will have a long future in Spain, the first one we encounter in Castilian letters predates the

appearance of our Jewess by only a generation, and comes from the same generic family: that of exemplary tales warning of Judaism's dangers. It is the famous story of Theophilus, as told by Gonzalo de Berceo in his *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*. Gonzalo's Theophilus is the chief administrator, chief judge, and chief accountant of his lord: all that remains for the worthy bishop are his devotions. In Gonzalo's words, Theophilus had "con el bispo amor e grand privança."³¹ It is when, under a succeeding bishop, Theophilus lost that "amor e grand privança" that he turned to a Jew, who brokered the sale of his soul to the devil in exchange for renewed favor.

"Amor" and "privanza": in the political vocabulary of our period love was understood as a powerful inspiration for and a representation of political confidence.³² But the association was not necessarily positive. Hence Alfonso X used the word *privanza* to designate a sexual danger zone confronting clerics who lived with their female relatives.³³ Royal love is on the one hand the basis of a well-ordered republic, but on the other it can, as Sancho repeatedly warned in the *Castigos*, easily seduce the monarch into an excess of carnality. In the medieval political and literary imagination it was often, as in Theophilus' tale, a Jew who lurked near the court waiting to mislead love into a carnal and corrupt *privanza*. According to Pero López de Ayala the court was a nest of competitive intrigue for royal affection, a hotbed in which the honeyed words of the Jews united them in a materialist love triangle with monarch and *privados*.³⁴ For historians writing in the late fifteenth century, the theme of Jewish *privanza* became a routine way of representing power in the troubled centuries that had come before.³⁵ In the story of our Jewess, however, we are witnessing the birth of that representation, exuberant and carnal.

Was the tale of Alfonso VIII's misguided love for his Jewess meant as an apologetic allegory of Sancho's own love for Lope de Haro? We need not insist. Given the importance of the Haro and Lara lineages in the politics of the late thirteenth century, it is not surprising that the chronicles produced in this period found the historical theme of conflict between the two houses particularly useful for exploring the tension between monarchical and aristocratic power. These explorations were often set in the heroic past of Alfonso VIII's reign, the reign in which the house of Haro rose to prominence.³⁶ The general point is more important: it is no coincidence that the story of Alfonso VIII appeared and flourished when it did and not before. It thrived in the loam of a half-century marked by struggle between aristocratic factions and a monarchy increasingly associated in the political imagination with the power of women, financial administrators, favorites, and Jews, powers here conflated in the figure of a Jewish concubine. The tale was very much a product of the period that told it. It was also, however, productive of that period, providing as it did a powerful new literary form for political pursuits.³⁷ In particular, it gave flesh to an aristocratic critique of the monarchy's increasing reliance on ministers to extend and consolidate its power, a critique

that proceeded by characterizing those ministers as "Jewish," seductive, and effeminate.

The revolutionary potential of this tale was obvious to the early modern poets and dramatists who embroidered it with such gusto.³⁸ Stressing that potential can help us make sense of yet another feature of the story: its dependence (to a point) on the biblical Esther narrative.³⁹ The biblical account of how the Jewish concubine and queen Esther called upon the love of King Xerxes/Ahasueros in order to prevent the destruction of her people was well known to medieval Christian and Jew alike. Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora reenacted the story each year at the festival of Purim, for it served them as a political allegory and a source of hope. For Christians the story also encoded love and sexual union as metaphors for political alliance, inclusion, and protection, but that encoding was more ambivalent. At the level of a purely Christian political typology, Esther served as an example of the ideal queen, putting herself in danger for her people. Hence, for example, the exhortation to emulate Esther in queenly coronation ceremonies, or the prominence of Blanch of Castile's arms in the Esther window at the Ste. Chapelle.⁴⁰

From another point of view, however, the story was much less comforting. Like Don Sancho's *Castigos*, the Scroll of Esther begins with the general principle that political perils arise whenever woman refuses to be ruled by man. Queen Vashti is condemned for disobeying the king's order to dance in front of his court: "The queen's conduct will soon become known to all the women, who will adopt a contemptuous attitude towards their own husbands... And that will mean contempt and anger all around." [1.16-18] But the book ends with the Jewess Esther and her uncle Mordechai effectively ruling the entire kingdom as ministers of Ahasueros, and indeed expanding its boundaries. In this book, the only one in the bible that proclaims female authorship, God clearly authorizes the deviant power of a woman over a man, and of a Jewish minister over a non-Jewish king: precisely the kind of inversion that Sancho warned against in his *Castigos*.

