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## The Authoring of a Queen: Identity in Isabelline Literature

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## Abstract

Scholarly analysis to date considers the concept of medieval queenship within the parameters of the queen regent or consort role. This is problematic in the investigation of a queen regnant. Isabel la Católica (1474-1504) crafted a queenship that cannot be compared to the regents or consorts whose power stemmed from a source of male authority. This dissertation addresses queenship at a theoretical level to provide a definition conducive to Isabel's role as monarch. It considers the limitations of her sex in relation to a political and societal position that was considered the sole dominion of men. It suggests that the conflicting aspects of Isabel's identity, the woman and the ruler, were reconciled within her self-fashioning without weakening her political position.

Identity within self-fashioning provides a theoretical framework in which to explore how others perceived her queenship through the means of 15<sup>th</sup> century literature. The dissertation builds upon the work of Stephen Greenblatt (1980), Judith Butler (1999 and 2010) and Barbara Weissberger (2008) to examine identity as a performative act and suggests that Isabel's queenship was fundamentally formed by her self-fashioning through historical discourse. The four texts discussed, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, *La Poncella de Francia*, *Dechado a la muy escelente reina Doña Isabel*, and *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda*, demonstrate how identity is conveyed through different genres of literature. The dissertation analyses the extent to which Isabel maintains control over the authoring of her identity. Significant is the inversely proportionate relationship between the authorial control outside Isabel's sphere of influence and the impact it has over her identity. Whilst works considered more literary

provide scope to deviate from Isabel's self-fashioning, they are not persuasive enough to overpower it. Ultimately, Isabel is the author of her identity, setting a precedent that affects how she is perceived throughout history.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The identity of a monarch is often conditioned by contemporary and retrospective propaganda. There are, however, some examples of sovereigns who were able to self-fashion their sovereignty so successfully that they appeared to be completely in control of their identity. Scholars in Hispanic Studies have identified monarchs such as Alfonso X to be a particularly cogent example of a sovereign who, with careful control over self-image, was able to convey an enduring identity through literature (Fernández-Ordóñez 2000). His own historiographical writings, the *Estoria de España* and the *Estoria General* were such successful forms of self-representation that he was effectively able to rewrite the history of Spain. Alfonso asserted his sovereign authority and created a discourse of knowledge so powerful that he became a source of knowledge, thus legitimizing his kingship. This was achieved through the authority he held by virtue of his monarchic power. Does this mean that the identity of a monarch is also formed through this authority? This dissertation examines the extent to which a sovereign can be in control of the identity they project.

Although there has been extensive research into male sovereign identity, there has been less research that focuses solely on the female sovereign. Is the authoring of identity the same if the sovereign is a woman, who is traditionally unable to achieve the agency required to assert authority over her identity? This dissertation seeks to investigate how identity is authored in queens regnant by examining the queenship identity of Isabel la Católica. Isabel provides a compelling case in the investigation of female sovereign identity. History remembers her as the unifying force of medieval Spain, a woman both exalted and idealized but also denounced as the usurper of her

niece's kingdom. It may be that Isabel's image was manipulated to become a tool for propaganda, or that the identity perpetuated throughout her lifetime was the sign of a very politically astute monarch who knew how to give her subjects the illusion of power. By studying literature produced in Isabel's own lifetime, this dissertation will analyse the identity imposed on Isabel in juxtaposition with the identity she herself fashioned when establishing her sovereignty in both the initial stages of her reign and in her political policy. It will focus on four texts in particular: Fernando del Pulgar's the *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, the *Poncella de Francia*, the *Dechado a la muy excelente reina doña Isabel, nuestra soberana señora* (1483) by Fray Íñigo de Mendoza, and Diego de San Pedro's *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda* (1491).

The principal purpose of this discussion is not to assess the extent to which the reality of Isabel's reign lives up to how it is perceived. Rather, it is a study of her queenship and how she and those around her seek to define her according to a role that, up until this point, did not exist. The dissertation will investigate the notion of queenship itself, exploring the obstacles Isabel faced inherent to her gender and how they affected her quest for total feudal control of her kingdom and her destiny.

The theoretical basis for this dissertation is threefold. First, in the study of queenship I will define the role of a ruling queen and move away from the description of a medieval queen's role that can be conflicting at best. Once securely defined, I will provide a methodology to explore the interaction between queenship and identity through the examination of contemporary texts produced by scholars, chroniclers, and courtiers.

Second, I will explore how the gender politics of the time created a social structure which seeks to restrict a woman's agency and authority over others and how

this creates problems for female rule. Through the exploration of gender ideology in relation to sovereignty I will argue that, as Isabel's sovereign identity is directly affected by her gender, she must seek to neutralize any existing doubts about a female ruler. I will examine this theme in particular with reference to the *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, where I will argue that there is clear evidence to suggest that Isabel was able to control Fernando Pulgar's authorship in order to establish herself as the sole heir to the Castilian throne in her own right, and not by deferring to her husband.<sup>1</sup>

Third, I will explore the relationship between notions of self-fashioning and identity. I will examine them in relation to each other to theorize a definition that conflates the two. I will analyse whether Isabel exploited how she was portrayed by others to her advantage in the context of self-fashioning. This, in turn, will enable me to discuss whether her self-fashioning was overshadowed by the way she was portrayed in literature. I will ascertain the extent to which these two forms of representation are reconciled and how they relate to the context of the medieval political circles in which Isabel moved. Furthermore, Stephen Greenblatt's (1980) three criteria methodological approach to literature and self-fashioning, which will be discussed in depth later, is a clear model on which to base my own textual analysis. This dissertation seeks to amalgamate the theories of Stephen Greenblatt and those of Judith Butler (2010), relating to the performativity of identity, to produce a model for the self-fashioning of Isabel's queenship through the lens of the variety of contemporary literature highlighted previously. I will assess the artistic authority of

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<sup>1</sup> This dissertation uses Juan Mata Carriazo's (1943) edition, Fernando del Pulgar *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*.

the relevant authors since they are as instrumental as Isabel herself in the construction of her identity.

### 1.1. Female Kingship: The Medieval Queen Regnant

To understand the significant impact of medieval gender ideology in relation to the concept of queenship, it is worth considering it in its historical context. The texts in this study will have undoubtedly used, even unconsciously, notions of gender ideology that pertain to contemporary or earlier societal teachings. The way in which gender was considered influenced the way Isabel's reign was perceived both before and after her death. The immediate reason for this is simple. For a medieval female aristocrat, gender ideology derived from ecclesiastical and classical sources would have permeated the unofficial law that governed their everyday lives. Crucially for a study of medieval queenship, it affected the parameters of permitted authority and governance. Women, grounded in the corporeal world (Dronzek 2001: 143), were considered physically incapable of political rule. They were restricted to the domestic sphere; their influence extended to matters pertaining to the household and upbringing of any children rather than matters of the state. Thus, the potential for chaos brought about when there existed no male heir to take up the highest position of political governance was a tangible fear in medieval society. A female ruler created political instability due to the absence of an accepted source of authority. However, the wider implications of this in the construction of queenship is a deeper question worthy of further study.

This investigation will begin by defining the term queenship. Previous scholarship has explored queenship and identity largely through queen consorts and queen regents. In other words, those who did not command power in their own right. John C. Parsons' (1994: 3) assertion that queenship is studied through the authority of the queen's closest male counterpart is therefore a succinct evaluation of queenship to this point. How can the authority of a queen, who holds no direct power, be assessed without first looking to the source of their limited power?

However, this theoretical approach is not sufficient when considering the queenship of a ruling queen, whose power is shared with no one and whose authority is, in theory, unquestioned. When a source of male authority to which a queen regent or consort may traditionally defer is removed, we can explore the relationship between sovereign identity and female identity and whether they are able to work in tandem with, or at the expense of, one another. In the case of Isabel la Católica, who was both a Queen Regnant and a Queen Consort, the relationship between the two principal forces that mould her identity is all the more interesting. This was because a male source of power in her husband Fernando was not removed nor did it diminish her own monarchical power. The 'divergent picture of medieval women' (Huneycott cited in Parsons 1994: 8) depicted in literary and historical scholarship is problematic when examining Isabel's personal queenship since it offers no standard with which to make comparisons in the manner it is conveyed.