The manifold medieval readings of the Book of Esther still await their historian. It is clear that the story could be used to make critical sense of Christian-Jewish relations. According to Polish legend, for example, King Casimir the Great (1310-1370) expanded Jewish privileges in 1334 because of his obsessive love for the Jewess "Estherke" (Esther).⁴¹ More important for our purposes, however, is the book's power to underwrite a broader political critique. From the point of view of our Iberian propagandists, Ahasueros could seem a bad king, too easily swayed by self-interested councilors and erotic desire, too willing to centralize power under Jewish ministers. Esther was, according to this reading, a biblical example of *privanza*, of wide-ranging political power obtained not through lineage but through royal love.

Such a reading of Esther could be used to Judaize and feminize the power of kings and their confidants, whether concubines or Counts, in order that this power might be resisted as un-Christian and

immoral. Precisely such a Judaization and feminization would become, as we have seen, a preferred weapon against monarchs and their ministers in the tumultuous history of Castilian politics. But before the story of Esther could be put to the hard work, not just of criticizing monarchy, but of rebelling against "Jew-loving kings," it needed first to be freed from its plain, "philo-Semitic" and "philo-ministerial" meaning. The story of "How the King Alfonso remained secluded with a Jewess" achieved this liberation. It re-staged the drama of Esther as one in which not the Jewish but the Christian nation was in danger, and then exorcised that danger by reversing the biblical ending: the aristocrats triumph, the concubine dies.

This conclusion begs to be understood as merely a reaffirmation of right rule, masculine and Christian, but it is much more than that. The story of Alfonso and his Jewess proved useful precisely because it represented political conflict in terms of consensus, translating the outcome of sharp struggle between sovereign and subject into gendered and religious terms seemingly sanctioned by nature and divinity. These terms, however, masked their origins in crisis and rebellion, both political and exegetical. The story of Alfonso and his Jewess challenged both monarchical authority and scriptural narrative. That challenge left its marks, not only in the fractured strata of the chronicle tradition, but also in the *dramatis personae* of the story itself. It is never easy to fly directly in the face of power: hence the angel, who reveals, so to speak, divine approval of assassination and revolt. Angel and Jewess alike were the over-determined products of political crisis. In the light of such over-determination it is probably pointless to ask whether or not Alfonso VIII really had a Jewish concubine. But a woman did fall under the barons' bloody blades, and her name was Queen Esther, protector of Jews.

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Notes:

1. *Castigos e documentos para bien vivir*, ed. Agapito Rey (Bloomington, 1952), p. 133. I have not used the new edition of H.O. Bizzarri (Madrid, 2001), nor compared the telling of the story across manuscript families. M. Jesús Lacarra notes, however, no variation. See her "Los *Exempla* en los *Castigos de Sancho IV*: divergencias en la transmisión manuscrita," in *La literatura en la época de Sancho IV*, ed. C. Alvar and J. M. Lucía Megías (Alcalá, 1996), pp. 201-212. The work was completed in 1292-3. On the debate over dating see the summary in F. Gutiérrez Baños, *Las empresas artísticas de Sancho IV el Bravo* (Burgos, 1997), pp. 205-6. My thanks are due to Rafael Mérida Jimenez, for his wisdom, to Sara Lipton, for her dissatisfaction, and to Boncho Dragiysky, for his charity. This article is dedicated with grateful love to my great aunt, Denah Lida.
2. For surveys of the many early modern and modern works that expand upon the story see the pioneering essay by E. Lambert, "Alphonse de Castille et la juive de Tolède," *Bulletin hispanique* 25 (1923): 371-97, and more recently, J. Castañeda, *A Critical Edition of Lope de Vega's Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo* (Chapel Hill, 1962), pp. 37-124.
3. Search for historical traces of this Jewess has been thorough but inconclusive. Because the *Crónica* Docampo named the Jewess "Fermosa"

(almost certainly a misreading of the adjective "fermosa" in the *Crónica de 1344* and in many manuscripts of the *Crónica de Castilla*), attention has focused on locating the name in Toledan records from the 1180s. In his argument against the truth of the story (see below), P. Fita noted that the name was not to be found in among the 76 Hebrew epitaphs from Toledo published by Luzzato. Later generations of scholars have found a Fermosa, the wife of Tomé Saturnino, in Arabic documents. She is, however, almost certainly a Christian. See A. González Palencia, *Los mozárabes de Toledo en los siglos XII y XIII*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1926), pp. 116 f., 127, 165 f., 175f.; J. Gómez Salazar, "Alphonse VIII de Castille et doña Fermosa," *Evidences* 22 (1951): 37-43, here p. 42; J. González, *El reino de Castilla en la época de Alfonso VIII* (Madrid, 1960), I, 26-38, here p. 37; Pilar Leon Tello, *Judíos de Toledo* (Madrid, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 40-42; and most recently G. Hilty, "Die Jüdin von Toledo: Entstehung und Frühgeschichte des Motivs in der spanischen Literatur," in *Verlust und Ursprung, Festschrift für Werner Weber*, ed. A. Maass and B. Heinser (Zürich, 1989), pp. 241-267, here 261-3.

4. *Crónica de Castilla* chap. 491, "conta o arçebispo dō Rrodrigo." See the edition by R. Lorenzo, *La traducción gallega de la Crónica General y de la Crónica de Castilla* (Orense, 1975), and on the dating, vol. 1, pp. XLIII-XLVI. Florian Docampo's *Tercera Crónica General or Crónica Ocampiana* (1541) relies heavily on the *Crónica de Castilla* for its account of the story but deletes the reference to Rodrigo, presumably out of familiarity with the Archbishop's work. On this point, and more generally on the redaction history of the tale, see above all Hilty, "Die Jüdin."

5. On the chronology and methodology of the Alfonsine historical project see Diego Catalán, *De Alfonso X al Conde de Barcelos. Cuatro Estudios sobre el nacimiento de la historiografía romance en Castilla y Portugal* (Madrid, 1962) (pp. 70-76, 88-93 specifically on the dating of the section on Alfonso VIII in the *Primera Crónica*); and his "El taller historiográfico alfonsí. Métodos y problemas en el trabajo compilatorio," *Romania* 84 (1963): 354-375. The story of Zaida is told in chapter 883 [ed. R. Menéndez Pidal (Madrid, 1955), pp. 552-554.] On Zaida see B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI, 1065-1109* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 234-5, 248, 328, 339-40.

6. The *Crónica de 1344* (written by Pedro Alfonso, Conde de Barcelos in the middle of the fourteenth century) will expand the description, calling her "una judía muy fermosa," and attributing her power over the king to "fechiços y esperamiento quele ella sabia fazer." Like the *Crónica de Castilla*, the *Crónica de 1344* attributes the report to Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, and describes the affair as lasting seven months, not seven years. On the dating of the various manuscripts (Portuguese and Castilian) of this last chronicle see D. Catalán and M. Soledad de Andrés, *Crónica General de España de 1344* (Madrid, 1971), pp. XV ff.; and idem, *De Alfonso X al Conde de Barcelos* (Madrid, 1962), pp. 299-302.

7. The first summary of these debates, still invaluable, is that of G. Cirot, "Alphonse le noble et la juive de Tolède," *Bulletin hispanique* 24 (1922): 289-306.