What must be taken into consideration, however, is the social context in which Isabel lived. Whilst women were not seen as ideal rulers, the social context of medieval Castile enabled women to wield differing levels of power due to the way communities were structured during the Reconquest. Heath Dillard alludes to "the vigour and independence of royal and aristocratic women" which consequently may have paved

the way for Isabel (Dillard 1984: 10). The way in which communities were formed during the period preceding her reign granted women more autonomy than those in other countries such as England or France. In fact, “for the majority of women status was determined predominantly by their relationship to property in a township” (17) implying that women were able to be property owners in their own right. Widows were considered to be “independent women” holding “autonomy as a citizen with an established position as an adult” (44). Perhaps at first glance it seems that this, coupled with the many instances of successful queen regents, allowed for the possibility of a woman to take the throne in her own right. However, Dillard admits that when a man was present or available in relation to a woman, whether through marriage, or parenthood, this autonomy was diminished. Husbands “determined the title and assumed the duties when the house belonged legally to his wife (17) and, in terms of crime and punishment, “wives were punished more severely than her husband during times of mutual abandonment” (93), implying that they were held to a different set of moral codes. In essence “a husband’s effective authority over his wife remained absolute” (95). This meant that Isabel would have to assume absolute authority and self-fashion her queenship to allow for her authority to be followed without question, even with the ever-present option of a male sovereign in her husband Fernando.

There was no perfect model of a medieval ruling queen. Treatises focused on the perfect model of womanhood (Dronzek 2001: 142) which was not conducive to rule. Therefore, Isabel’s sovereignty cannot be compared directly to earlier models of medieval queens, such as Leonor de Plantagenet (1161 – 1214) or María de Molina (1265 – 1321), who were not Queens Regnant. However, that is not to say that the queenship of queen regents should be dismissed entirely as they offer both insight into the nature of queenship and would have provided guidance for Isabel. For example,

the queenship of both Violant of Bar (1387 – 1395), Elionor of Sicily (1349 – 1375) and María de Luna (1396 – 1406) demonstrate the capacity for queens to hold, and maintain, significant amounts of political power. Zita Rohr (2015) admits that whilst queens “enjoyed the political confidence and support of their husbands”, ultimately their ability to rule successfully rested on their “own political and administrative talents and capacity to support the dynasty” (47). Thus, what was required of queen regents was not only the endorsement of the nearest male authority but the requisite skills to self-fashion their queenship to wield the political power that came with it. How the aforementioned Queens achieved this varied; for example, Elionor of Sicily “fashioned her identity as a proactive and visible queen-consort” (Rohr 2015: 48) whilst María de Luna “fashioned her household and palaces to reflect her profound piety” (Rohr 2015: 64). Whilst they did not hold political power in their own right, in the way that their husbands and sons were able, these medieval Queens were still able to exert their authority and act in place of their respective kings. They provide pertinent examples of how Isabel could wield power as a woman. It provides a starting point for her as she reconciles wielding power in her own right rather than as an extension of her male counterpart.

Isabel’s queenship, therefore, should be considered as a female kingship more in keeping with Barbara Weissberger’s (2008) notions of queenship. Considering her sovereignty as a ‘female kingship’ gives her a more defined role around which to model her actions – the role of the monarch. However, to craft a queenship that holds the masculine power of a male monarch runs the risk of masculinizing Isabel as she moves from the feminine sphere of household control and into the masculine sphere of political rule. How is this reconciled? If Isabel is not masculinized, does she thus only perform the role of ‘king’ rather than become it? The dissertation will examine

Isabel not as an often-idealized Queen of a new Golden Age but as a woman who shouldered the burden of legitimizing her reign, securing her legacy and reconciling the ‘female’ with the ‘ruler’. It will examine the extent to which the outside forces of courtiers and writers seek to mould the identity of a queen for their own purposes and the extent of control that Isabel had over her own self-fashioning.

## 1.2: Self-fashioning and Identity in Literature

A study of female sovereign identity and queenship must also examine how identity itself is related to the concepts of Judith Butler (2010) and Stephen Greenblatt (1980). What, if anything at all, defines and legitimizes identity? More importantly, can identity be controlled by the self through self-fashioning? Do outside forces exert more agency over the self and, if so, how can this be mitigated? Can it be taken further to suggest that identity is nothing more than a role that can be shed as easily as it is put on?

As the concept of self-fashioning is a recurrent theme throughout this discussion, it is important to discuss it in general terms before addressing the specific issues relating to self-fashioning within the individual chapters. Stephen Greenblatt’s assertion that that “self-fashioning derives its interest precisely from the fact that it functions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life” (1980: 4) acts as a starting point in this study of Isabel’s queenship. If ‘social life’ is defined as life experienced physically, or in reality, it would appear that Greenblatt is arguing that identity in both literature and life cannot be separated, that self-fashioning is a form of characterizing other selves. This is fundamental to understanding Isabel’s self-fashioning and the fashioning of her identity by outside forces.

Furthermore, Greenblatt, in his assessment of self-fashioning, cites Thomas More's assertion that at the crux of the matter is power, specifically the power that in turn enables the 'ability to impose one's fictions upon the world' (1980: 13). With this in mind it would appear that Isabel naturally would be in strict control of her identity because of her societal status. She is the monarch, answerable only to God in the eyes of late medieval society. Thus, it would be safe to assume that she would be able to 'impose her fiction' upon Castilian society and craft her identity with relative ease. In exhibiting such absolute power, other literary portrayals of her identity would have to follow in the same vein in fear of the retribution of the sovereign. However, in reality this does not seem to be the case. We will see in the course of the dissertation that as the texts become more removed from Isabel's direct sphere of influence, the ways in which her identity is conveyed become vastly different. After all, if there is no regard for the distinction between literature and social life, the authors of the texts studied would be able to craft Isabel's identity in literature and thus in reality. Therefore, either Isabel's power was not absolute or Greenblatt's definition of the relationship between power and the success of one's self-fashioning is problematic.

However, if we take Greenblatt's work and put it into the context of an earlier monarch, such as Alfonso X, the definition seems to be effective. His *Estoria de España* and *Estoria General* written throughout his reign are evidence of this. Therefore, perhaps Isabel's power was not absolute which begs the question, why? Isabel, as a queen regnant, should have the highest earthly power within the limits of a feudal society. Therefore, it can be assumed that Isabel's power is limited not because of her queenship but because it is female sovereignty and not male sovereignty. Due to the prevailing gender ideology that permeated medieval Castilian society, Isabel, by virtue of her sex is not able to access full monarchic power. Greenblatt's assessment

is only problematic because of the power dynamics with which Isabel is faced and so, just as queenship needs to be defined, self-fashioning must be defined specifically for a female ruler.

Greenblatt's requisite criteria for self-fashioning to take place is significant to this dissertation's later analysis. He states that self-fashioning is "a manifestation of the concrete behaviour of its particular author", "the expression of the codes by which behaviour is shaped" and "a reflection upon these codes" (1980: 4). These criteria will serve to analyse the extent to which each text fulfils it, whether they fulfil all criteria, and what role Isabel plays in relation to each text.

Although, as Greenblatt's work on self-fashioning largely pertains to self-fashioning in the ceremony of the early modern English court, he cannot be used in isolation. He argues that there was 'less autonomy in the sixteenth century than before' (1980: 1) due to the constraints of religious and state institutions. However, I argue that there was little change between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the subject is a woman. The constraints that worked against Isabel in the late fifteenth century worked much in the same way as they did on English male courtiers in the sixteenth century largely due to issues of power dynamics. Greenblatt goes on to assert that the 'power to impose a shape upon oneself is an aspect of the more general power to control identity' (1980: 3). In order to place this fully in the context of Isabel's power we must first explore what is meant when we say identity. Is identity to Isabel a manifestation of queenship mentioned above or is it something more? When Isabel allows Fernando del Pulgar to record her deeds in a way that sets her up to be the sole legitimate ruler, then who holds the power? Is Isabel sharing an artistic identity with Pulgar? Later, we see that Isabel arguably has less control over what is written about her. Is this a power diminished?

The difficulty in assessing identity is ascertaining the extent to which identity is a performance or if it is a matter of external perception. It is fundamental to examine the work of Judith Butler (2010), who theorizes gender and identity as performative acts. Butler's theories can be used in discussions of medieval queenship through her treatment of performativity and the self. First, her conclusions drawn from Foucault's assertion that "systems of power produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent" (Butler 2010: 1). Isabel is both a representative of the system of power in Castile, the monarch, and the subject of it, as she was born a subject of the crown she would later come to represent.