8. The quote is from Menéndez Pelayo, *Estudios sobre el teatro de Lope de Vega IV, Obras Completas* vol. 32 (Santander, 1949), p. 89. Cf. Cirot, "Alphonse et la juive," pp. 293-4. Cirot (p. 305) argued for the reality of the affair, as does (most recently) Hilty, "Die Jüdin," p. 251, who believes that the author of the *Castigos* drew upon historical material assembled by the Alfonsine workshop, but doubts the murder.

9. "Una judía muy fermosa: The Jewess as Sex Object in Medieval Spanish Literature and Lore," *La Corónica* 12 (1984): 187-94, here p. 188.

10. Figural in the sense meant by E. Auerbach, "Figura," in *Neue Dantestudien* 5 (Istanbul, 1944), pp. 11-71.

11. The list differs from that given by Alfonso X, who counseled kings only against intercourse with relatives, and vile, religious, or married women, but made no mention of non-Christians (*Siete Partidas* 2.v.3). These injunctions for sexual restraint, royal or otherwise, were commonplace. For one among numerous contemporaneous examples see that of Sancho IV's tutor Juan Gil de Zamora, *De preconiis Hispaniae*, ed. M. Castro y Castro, O.F.M. (Madrid, 1955), pp. 188-90 (which includes sodomy). Sancho's emphasis on the Jewess is, however, unusual.
12. *Castigos*, pp. 117-123.
13. *Castigos*, p. 127.
14. For the importance of the theme in general, see M. Halbertal and A. Margalit, *Idolatry* (Cambridge, 1992), Chap. 1. On its importance in medieval Iberia, see Nirenberg, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain," *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002), pp. 1065-93.
15. *Castigos*, pp. 31-32.
16. On the much studied María de Molina see especially M. Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *María de Molina* (Madrid, 1936), and most recently, M. Jesús Fuentes, *Reinas medievales en los reinos hispánicos* (Madrid, 2003) pp. 243-68. On the forged bulls, E. Jaffe and H. Finke, "La dispensa de matrimonio falsificada para le rey Sancho IV y María de Molina," *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 4 (1927), pp. 298-318.
17. In addition to the text in the *Primera Crónica* cited above, see also *Leyendas épicas Españolas*, ed. R. Castillo (Madrid, 1956), 151-155. Muslim writers also understood relationships between Christian lords and Muslim women in Iberia in terms of domination. See D. Nirenberg, "Varieties of Mudejar Experience: Muslims in Christian Iberia, 1000-1526," in *The Medieval World*, ed. P. Linehan and J. Nelson (London, 2001), pp. 60-76. Sancho himself translated the tombs of Alfonso VI and his wives Isabel and Zaida: See the *Crónica de Sancho IV*, in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla*, ed. C. Rosell, *Biblioteca de Autores Castellanos* vol. 66 (Madrid, 1875), pp. 73-4.
18. *Llibre dels fets del rei en Jaume*, ed. J. Bruguera, vol. 2 (Barcelona, 1991), p. 13. See more broadly S. Lipton, "'Tanquam effeminatum': Pedro II of Aragon and the Gendering of Heresy in the Albigensian Crusade," in *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. J. Blackmore and G. Hutcheson (Durham, 1999), pp. 107-129.
19. As Alfonso X put it sometime in the 1250s: "Si por ventura acaeciére que el rey tuviese otra mujer que no fuese de bendición... decimos que debe ser guardada por honra del rey." *Leyes de Alfonso X*, vol. 1, *Especulo*, ed. G. Martínez Díez (Avila, 1985), Libro II, título III, 1. A. Firpo ("Los Reyes Sexuales" parts I [*Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 20 (1984), pp. 217-227] and II [21 (1985), pp. 145-58]) is one of many commentators who treats the extra-marital sexual activities of kings as "la representación misma de los valores de la virilidad." He suggests that sexual corruption became a revolutionary charge against kings as a consequence of increasingly powerful aristocratic attempts to decrease the prestige of monarchy (I, p. 220), but that this did not occur until Enrique IV (II, p. 147, though at I, p. 226, he treats Pedro I as an earlier example).
20. On the politics surrounding Alfonso's (and later Sancho's) use of Jewish administrators, and on the controversy over Isaac Çag, the best narrative is still Y. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia, 1978), vol. 1, 120-37. See also J.-M. Nieto Soria, "Los judíos de Toledo en sus relaciones financieras con la monarquía y la Iglesia (1252-1312)," *Sefarad* 41 (1981), pp. 301-19, 42 (1982), pp. 79-102. On the episcopal complaints, and on Sancho's role in investigating and amplifying them, see P. Linehan, "The Spanish Church Revisited: the Episcopal *gravamina* of 1279," in *Authority and Power: Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter Ullmann on his*