Butler further discusses the philosophical discourse of the notion of personhood in that "whatever social context the person is 'in' remains somehow externally related to the definitional structure of personhood" (Butler 2010: 22). Let us consider Isabel's social context. As a sovereign, it is she who holds the power and authority of the society in which she lives. Thus, her personhood is defined in this context. However, it must be noted that Isabel occupies the social context of "woman". Despite the numerous examples of queen regents, who were able to wield power successfully to maintain the authority over their subjects, a man was still the preferential, and natural, choice for a ruler. I will state again that these queens' social contexts included their power and authority stemming from their male counterparts. Indeed, when that starting position was contested or fragile, for example with regard to Violant of Bar's relationship with her father in law Pedro IV self-fashioning is more difficult. In Violant's case, despite her considerable political acumen, it can be argued that her father in law's opinion of her was instrumental in her eventual downfall. The juxtaposition of these social contexts proves problematic for the establishment of Isabel's personhood, and thus her sovereignty. Isabel is a woman occupying a man's

sphere. Therefore, Isabel must work within these parameters. However, she cannot separate the two. Indeed, Butler's assertion that it is "impossible to separate 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained (Butler 1999: 3) theorizes her predicament. Isabel must then use the previous constraints of female sovereignty as a springboard from which she self-fashions her identity as a ruling female authority. Butler asserts that performativity starts to describe a set of processes that...work to bring into being certain kinds of realities that lead to socially binding consequences" (1999: 147). It is clear throughout the course of this dissertation that Isabel must then perform her identity as sovereign in order to establish her rule. That is, her performance as Queen allows her intended effect (Butler 2010: 147), to legitimize her claim, to be realised. If we work within Butler's parameters and assume that performativity works to "bring into being certain kinds of realities" (Butler 2010: 147) it must be that Isabel must perform her role in order for it to become a reality.

However, this dissertation will argue that Isabel, who must perform an unclearly defined role, runs the risk of performing an identity imposed on her in order to establish her sovereignty. It brings into question the notion of Isabel's agency in the creation of Isabel's own identity. Whilst there must be an agent (Butler 1999: 33) it may not necessarily be her. It will examine the extent to which the author of each text is able to exert their agency over her through their writing to perform her identity vicariously.

Whilst Butler's research pertains largely to performance in speech, it is possible to associate it with the written word and how Isabel's identity is performed. It is in this way that this dissertation will reconcile Butler's work in identity and performativity with Greenblatt's research on renaissance self-fashioning, which the

focus is the written word. That what is written becomes part of the identity of the subject in question, connecting this research with Butler's notion of performativity and identity, it becomes apparent that through literature, contemporary authors have the opportunity to participate in the fashioning of their new Queen's sovereignty. This means that when a work about Isabel is produced, she automatically becomes what the author believes her to be. That is to say, the author has greater control over how she is portrayed. The author's perceptions and ideas over Isabel's identity are written as truth. This could mean that self-fashioning becomes a solidified concept through the written word, even if she has no agency. She is forced to perform a role simply because she is believed to be that role. This is problematic for a sovereign who cannot be a puppet at the mercy of her courtiers. This therefore relates directly to her self-fashioning. Just as she must overcome the unstable female power that she holds through a display of strong queenship, the identity she authors must be stronger than the identity others author for her.

However, if Butler's performative identity is used to define Isabel's identity, we must consider how this affects the way in which I examine the texts chosen for this dissertation. Developing Butler's theory and using it in Isabelline identity raises one critical question: regardless of the author's belief in the way Isabel is represented in the text, can Isabel perform an identity that solely exists in literature and not through action as it does not fulfil all of Greenblatt's criteria? Is this still self-fashioning? The author of *La Ponce de France* may believe that Isabel is a Joan of Arc figure, and thus Isabel becomes Joan of Arc in the pages of the narrative, but does she truly become this if she never exhibits the saintly qualities similar to her counterpart in the narrative? There is thus a significant void between the identity of Isabel on the pages

of literature and the identity of her physical persona. If identity is solely performative it must in theory also convey itself through the body.

Pulgar's chronicle is different because it is based on Isabel's direct actions. He uses powerful rhetoric to convey these actions in a way that supports Isabel's perceptions of her identity. This, therefore, proves problematic when Isabel is represented in literature. Isabel's identity can be solidified only through the physical act of performance. Therefore, identity must be theorized in a way that includes Butler's performativity but reconciles it with identity within literature.

To what extent do the texts manage to adhere to both Butler's and Greenblatt's theories concerning the shaping of identity? It can be argued that each interpretation of Isabel's character in each text studied in this dissertation cannot be separated from herself. This dissertation will assert that once Isabel's identity is crafted on paper it is no longer a performance, it cannot be distinguished from Isabel. The rationale of this discussion will be explored through each text in turn.

### 1.3. Principal Texts

The texts studied in this dissertation are representative of the wide-ranging contemporary writings about or produced for Isabel. The discussion will be structured thematically, assessing which types of text Isabel was able to exert her authority over and why. It will assess each genre in its own right, exploring the ways in which Isabel's identity is portrayed within the text and analysing what was important for the author to convey and why.

Chapter Two will focus on chronicler Fernando Pulgar's *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*. This is the strongest example of historiography that shows definite signs of

crafting the portrayal of historical events for a specific agenda, namely, to legitimize Isabel's claim to the throne over that of her niece Juana. This chapter will analyse how Isabel's control over what is written for posterity alludes to a queen with a specific idea of the identity she wants to convey. It will explore the features and structure of the first twenty chapters wherein it appears Pulgar creates a historical narrative that firmly establishes Isabel to be the sole legitimate heir to Enrique IV. Furthermore, it will analyse what the very act of writing a historical narrative reveals about Isabel's identity as a ruler. The chapter will demonstrate how in Pulgar's production of the chronicle, Isabel was able to consolidate the female with the monarch by establishing her reign in a way that was appropriate for her gender within the context of medieval Castilian society. She shows her extensive patronage (which will be further discussed in later chapters) conducive to the establishment of traditional queenship shown in earlier medieval Spanish queens, notably María de Molina, whilst also continuing Alfonso X's literary self-fashioning of controlling the content and form of historical discourse. Her political astuteness will be assessed in relation to the context of the chronicle itself, most significantly the civil war between her and her niece in the first years of her reign. Doing so will expose the notion that her identity is not fixed, but ever shifting in accordance with the political landscape at the time. Whilst seemingly obvious, this reveals further scope to assess to the extent Isabel's queenship relates to the traditional notion of kingship and how this relates to her identity as a woman.

The third chapter will branch out into a narrative rather than historical discourse in the *Poncella de Francia*. Through the study of this text, the power of religious imagery over Isabel's identity will be critiqued, which will open itself to the greater question of the significance of portraying Isabel as a saintly figure akin to the Virgin Mary. This section will analyse Isabel's control over narratives that do not

pertain to her direct actions. It will assert that narratives which superimpose her identity onto someone else, in this case Joan of Arc, imply a sense of indirect patronage, whereby what is identified with Isabel does not necessarily emanate from Isabel herself. The section will also discuss the importance of the character of Joan of Arc, in relation to Isabel's own identity. It will further examine how the Castilian portrayal of Joan, who was not martyred, conceptualizes female authority. It will assess the implications of representing Isabel as a patriotic heroine during a time of civil war in Castile and question whether the only acceptable way for Isabel to be represented as a powerful woman is through a hagiographic style of narrative. This brings into question the role that the concept of sanctity plays in the shaping of Isabel's identity. Does it empower Isabel through what would have been considered a socially acceptable means of conveying a woman's agency and power? Or, is she shown as the Ave in the Ave/Eva palindrome that dominates medieval gender ideological discourse? Third, and more in accordance with what Isabel herself sought to convey, does the text simply portray Isabel as destined by God to rule so that her claim to the throne is strengthened?

Chapter Four will focus on Fray Iñigo de Mendoza's idea of the perfect female monarch through his *Dechado a la muy excelente reina doña Isabel, nuestra soberana señora* (1483). The analysis of the *Dechado* will be twofold in approach. First, this poem will reveal an insight into how Isabel's courtiers sought to mould her image to correspond with their own expectations of a female monarch. It will also consider the importance of Franciscan values on Isabel's identity. Second, through the study of Fray Iñigo's choice of narrative structure, the chapter will assert how he uses the quintessential female pursuit of needlework and embroidery to restrict her power. In turn, this will return to the theoretical notion of what queenship is in reality, and how

this affected the power of the nobility at court. This chapter will offer a study of Barbara Weissberger's (2004) notion of anxious masculinity which will provide a theoretical foundation for its analysis. I argue that, by seeking to manipulate how Isabel's image is portrayed, Fray Iñigo attempted to restrict her to the female sphere to avoid handing over complete power to a female sovereign, whilst implicitly bolstering the importance of her husband's role in her sovereignty. Where Chapter Two argues that historiography allowed Isabel to control how her deeds were portrayed in order to establish and legitimize her reign, this chapter will argue that whilst the text is still a piece of non-fictional writing, it seeks to use gender ideology as understood by Isabel's courtiers as a means of control over the Queen.

Chapter Five proceeds to literary works to evaluate how Isabel's identity is shaped in narrative, where her control is relinquished, and her image is shaped through allegory and thematic content. It will analyse a wholly literary work not based upon Isabel but dedicated to her and her ladies. Diego de San Pedro's the *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda* (1491) will provide insight into how poetical deviations inserted into a tale of courtly love are used to create a dual narrative in the text. The work, entirely removed from Isabel's direct influence, forms a facet of her identity which, it will be discovered, only reinforces an identity forced upon her. It will analyse Diego de San Pedro's portrayal of the three subjects of his poetry: Isabel, the Virgin Mary, and the eponymous Lucenda. It will explore how Isabel is used as an archetype to provide the perfect role model for the ladies of the court to emulate. The chapter will assess how San Pedro achieves this through the differences between the portrayal of each woman, most importantly through his direct comparison between Isabel and the Virgin Mary, who Isabel must observe and emulate if she is to be an effective queen. The chapter will also critique the efficacy of San Pedro's authorship in relation

to the genre in which he writes in order to assess whether he succeeds in exerting agency over Isabel's identity. Furthermore, it will examine Isabel's ability to control San Pedro. Because she is a woman, she must be aware of her own agency in all forms of literature and when her control is relinquished due to the very nature of literary discourse, we see her agency wane. However, although Isabel is unable to control how her identity is authored fully allowing San Pedro to achieve textual authority over her, the chapter will analyse the extent to which this textual authority is fully realized.

The dissertation will underline the fact that Isabel was only able to control her image through her actions. The way in which they were recorded through historical discourse enabled her to author her own identity to a limited extent. However, in literature, where there is a wider scope to convey ideologies in a less direct way, her identity was shaped by authors who, in some cases, even sought to dictate to her how her identity should be perceived during and after her reign. It will explore the theory that self-fashioning through literature works against Isabel almost as much as it works in her favour. The relationship between sovereign power and female power thus comes into play, allowing critics to question whether Isabel was in actual fact, or played the role of, a political puppet. It will argue that as Isabel attempts to transform her identity as a woman sovereign into that of a powerful anointed monarch, the more we see that written literary discourse attempts to restrict her to the narrow view of the idealized woman. As Isabel comes into her own power and effectively asserts her agency over her queenship literary works seek to justify her success by painting her as a woman who is contrary to the norm, who is so perfect in her womanhood that she is no longer a woman but a caricature. It will argue whether the very nature of her gender inhibits how her power is represented, despite the high level of political astuteness that Isabel appears to demonstrate. The dissertation will contribute to the study of the realities of

the conflict between agency and portrayal in the representation of medieval and early modern queens regnant and further open the discussion to consider queenship not simply as a feminization of kingship but a wholly different concept in its own right.

## Chapter 2

### The Rewriting of History in Fernando del Pulgar's *Crónica de los Reyes*

#### *Católicos*

The first text examined in this dissertation is Fernando del Pulgar's *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*. This chronicle covers the reign of Isabel extensively, commencing with the power struggle with her brother Enrique IV, prior to 1475. The significance of the chronicle lies not in its historical accuracy, nor in its importance as a piece of historical writing, but rather the manner in which it portrays history as part of a greater representation of identity. This chapter will discuss how historiography is crafted to explore the relationship between the subjectivity of historiography and the establishment of sovereignty.

The influences from medieval humanism and from the exemplar of similar historiographical discourse were utilized by previous monarchs to establish their sovereignty. Hence, the fact that Isabel chose this form of discourse to fashion her sovereignty is not only an indication of her political astuteness, but in aligning herself with the authority of previous monarchs of Castile, she identifies with the absolute power of kings such as Alfonso X. This chapter will focus on the portrayal of the power struggle between Enrique and Isabel as well as the early years of Isabel's reign. It will first examine the nature of historiography and its role in securing Isabel's power retrospectively to assess how Isabel's identity as a sovereign is shaped for posterity

A further objective will be an exploration of the relationship between subject and author. It will examine how through Isabel's active patronage of Pulgar's work, she is able to utilize power dynamics and assert agency over her sovereignty. Patronage

as a means through which propaganda was circulated was not a novel concept in medieval Castile. In fact, it was an essential political tool with which to legitimize a monarch's rule. It was often a tool used by queen regents, who, devoid of autonomous political power, would look to indirect authorship within historiographical works to bolster the political power of their sons or husband.

The most notable example was María de Molina, wife of Sancho IV (1284-98) and regent to both her son Fernando IV (1295-1312) and her grandson Alfonso XI (1313-50). Although she held no direct power, only the power to influence the sovereigns whom she served, it is clear that she needed to create power indirectly from another source. Her sex excluded her from the realm of politics, ensuring that she had to enter it from another source. She succeeded in doing this through her extensive patronage which not only strengthened the reigns of the three kings but also affirmed her legitimacy to hold indirect political power as regent. Her patronage was an act of continuity which preserved royal power. By enabling the production of historical writings, she ensured that history was favourable to her agenda. This history in turn provided a legacy for proceeding two kings Fernando and Alfonso, a base upon which to build their own authority. Perhaps paradoxically, it is this sense of interdependence that ensures that María de Molina succeeded in her endeavours. As Queen regent, she was able to legitimize her power by participating in works that strengthened the king's rule. However, this is only able to happen as a result of the forced reliance on the undisputed authority of a male in order to legitimize her power. This, as Núria Silleras-Fernández surmises, 'creates a historiographical tradition that tends to present queens as moral dependants of their husbands or sons' (2008: 8). As long as their male source of authority remains intact, they are free to exercise their power.

However, queens regnant, such as Isabel, do not and cannot have this reliance on male power. A paradox of secure power is created when ruling queens in their own right are forced to exercise less power than their queen regnant counterparts. Isabel, to maintain full control over the kingdom, must first ensure that she is able to access her full power. To achieve this, like María de Molina, she must create a history that legitimizes her rule. However, she must go further than María. She must legitimize her rule within and without the political sphere. She must alleviate the anxiety created in response to a ruling queen in addition to exerting agency over the men of the court who were able to move freely within the political sphere.

Therefore, Isabel must not simply act as a patron of works that legitimize her rule, she must utilize this indirect authorship and she must be complicit in the act of writing herself to control how she is portrayed. Does this transform Pulgar into the closest male authority she uses to legitimize her sovereignty or is he a facade that adheres to contemporary attitudes despite Isabel maintaining full authorial control?

This chapter will illustrate models of patronage displayed by María de Molina in relation to Isabel's patronage of Pulgar. As a patron, she is able to gain artistic authority over Pulgar and thus have the mandate to dictate the way in which Pulgar crafts his narrative. With control over the content and form of the chronicle, Isabel fashions a history that presents her as the legitimate and rightful ruler of Castile. Additionally, it will show that through her patronage of Pulgar she combines the acquisition of authority of female sovereigns with that of the propagation of authority of male sovereigns. This chapter will, therefore, discuss the concept of patronage in relation to self-fashioning, considering how Isabel exploits her relationship of patronage with Pulgar to determine the relationship between the audience and the writer. It will analyse the extent to which Isabel's self-fashioning is compromised by

Pulgar's management of the audience's expectations of a queen regnant. The discussion will then focus on how queenship must be conceptualized in relation to a queen regnant. It will assert that Isabel was able to become both patron and author in order to mirror the reconciliation of the two spheres that were constantly at odds with one another throughout her reign.

Finally, it will focus on the degree of success to which she achieves this and in doing so will examine whether Pulgar becomes a crucial mediator between the authority Isabel must obtain and the authority she must project. It will then assess Pulgar's authorship and whether by manipulating Isabel he surpasses the authority of the queen or whether he is in fact merely a puppet authority figure.

## 2.2 Medieval Historiography and Authorship

The subjectivity of historiographical writing becomes a highly effective tool in Isabel's self-fashioning. Just as she must 'perform' her chosen identity in order to shape the perceptions of those around her, Pulgar's responsibility is to aid her in this and not simply create a rendition of factual events. At this point, historiography was shifting away from the cataloguing of dates and events to a more nuanced approach influenced by the Alfonsine texts and the spread of the humanist movement. Thus, historiography became more subjective, with scope to retell history according to a particular agenda. Let us first explore Pulgar's text as an important example of historiographical writing. The chronicle goes beyond the simple recounting of facts which allows Pulgar to highlight the importance of creating a 'historical narrative' in Isabel's legitimization. Ignacio Navarrete (2004) suggests that historical writing at this time was humanist writing because the importance lies in the events and not in the

unfolding of the years according to God's plan (263). The historiographer, therefore, passes judgement and is no longer an infallible narrator. Therein lies the ability to craft a narrative which suited their agenda or political viewpoint. Isabel is able to exploit this to direct Pulgar to craft a narrative that presents her as a worthy monarch despite her sex. However, this does not necessarily mean that the chronicle is presented as an entirely subjective text.