Seventieth Birthday, ed. B. Tierney and P. Linehan (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 127-147. The quote is from p. 137. One of the bishops' complaints, transcribed on p. 146, is that "los judios son puestos sobre los cristianos en los officios..., dela qual cosa vienen muchos males entre los quales e s mayor mal que los cristianos son subiectos a ellos e son corruptidos por sus costumbres e por sus malos husos." For examples of Sancho's anti-Jewish measures during the rebellion in 1282 see p. 136, note 37.

21. The most detailed study of Sancho's reign remains that of M. Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Historia del Reinado de Sancho IV de Castilla*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1922-1928). On the Haro lineage see L. Salazar y Castro, *Historia genealógica de la Casa de Haro* (Madrid, 1966).

22. For a summary of these events see J.- M. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV, 1284-1295* (Palencia, 1994), pp. 83-98. The Cortes of 1288 are published in *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*, vol. 1 (Madrid, 1861), pp. 99-106. The Count's murder is described in the *Crónica de Sancho IV*, chap. 5, pp. 78-81. For the 15th century bishop Gonzalo de Hinojosa, author of the *Continuación de la Crónica de España*, the affair of Don Lope was so noteworthy that fills the entire section devoted to Sancho's reign. *Colección de Documentos ineditos para la historia de España*, vol. 106 (Madrid, 1893), pp. 37-46.

23. *Crónica de 1344*, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, ms. 10,815, fol. 145 v. Compare Ms. Escorial V.II.10 and 11, Diego Rodríguez de Almela, *Compendio de las crónicas de España*, cap. cccclxii (81v-82v): De como el rey don alfonso de castilla caso con la Reyna doña leonor hija del rey don enrrique de ynglaterra e de como estouo ençerrado en toledo con una judía e loque sobre aquello de la judía acaesçio. At fol. 82r: "a ti e al tu reyno por que telo consintio."

24. See esp. M.A. Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y poder real en Castilla (1252-1369)* (Madrid, 1993), and F. J. Hernández, *Las rentas del rey. Sociedad y fisco en el reino castellano en el siglo XIII*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1993). Some scholars have argued for the expanding role of Jews through the financial administrations of Alfonso XI and Pedro I. See, for example, M. Kriegel, *Les Juifs à la fin du Moyen Age dans l'Europe méditerranéenne* (Paris, 1979), who presents these monarchs' use of Jews in administrative posts as an effort to build "l'état de finance" moderne." (pp. 59-69). It is commonplace to speak of Pedro I's "política filojudía," as does J. Valdeón Barúque, *Los judíos de Castilla y la revolución Trastámara* (Valladolid, 1968), pp. 25-38.

25. The disproportionate role played by Jews in the representation of royal power gone wrong was as much the product of Christian theology as it was of the real but often exaggerated functions Jews carried out in medieval taxation and administration. As Sancho himself put it in the *Castigos* (p. 35), the greatest enemies of good Christian kingship were the devil, the world, and the flesh: three things Christians had long associated with Jews.