Hayden White's (1987) analysis of historical writing is crucial in understanding the power of chronicle writing. He believes that chronicle writing lies between the fictional subjectivity outlined by Navarrete and the writing of annals 'reflecting a greater degree of emplotment yet still retaining the chronological rigidity characteristic of the annal' (cited in Navarrete 2004: 263). This gives Pulgar the scope to author Isabel's identity according to her agenda whilst using the 'chronological rigidity' to cite her actions as further verification. Navarrete asserts that by retaining this rigid structure and not developing the humanist Italian model of historiography, Spain reflects a sense of 'belatedness' (2004: 264). However, there are reasons to disagree with his assessment. Pulgar's chronicle writing does not reflect the so-called backwardness of Spain as Navarrete suggests but a clever stylistic strategy. Whilst the emplotment created by Pulgar in the chronicle allows him to develop his legitimization of Isabel's reign, the rigidity of structure that Pulgar uses to chronicle every event precisely unites the past tradition of historical writing with the future of Isabel's reign. This allows Isabel to be part of the 'unfolding of God's plan' thus securing her place in the line of succession. Isabel was aware of the power of this type of literature in furthering her cause and strengthening her queenship. Nancy Marino states in particular Isabel was conscious of "visible signs of their sovereignty aimed at influencing opinion about the legitimacy of their reign" (2008: 10-11). Literature in

support or furthering this would have been well received by her. We see this clearly in Pulgar's chronicle where his authority would have grown through his writing, and so would his reliance on Isabel's goodwill towards him.

It is in this way that chronicle writing appears to be the most effective form of writing in order to preserve and propagate Isabel's sovereignty. Laura Delbrugge states that "Iberian self-identity was ultimately tied to, but not completely limited by, issues of class, gender and religion and that purposeful self-fashioning of individual identities could lead to changes in the acceptability of the prescribed social behaviour" (2015: 4). The successful fashioning of Isabel's identity as Queen would not only legitimize her reign and that of her successors, it would also provide an example of sovereignty of a queen regnant thus providing the opportunity for further female monarchs. The writing of a chronicle provides an excellent locus for self-fashioning. First, the chronicle enabled Pulgar to legitimize Isabel's reign retrospectively. The detailed and lengthy account of the events ten years before Isabel was crowned Queen of Castile, written in 1482, allays any doubt that she was a usurper. Second, the chronicle is an account based on Isabel's own actions. Whether or not these events were embellished or changed is unimportant as Isabel verified herself, creating little room for criticism. As the chronicle portrays her own actions, she is in a position to control their representation and thus strengthen her artistic agency over that of Pulgar. Third, and perhaps most important, just as Alfonso X sought, through his *General Estoria*, Isabel's identity becomes an enduring legacy that not only establishes a powerful sovereignty during Isabel's lifetime, but also plays a dynastic role that legitimizes the rights of her successors over any potential pretenders to the throne. It does not simply protect her identity as the rightful monarch but preserves her identity as part of the line of succession, by both linking her with the past and securing the future.

### 2.3 Characterizing a Queen

The structure of the chronicle is implicitly didactic. Combining subtle rhetoric with a structure reminiscent of an epic, it manipulates the audience, casting Isabel as the central heroic character. From the initial chapter, Pulgar establishes that his writing is the 'truth'. In line 7 he states 'pero escreuirmemos, con el ayuda del muy alto Dios la verdad de las cosas que pasaron.' He uses the highest authority, that of God, to strengthen the claim that he writes the honest and true version of events. This ensures that the audience is subtly influenced and thus more susceptible to further suggestion throughout the narrative. This is further reinforced in line nine where he implies that Isabel's accession was the result of divine providence. To negate this would therefore be to contradict the authority of God. In lines 27-28 Pulgar asserts that his own honour is intact, thus denying that he could possibly deviate from the truth. He uses the authority given to him by Isabel as the official historiographer to generate a rapport with the audience, who will in turn trust that he portrays Isabel in a true light. Pulgar is able to convince them that Isabel is without doubt the rightful and legitimate Queen of Castile through this trust. He thus never needs to reveal his agenda explicitly. Instead, he invites the audience to reach the same conclusions as him. This tactic is endemic throughout the first fifteen chapters of the chronicle.

Considerable time is spent establishing and reinforcing the rumours which circulated about Juana's illegitimacy. Pulgar deliberately foregrounds Isabel's role in the war with Enrique as a manipulative tactic to convince the audience that she has the best claim to the throne. Her identity is expressed through that which she is not; Juana is

the illegitimate 'La Beltraneja,' therefore Isabel must be the legitimate descendant of the Trastámara dynasty.

Greenblatt defines self-fashioning in "relation to something perceived as alien, strange or hostile" (1980: 10). In order for self-fashioning to occur, this other must be repudiated. What Pulgar writes concerning Juana adheres to Greenblatt's theorisation of self-fashioning, creating the requisite "other" in Juana, who must be "destroyed" (Greenblatt 1980: 9). By doing so, Pulgar will succeed in solidifying Isabel's identity as rightful ruler. There is no concrete evidence that proves the veracity of the claim that Enrique IV did not father Juana. Instead, every mention of Juana is followed by the uncertainty of her heritage and it is foregrounded repeatedly. Pulgar uses phrases such as 'aquella doña Juana que dezia [Enrique] ser su hija' (II, 15).<sup>2</sup> He reminds the audience that they must rely solely on the testament of Enrique to surmise that Juana is legitimate. According to the chronicle, history now asserts this according to what Pulgar, and thus Isabel, necessitates in order to strengthen Isabel's claim to the throne. The deliberate casting of doubts over Juana's parentage does not only weaken her claim to the throne, it provides an opportunity to portray Isabel as the critical successor who will save Castile. The writing of history becomes the conscious manipulation of information which further serves their cause. History becomes propaganda. Although Pulgar is directly involved in what is written, he is not the sole author of chronicle. As his position at court relies on the efficacy of his portrayal of Isabel's identity in the best possible light, there is evidence to suggest that Isabel exerts an agency over Pulgar that does not allow him to achieve full artistic control.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations are referenced by chapter and page number.

Pulgar's account of events takes every opportunity to discredit Enrique's character through the juxtaposition of the two monarchs' reigns. Pulgar portrays Enrique as an ineffective ruler who lost the obedience of the people (V, 21). He uses this to justify the political unrest in Castile and invite the audience to take part in critiquing his character through accepting Pulgar's portrayal of him. Furthermore, Enrique is described as 'ynábil' (IV, 18). An incompetent king thus becomes an unreliable source of knowledge and thus the audience does not trust him. Line fourteen describes him as an 'omne afeminado' (II, 11), implying that he did not possess the requisite masculinity admired in male monarchs. Pulgar uses this to discredit Enrique and to foreshadow that Isabel, despite the fact that she is a woman, is able to overcome this and rule effectively through the qualities she displays later in the chronicle.

Enrique is then considered to have a spirit that was 'inclinado a quietad' (II, 14) to highlight his instability and indecisiveness and thus not fit for rule. Pulgar also foregrounds his involvement in 'viçios desordenados y otras cosas feas' (II, 11) directly subverting his character and morality. Pulgar is successful in discrediting Enrique which further bolsters Isabel's virtuous identity. Whilst Enrique was a king whose ineptitude threatened the stability of the kingdom and incited civil war and caused the growing influence of noble factions, Isabel's comparative strength of character is shown through her own conduct during this period. First, Pulgar once again defers to the highest textual authority of 'la sacra escritura' (proemio, 3) to justify the rebellion against Enrique. This immediately absolves Isabel and her followers of blame before any act of rebellion is even recounted. Then, he reminds the audience that the kingdom 'suffered' (I, 4) as a result of Enrique, using a strong emotive adjective to elicit a strong emotional response from the audience, who will

remember the uncertainty of his reign. This ensures that they ally themselves with Isabel's cause, if they did not already.

However, despite that Pulgar has created the expectations that Isabel would show defiance, she is portrayed as doing the opposite. Pulgar ensures that again she is portrayed as the legitimate successor and not a usurper by describing how she does not take the title of queen whilst her brother still lived. She is therefore not a usurper but a woman who is obedient and trustworthy by not seizing the crown despite her 'right' to do so according to doctrine. Immediately the identity of the two monarchs is juxtaposed; she is the stability to Enrique's instability and thus the solution to Enrique's strife. She is portrayed as politically astute in choosing stability over further civil war, unlike the self-serving Enrique whose political alliances were constantly changing.

Pulgar continues to portray Isabel's identity through further juxtaposition with Enrique's wife, Juana. In Chapter III Pulgar states that Juana 'no guardó la honra de su persona, como debía' (17). Just as her daughter's heritage is repeatedly questioned, the audience is repeatedly informed that Juana is not an exemplary queen. In the following chapter, it states that 'Juana no guardaba la honestidad de su persona' (17). This ensures that when Juana comes to declare her daughter to be legitimate, the audience does not believe her because her identity is defined as immoral and dishonest. Isabel's comparative obedience to Enrique, despite his failure in his role as king, is contrasted directly with Juana's disobedience to her husband through her affairs and illegitimate children. This creates an enduring contrast between Juana and Isabel, whereby one queen is portrayed as dishonourable and the other, virtuous. This cements the self/other relationship that Pulgar exploits to fashion Isabel into the rightful monarch. The title of Chapter III, 'Cómo salió la reyna doña Juana de alaejos' (III,

16) suggests a comparison with Eve as she is forced out of her position due to her dishonour. This invites audience to consider Isabel as a successor, as one who will rectify the damage caused by Enrique and Juana. Therefore, the comparative allusion between her and the Virgin Mary, though subtle, strengthens Isabel's right to rule.

Important to note is that Pulgar rarely uses adjectival phrases to describe Isabel. He simply describes her actions and allows the audience to form her identity independently. In the title of Chapter XXI, she and Fernando are described as 'muy altos e muy poderosos y excelentes' (XXI, 65) although this is to mark that the following is an account of Isabel's accession to the throne. That she is rarely described in the same level of detail as Enrique or Juana is highly significant. The focus on her actions over another's opinion of her grants Isabel agency over how she is presented. She is able to control how she is portrayed in relation to what she does which suggests that Isabel has agency over the entire chronicle. Furthermore, the actions appear to be objective, granting them greater veracity and thus the audience shapes Isabel's identity from them. The audience is manipulated by Pulgar and believes that Isabel's identity is as it is written in the chronicle. Isabel's identity as sovereign is legitimized and although the chronicle was written after Isabel had defeated Juana, it nevertheless ensures that her identity as Queen is firmly established.

#### 2.4 Agency Over Audience Perceptions

The identity that Pulgar conveys in the chronicle is favourable to the identity required by Isabel to perform as Queen. Does this therefore mean that Isabel was involved fully in its production? Is there sufficient evidence to suggest that she exerts sufficient agency over Pulgar to have full control over her identity? Although the text

supports Isabel's authorial agency, the political context of Pulgar's authorship elicits further evidence.

Ana Gomez-Bravo states "the catholic monarchs reputedly promoted individuals on the basis of merit including those of lower ranks of the nobility to service and administration" (2013: 23). This illustrates Isabel's awareness of the need to surround herself with those who depended entirely on her patronage and favour whilst demonstrating that those who would work to support her reign would be duly rewarded. Fernando del Pulgar, as official chronicler, is one of two authors discussed in this dissertation who is known to be directly associated with Isabel. His authorship is entirely dependent on her as is not always the case for other authors studied in the later chapters of this dissertation. His authorial agency is thus compromised from the outset because of his duty to his monarch. "Scholars have remarked that Pulgar seems to maintain a conscious strategy of limiting his own presence... he is evident everywhere but visible nowhere" (Smith 2015: 189 – 190). It is clear here that in crafting Isabel's queenship through the chronicling of her rise to power and her subsequent reign he "self-cancels" (Greenblatt 1980: 9); his agency is diminished through crafting an identity that will fulfil Isabel's intended effect of legitimizing her reign and thus Isabel self-fashions an identity through Pulgar of an undisputed ruler whose character and moral code was always suited to that of sovereignty. That is not to say that Pulgar is diminished entirely but rather he bolsters his authority as a royal chronicler, ensuring he is a fundamental part of court and instrumental to Isabel's continued self-fashioning.

Isabel's influence over Pulgar's authorship becomes apparent when one considers Pulgar's position at the Castilian court before and during Isabel's reign. During the reign of Enrique IV, Pulgar frequently represented the king on diplomatic

missions. He was a follower of the Mendoza family who were known supporters of Enrique before they defected to Isabel towards the end of his reign. Such an elevated position suggests loyalty towards Enrique, contradictory to the way in which Pulgar portrays him. Even after his reign it would be naïve to suggest that he would have so easily maligned his previous king without significant reason. Although medieval society demanded absolute obedience to the sovereign, the level of loyalty that Pulgar demonstrates to Isabel by the way in which he portrayed Enrique was over and above what was required to legitimize Isabel's reign. In fact, it would have been plausible to de-legitimize Juana's claim through the actions of her mother alone. A secondary motive must be considered, namely, to regain Isabel's favour. We know that Pulgar was expelled from court in 1479 in response to his criticisms of Isabel's religious policy. In order to prove his loyalty Pulgar must diminish the authority in his authorship. The power dynamics between monarch and subject intensify in the chronicle where Pulgar relinquishes artistic agency in order to regain the prestige and influence he had previously lost. As Pulgar's agency diminishes, Isabel's agency grows.

However, whilst Isabel may have been able to assert agency over the chronicle's author, it does not mean that full agency over her identity was achieved. Not only is it important to consider the significance of the chronicle's authorship, but it is also necessary to consider its audience. The principal audience from Pulgar's perspective may have been Isabel. However, in order to legitimize her reign, Isabel needed to ensure that she balanced the identity that she herself wanted to convey and the audience's expectations of a queen regnant. It is from this aspect that one must consider how the audience shaped the writing of the chronicle.

Ludmilla Jordanova (2010) considers the relationship between the subject and the audience. Although she focuses on visual identity through portraiture, her observations on how an audience perceives identity remain significant in the literary context. She notes that when visualizing identity, the audience presumes that they have access to the subject's character. This means what they read about Isabel in the chronicle renders her identity visible (2010: 132). However, which particular part of her identity becomes visible is down to individual perspective. In accordance with Jordanova, it can be assumed that the audience's engagement in the text shapes Isabel's identity through their own judgement and perspective, which is beyond her control. Once Pulgar makes the chronicle available for the audience's engagement, neither he nor Isabel have full control over how it is perceived. Although Isabel may be able to deduce the qualities she must enact, especially as a female sovereign, there is no way of guaranteeing the audience's perceptions. She cannot control what is largely an intuitive process (Jordanova 2010: 134).

The way in which Pulgar structures the text manages to mitigate the audience's response. His exploitation of rhetoric, allusions to traditional historiographies and deference to sacred authority help to guide the audience and shape their perceptions of Isabel's identity. His use of rhetorical speech draws the audience into a narrative that at times generates an emotional response that garners support for Isabel against a corrupt king. Pulgar's strong narrative organization leaves little scope for deviation from his intentions as it guides them through a specific thought process resulting in the belief that Isabel's sovereignty is unparalleled. Just as Pulgar is able to control his narrative, similarly Isabel, in her control of Pulgar, has agency over her identity to a considerable extent. Whilst she is unable to shape the audience's perceptions fully, she

is able to guide them into engaging with her self-fashioning, thus authoring her historical identity.

## 2.5 Managing Queenship

Is Isabel's self-fashioning through the chronicle vastly different to the way in which previous medieval queens managed their own sovereignty? In many ways Isabel's careful control over how she was portrayed does mirror the ways in which queens regent would manoeuvre in the political sphere to further their husband or son's interests. The power of patronage of a medieval queen has been analysed in this chapter and there is no question that Isabel's patronage of Pulgar and his appointment as official chronicler was fundamental to the realization of her queenship. However, the answer to the extent to which she secured power in the same way as her predecessors lies in how queenship is defined in relation to power. It also lies in whether the definition of queenship can encompass queens regnant and regent.

The previous chapter noted that the most problematic aspect of Isabel's self-fashioning was that queenship as a concept is not as clearly defined as its male counterpart. In fact, queenship was often defined in relation to male power and was only legitimized by a male authority figure. Theresa Earenfight (1994) considers queenship to be a partnership, indicating a symbiotic relationship between queen and her closest male kin. She explores queenship as a power balance between two people as witnessed through the example of María of Castile. She asserts that she was able to wield a high level of political power through her position as *Lloctinent general* – the highest political office in Catalunya after her husband Alfonso (Earenfight 1994: 46). Alfonso empowered María with his frequent extended absences leaving a void that

needed to be filled. María was the perfect candidate to fill this void because her role as consort demanded absolute loyalty and obedience to her husband. Elizabeth Casteen further agrees that female sovereignty served to preserve the authority of their sons or husbands (2011: 184). At this point it can be posited that queenship is conceptualized as a form of service to the monarch. The queen regent or consort ensures that their son or husband, once they return to a position to rule, has not been usurped by performing their duty in a ceremonial way. It appears that this definition of queenship is fleeting and not one that Isabel could emulate as Queen Regnant.