26. On complaints about Peter's favor toward Jews see C. Estow, *Peter the Cruel of Castile: 1350-69* (Leiden, 1995), pp. 154-79; and on his Jewish mother, M. Kriegel, "Histoire sociale et ragots: sur l' "ascendance juive" de Ferdinand le Catholique," in *Movimientos migratorios y expulsiones en la diáspora occidental* (Pamplona, 2000), pp. 95-100. On Luna as Jew see e.g., "El memorial contra los conversos del Bachiller Marcos García de Mora," ed. E. Benito Ruano, *Sefarad* 17 (1957), pp. 314-351, here p. 321. Luna was also reputed to have a sexual relationship with Juan II. According to Alfonso de Palencia, Luna taught the homoerotic secrets of ascendancy to Juan Pacheco, who in turn became Enrique IV's lover, corruptor, and confidant. See his *Gesta Hispaniensi*, ed. B. Tate and J. Lawrence (Madrid, 1998), I.1, pp. 3-4. For Enrique IV's difficulties, see most recently F. Foronda, "Le prince, le palais et la ville: Ségovie ou le visage du tyran dans la Castille du xve siècle," *Revue Historique* 305 (July, 2003): 521-41; A. Echevarria Arsuaga, "La conversion des

chevaliers musulmans dans la Castille du XVe siècle," in *Conversions islamiques. Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen*, ed. M. García Arenal (Paris, 2001), pp. 119-140. On Isabel as "protector of the Jews and daughter of a Jewess" see the account of the Polish traveler Nicolas Popplau, in J. Liske, *Viajes de extranjeros por España y Portugal en los siglos XV, XVI, y XVII : colección* (Madrid, 1878).

27. Both advised repudiating María in favor of a legitimate marriage. The *Crónica de Sancho IV* understood well the fragility of her situation throughout these negotiations: "como era mujer de grande entendimiento, é que veia como el rey andava en poder del Conde é de aquellos sus privados... é que era amenguamiento del Rey é daño della é de sus hijos, non ovo á quien tornar, salvo á Dios..." (p. 75). On Abbot Gómez see P. Lorenzo Gradín "Gómez García, Abade de Valadolide," in *La literatura en la época de Sancho IV*, pp. 213-226.

28. Surprisingly little has been written on royal concubinage in Castile. See, for example, A. Firpo, "Las concubinas reales en la Baja Edad Media castellana," in *La condición de la mujer en la Edad Media* (Madrid, 1986), pp. 334-341. On queenship see most recently M. Jesús Fuente, *Reinas medievales*

29. Estow, *Pedro the Cruel*, Chapter 6, here p. 149. One of the chief complaints of the magnates was that Pedro preferred his concubine's family to candidates from the nobility. The practice of favoring blood relations for office was an ancient practice, recommended as well by the *Siete Partidas* II.viii.1.

30. *Romancero del rey Don Pedro, 1368-1800*, ed. A. Pérez de Gómez (Valencia, 1954), Romance IX, p. 134. The chronicle of 1344 also attributed the power of Alfonso VIII's mistress to magic: "dicen que este grande amor que el auia dessta judia ca non era si non por fechiços y esperamientos qeyle ella sabia façer" (fol. 145r.). On the Romancero tradition about Pedro see L. Mirrer-Singer, *The Language of Evaluation: a Sociolinguistic Approach to the Story of Pedro el Cruel in Ballad and Chronicle* (Amsterdam, 1986).

31. Gonzalo de Berceo, *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, ed. A.G. Solalinde (Madrid, 1978), Milagro 25, 791b.

32. Cf. *Siete Partidas* II.viii.1. Similarly Don Juan Manuel advises in the early 14th century that lords fill the important office of chancellor with a "privado," selected from "sus criados." *Libro de los Estados* chap. 95.

33. *Siete Partidas* I.vi.38: "pero con todo esto guardarse deben ellos que non hayan con ellas grant privanza nin grant afazimiento, ca por engaño ó por descibimiento del diablo algunos clérigos cayeron..."

34. "Libro de Poemas" o "Rimado de Palacio", ed. M. García, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1978), especially strophes 234-297, 422-534. On the difficulty of choosing the right *privado* to love, see strophe 289.