Elizabeth Casteen (2011) notes in her analysis of the queenship of Johanna of Sicily is that at this period ‘many political theorists were defining monarchy as an exclusively male prerogative’ (2011: 183). She uses this to highlight the principal obstacle Johanna faced during her reign; that she was not accepted as a monarch. Indeed, it was believed that ‘Johanna and supporters subverted the natural order’ (Casteen 2011: 186), indicating that a queen regnant was in no way a welcome concept. A further obstacle was that if monarchy was, at the time, ‘an exclusively male prerogative’, there thus existed no code which to follow, nor would queenship be grounded in centuries of tradition. Once a queen is in a position to rule, she is faced with a job description that her sex does not permit her to fulfil. In some ways, the self-fashioning of Johanna is reminiscent of Isabel’s. Just as Isabel’s self-fashioning was grounded in her piety and strong but virtuous character, so was that of Johanna’s supporters. However, whilst Isabel used Pulgar’s chronicle as a locus in which to project these characteristics, Johanna ‘took part herself in the contemporary debate about women navigating the hazards of a conversation about femininity to identify herself as one type of woman while her opponents sought to define her as another’ (Casteen 2011: 185). Isabel was more indirect in the way she proved herself a worthy

sovereign. Whilst Johanna fought continually with her opponents, and became the subject of considerable international intrigue and scandal, the careful control over Pulgar's chronicle suggests that rather than incite conflict with any potential opposition, Isabel sought to silence them before they could give voice to any of their complaints. Whilst Johanna sought to validate her reign, Isabel sought to secure her power.

Exploring Isabel's queenship within the parameters of these previous studies of queenship is problematic. Therefore, how queenship is conceptualized must change. Rather than examining it as a transient solution to an absent or child king, it must be able to encompass a queen regnant. However, that does not mean it can be considered simply as a female equivalent to kingship. Queenship must be viewed as a woman's expression of political power and authority as opposed to the way in which a queen should rule because there are no criteria to follow. Queenship was not considered as a valid form of power and therefore not worthy of assessment. With regard to the medieval queens explored throughout this chapter, their exercise of power came with a specific intent: to preserve the power of their king. Earenfight (1994) asserts that it is erroneous to suggest María of Castile did not have power in her own right. Even considering the Aragonese customs of inheritance, that had granted no powers of succession to women since the reign of Urraca, Earenfight maintains that María was an anomaly, much like Isabel. Despite this, María's power depended entirely on Alfonso. This is highlighted most strikingly through the constant changes in the terms of María's lieutenancy where at times she was forced to share the role with Alfonso's brother (Earenfight 1994: 54). María's political expression remained an extension of her husband's power.

Highlighted repeatedly by Theresa Earenfight (1994), Elena Woodacre (2013), and Melissa R. Katz (2013) is the fragility of the power possessed by a queen consort or regent in comparison to their male counterpart. When this is considered in the case of Isabel it is undeniable that she must obtain a fixity of power in order to fulfil her role as sovereign. However, these studies do not identify queenship with the concept of agency. Woodacre (2013) draws attention to the issues of female sovereignty and power in order to suggest that a distinctive feature of queenship in the Mediterranean context was the ‘enhanced ability to access power as queens regnant, regent and consort’ (5). Whilst that is superficially true, and it is true that there are examples of many queens who were able to access power, it cannot be the case when the acquisition of secure agency over that power is transient. Although Alfonso appeared to have a great deal of faith in María’s capabilities (Earenfight 1994: 54), it is nevertheless obvious that her political rule needed to be justified by a male in order for it to be a legitimate power.

Whilst there should be comparisons between queens regnant and regent, it must be remembered that to compare them as equivalent models is problematic as it assumes that the core of their political power, their motives, and their realization must be the same. This does not happen to be the case. Where a regent draws power from the presence of a male influence, a regnant must fill the void which the absence of a male influence causes. A regnant risks deposal if she were to build her power upon the power of her closest male kin. She cannot be a regnant if her agency is compromised.

Elena Woodacre may laud the many examples in her works of women who ‘were firmly at the centre of governance in their respective realms’ (2013: 6) but at times she appears to confuse influence with genuine power. Genuine power must involve agency, that a queen regnant must achieve. It is not enough for Isabel merely

to achieve political power upon her accession to the throne, she must inextricably link the monarchy to her identity so that the constantly changing power dynamics within the Castilian court remain in her favour. Her engagement in the medium of historiographical writing she achieves this, and she is able to assert agency over the authoring of her identity. What is evidenced by the chronicle is the agency that Isabel was able to achieve over the shaping of her identity within the historical context and how this allowed her to build upon a legitimacy she created for herself.

Earenfight asserts that María ‘straddled two worlds’ (1994: 61) and likely came to power with the expectation that it would be problematic. This chapter agrees and asserts that Isabel is part of two forms of power that are difficult to reconcile one with another. The chronicle reveals that Isabel superficially self-fashioned her sovereignty in a way reminiscent of queens before her. However, as her queenship must be legitimized without the presence of a male sovereign, she must ensure that her power is secure.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Fernando del Pulgar’s *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos* was the perfect medium through which Isabel could legitimize her reign and project an identity that would preserve her authority. The nature of the text itself allowed Pulgar to present his version of events as fact, re-writing history in Isabel’s favour. The evidence of his conscious crafting is clear. His direct comparisons of Isabel to the ineptitude of Enrique, to the sinful promiscuity of Queen Juana and to the dubious heritage of their daughter defined her as their opposites and thus possessing superior qualities to rule Castile more successfully. The chronicle also provides a legacy for Isabel and her

descendants. Her identity as the strong and rightful monarch establishes a dynasty which provides security for future monarchs of her lineage.

Pulgar identifies her as a Queen Regnant with the capabilities to rule in her own right. His retelling of her proclamation presents her as a woman who not only ritually performs the duties of a male monarch, most significantly the duty to dispense justice, but embodies them. This presents her as a fully empowered sovereign who transcends the limitations of her sex and is able to rule alone.

The structure of the chronicle itself was not a novel approach to the establishment of sovereignty. Isabel uses Pulgar's authorship to emulate the self-fashioning tactics of predecessors such as Alfonso X in order to be in full control of how she is presented. For Isabel, this is the most effective form of literary control over her identity because the chronicle is based on Isabel's own actions. Although Pulgar authors her identity, it is Isabel who asserts her agency over Pulgar, using his authorship to realize the expectations she has over her identity. She becomes a co-author with Pulgar, simultaneously using his artistic authority whilst disempowering him in order to retain control. Her control over Pulgar appears to be substantial. The chronicle portrays her as the exemplary monarch and the exemplary woman, in possession of full sovereign authority. Pulgar's position at court also reflects her agency over him; the periods of banishment from court after disagreeing with aspects of Isabel's religious policy suggest that his prestige is only secure if he remains in favour with her. The dating of the chronicle (1482) coincides with the reconciliation between Isabel and Pulgar. That the chronicle is strongly in favour of Isabel alludes to an author who must prove his loyalty to her. Although Pulgar is the author, he does not have full agency and thus does not have the power to shape Isabel's identity in any way contrary to her self-fashioning.

Pulgar's work fulfils Greenblatt's three criteria as it a "manifestation of the concrete behaviour of its particular author", through the chronicling of her deeds. It acts as "the expression of the codes by which behaviour is shaped" and "a reflection upon these codes" through the way in which he "others" Isabel's rival to the throne and continuously seeks to prove Isabel's legitimacy and capacity to rule despite her sex, offering a subtle analysis on the subject of queens regnant.

This co-authorship between Isabel and Pulgar moves away from the artistic patronage used by previous queen consorts and regents, and thus calls into question the very concept of queenship. Whilst Earenfight (1994), Casteen (2011) and Woodacre (2013) define queenship in relation to male sovereignty and authority, this definition cannot be reconciled with Isabel's queenship, which has no male authority through which to justify her own. The definition of queenship shifts to include the origins of that power and the extent to which agency is achieved. Isabel has too much agency to embody previous definitions of queenship. However, her agency is not as secure as that of a male monarch. Her queenship is one that contains elements of both without fully belonging to either. Although it is clear that Isabel has full control over her identity in Pulgar's *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, it poses questions as to how her sovereignty is defined that warrant further investigation. The next chapter will continue to research the relationship between female and male authority in Isabel's queenship to the extent where some critics will argue that she becomes an androgynous figure through her superimposition onto the character of Joan of Arc. In contrast to this chapter, it will explore how the anonymity of the author of the *Poncella de Francia* limits Isabel's agency over her representation as both a political and a religious figure.

### Chapter 3

#### Permitted Female Authority in the *Poncella de Francia*

The *Poncella de Francia* is an anonymous Castilian re-imagining of the story of Joan of Arc, referred to throughout the text as the ‘poncella’. Little is known about the text other than it is believed to have been produced between 1474 and 1491 (Osorio 2009: 56) and is clearly dedicated to the Queen, whom the author addresses at various points. The religious and political themes conveyed in the narrative provide scope to address Isabel’s identity from an outside perspective. There is no evidence to suggest that Isabel endorsed or commissioned it. Thus, the *Poncella* is a useful tool through which to conduct an analysis of her identity beyond the confines of her direct control. However, is it possible that Isabel was able to control how she was perceived in literature simply through the propagation of her own perception of identity in chronicles and other displays of political power?