35. Diego Rodríguez de Almela, for example, spoke of "la gran priuanca que en aquel tiempo tenian los judios con los Reyes & grandes señores asi ecclesiasticos como seglares destos regnos despaña." *Valerio de las historias eclesiásticas y de España* (Murcia, 1487), fol. 20v.

36. According to one chronicle tradition, for example, Don Diego López de Haro advised Alfonso VIII to impose the *pecha* tax on the hidalgos of his realm. The hidalgos rebelled under the leadership of the house of Lara, and Don Diego was exiled. See G. Cirot, "Anecdotes ou légendes sur l'époque d'Alphonse VIII," *Bulletin Hispanique* 28 (1926): 246-59; and J. Paredes Núñez, "Sancho IV y su tiempo en la literatura genealógica peninsular," 235-43. It has already been noted by González, pp. 40 ff., and Hilty, pp. 251-55, that the story of the Jewess bears some traces of this conflict between lineages. The *Crónica de Castilla* explicitly names Don Diego as leader of the tepid faction at Alarcos, while the *Primera Crónica General* (Ch. 1006; Menéndez Pidal 1955, p. 685) attributes to the advice of this same Don Diego the expiatory foundation of Las

Huelgas. On the rise of the lineage in the reign of Alfonso VIII see González, *Alfonso VIII*, pp. 300-307.

37. Cf. L. Montrose: "to speak of the social production of 'literature' or of any particular text is to signify not only that it is socially produced but also that it is socially productive – that it is the product of work and that it performs work in the process of being written, enacted, or read." "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Vesser (New York, 1989), p. 20.

38. D. Luis de Ulloa y Pereyra, for example, adopted the theme for a poetic reproach he addressed to the king in 1650, after the disgrace of his friend the Count-Duke of Olivares. See his "Alfonso Octavo Rey de Castilla, Príncipe perfecto, detenido en Toledo por los amores de Hermosa o Raquel, Hebrea, muerta por el furor de los Vasallos," in his *Versos* (Madrid, 1659). Among historians Jacques Basnage, who first encountered the story of Alfonso VIII in Mariana's *Histoire générale d'Espagne*, underlined its political implications in his *Histoire des Juifs* as neither Mariana nor any other Spanish historian previous had done. There is a considerable bibliography on Privados in seventeenth-century drama. See, for example, Antonio Feros, "'Viciosos, pero humanos,' el drama del Rey," *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 14 (1993), pp. 103-31.

39. Later authors tended to bring the story's details into ever-greater conformity with the Esther narrative. In his *Raquel, tragedia española en tres jornadas* (1783), for example, Vicente García de la Huerta added a "Reuben" to parallel Esther's Mordechai, and inserted the theme of an anti-Jewish decree that the concubine seeks to overturn and avenge.

40. See, for example, the coronation formulas edited by Reinhard Elze in *Ordines coronationis imperialis. Die Ordines für die Weihe und Krönung des Kaisers und der Kaiserin* (MGH Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui in usum scholarum vol. 9) (Hannover 1960). The first (p. 8) is ca. 900 c.e.: "ineffabilem misericordiam tuam supplices exoramus, ut sicut Esther reginam Israelis causa salutis de captivitate suae compede solutam ad regis Assueri thalamum regnique sui consortium transire fecisti, ita hanc famulam tuam N. ..." My thanks to Claudius Sieber-Lehmann for the reference.

41. The Estherka legend appears in Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew sources, of which the earliest one known to me is David Ganz' sixteenth-century *Zemah David*. See Haya Bar-Itzhak, *Jewish Poland: Legends of Origin* (Detroit, 2001), pp. 113-132; and Chone Shmeruk, *The Esterke story in Yiddish and Polish literature: a case study in the mutual relations of two cultural traditions* (Jerusalem, 1985) [my thanks to Magda Teter for this last reference]. The similarity of the Castilian story to the Polish one was already noted by Lambert, pp. 371-72, citing Longinus' *Historia Polonica*.