The *Poncella* has all the characteristics of a literary fiction and thus moves away from historiographical texts wherein history is effectively rewritten to support the agenda of the author – or, as discussed in the previous chapter, the power behind the author. Undoubtedly the text is based upon historical events, but its purpose is more than to relay them to a Castilian audience. The narrative style conforms to the generic definition of a literary narrative. Victoria Campo and Víctor Infantes (1997) identify more than ten stylistic features of the *Poncella* in their introduction to the text which clearly it as strongly literary. The principal points this chapter will address first are the intertextuality present within the narrative (1997: 21) that relate the *Poncella* to what Campo and Infantes describe as books of chivalry that pertains to the clear linear structure of the narrative and the ‘poética de redundancia’ which highlights the

repetition inherent in the structure. To the audience, these two features would be recognizable, and an association would be made between the *Poncella* and other contemporary popular chivalric tales. This allows the text to remain spiritually accurate and provides the opportunity for creativity. Thus, the *Poncella* appears to be designed for enjoyment and not as a reliable source of information. The author therefore has more scope to use rhetorical devices such as allegory and metaphor to convey his moral guidance to the Queen. This aspect will be investigated throughout the chapter.

There is much speculation over the identity of the *Poncella*'s author. Campo and Infantes (1997) identify two possible contenders as the author of the *Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna*, who was possibly Gonzalo Chacón, and Fernando Pulgar. Evidence in favour of both contenders makes them plausible possibilities. However, it remains unsubstantiated and indeed there is no way to prove that either wrote the *Poncella*, so this chapter will follow the assumption that the author of the *Poncella* is unknown. The most compelling consequence of this is that it tightens the author's control over Isabel's identity because there is no way to prove that the author had any personal motive for using the identity of the 'poncella' to convey the identity of Isabel. If the author were Pulgar or Chacón, then they are verifying what Isabel wants. If the author remains anonymous, it becomes a source removed from Isabel's favour and control. The author, therefore, certainly does not need to endorse the persona Isabel crafted so carefully through Pulgar in the *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*. This impartial source creates his own textual authority over Isabel because there is little tangible reason for the author to perpetuate her own self-fashioning. Thus, his motive for writing the text becomes unclear. His anonymity means that his relationship to

Isabel is also unknown and Isabel is portrayed in whatever way he wishes, without fear of negative repercussions.

This chapter will then address why the author chose to superimpose the identity of Joan of Arc onto Isabel at a time when Joan was considered to be neither a martyr nor a saint. The ways in which the *Poncella* is shown to subvert traditional gender roles for political gain will be explored and how this is comparable to Isabel's rule of Castile as Queen Regnant. It will also examine the significance of the religious motifs and will shed light on the author's assessment of her identity as both monarch and woman. It will analyse how the *Poncella* conveys a heroine typical of the virgin saints described in medieval Spanish hagiography. This will demonstrate how Isabel is interpreted by association. Most crucially, female sanctity will be discussed as a source of permitted and acceptable female authority that allows a woman to break the societal restrictions placed upon her. This will address how the author generates a didactical rapport between himself and Isabel. Does the author suggest that there is only one way for Isabel to fashion her sovereignty? Does he fully empower her to access all the power granted to her as the anointed sovereign? Or does he impose restrictions upon her in order to redress the imbalance that a female regnant pose on Castilian society?

### **3.1: Anonymity in Authorship**

Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths (2010) maintains that the *Poncella* 'upholds an Isabelline ideology, which justifies the full capacity of female governance in a nascent absolutist monarchy' (21). There is no doubt that the author is in favour of Isabel's rule, however it is arguable that he does not 'uphold' the Isabelline ideology as the ideology itself may not have been fully established by the time the *Poncella* was

written. There is a good deal of dispute over the exact date that the *Poncella* was produced. It is plausible to assume that the author was part of a trend that supported Isabel's early self-fashioning which began with the commissioning of Pulgar's *Crónica*. However, there is strong evidence to suggest it was published earlier rather than around the time of the re-conquest of Granada in 1492. The author's strong emphasis on the political climate in the *Poncella*'s France ensures that Isabel is further conflated with Joan. It is also suggestive of the political climate at the time of writing. The focus on the tensions between the houses of Orleans and Burgundy alludes to the civil war between Isabel and Juana la Beltránaja between 1474 and 1479, which is the earlier of the suggested dates for the publication of the *Poncella*. Taking Lucila Lobato Osorio's (2009) view into consideration, which assumes that the author hoped to provide Isabel with hope and comfort, it can certainly be assumed that it was written during the most unstable point of her reign. Hence, it cannot be said that the *Poncella* endorses an ideology that was not yet in full force, although the text is supportive of many of the key parts to Isabel's ideology.

It is difficult, however, to ascertain the motives behind the publication of the *Poncella* when its authorship remains anonymous. The text is part fiction, part treatise and is clearly designed not only to inform, but to instruct. Didactic narratives were a popular method of advising royalty, especially the 'mirror for princes' genre, and indeed this discussion will examine another more overtly didactical text dedicated to Isabel. It is significant that the author has no insecurity over his ability to establish a discourse narrative with the Queen, despite lacking the credentials used by other eminent scholars to justify their treatises to her. The very first line of the text, 'muchas veces se ha puesto mi pensamiento en cuidado, buscando entre las mayores que más al triunfo de la fama son cercanas, por ver si fallaría alguna con quien a Vuestra Alteza

comparasse', demonstrates confidence in his academic abilities to be able to eventually discover the perfect role model for Isabel to emulate (90).<sup>3</sup> There is no indication of his identity beyond the possible indication he is familiar with the ambassador for Castile (89), which suggests he is at least an educated man. Were he an eminent scholar, he would be able to gain Isabel's trust more quickly, and more importantly he would have reason to offer his interpretation of Isabel's identity. He seems to have little to no authority in his authorship and yet converses with the Queen as though he is worthy of her attention. He offers no clue as to his identity, which seems inconsequential to the author, as though his ideas themselves are of such importance that they transcend the need to justify his authority.

Instead, the author relies solely on the power of his narrative so that his vision for the Queen's sovereignty is successfully delivered. He uses the character of the 'poncella' as his most powerful rhetorical device. She becomes the medium through which his message is conveyed. As the primary recipient of the text is Isabel herself, the author quickly generates a reassuring rapport with her, as though his text is the solution to any concerns she may have about her rule and sovereignty (90). This provides the subtle message that if she emulates the 'poncella' as portrayed in his narrative, if she heeds his didactical message, she too will enjoy similar success. His use of terms of address such as 'Vuestra Alteza' (90), 'Vuestra Señoría', (92) and 'muy esclarecida Señora' (93), whilst typical forms of address, demonstrates the high level of respect the author affords his sovereign; respect that an anonymous author would not necessarily need to demonstrate. This shows that the author intends to vouchsafe his support to her, implying that he is far from her enemy but a subject who wishes to

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations from Victoria Campo and Víctor Infantes' 1997 edition of the *Poncella de Francia* and will be cited by page number.

aid her to the best of his ability. However, the rapport that the author intends to generate is also indicative of the extent to which he believes he can exert authority over her identity. The author has nothing to justify establishing a discourse with the Queen. Yet, not only does he establish this from the very first line, he proceeds to envision how she should rule. The author is in complete control of his rigid narrative structure. He provides clear cohesion in his summary of each chapter, and consequently is able to have complete control over Isabel's identity, utilizing his generic preferences over his authorship in order to do so. His success is achieved through a literary narrative as it is an indirect form of instruction. Allegory is more manipulative. Should Isabel read it she could infer that the 'poncella' was herself or she could ignore the allegory completely. Although it is likely that she, or any other audience would not fail to understand the author's message, the ambiguity of the text provides security for him and renders him safe from any repercussions caused by his writing. However, if the text and the advice contained in it elicited a positive response, the text becomes more manipulative still. Without a name, Isabel can bestow no favour or reward upon the author for his work. Therefore, it is indicative that he was seeking no such thing. The author then appears to be altruistic, working solely to serve Isabel as she navigates her new role through an unstable period. Indeed, he appears to be more trustworthy, as he has ensured that what he has written could not garner any form of recompense.

### 3.2 Sanctifying the Secular: Female Authority in the *Poncella*

From the beginning of the text the author draws parallels between the 'poncella' and Isabel, exploiting his description of the setting and background to the

main tale. The war of succession, the hostilities between ruling noble factions, and the instability of the throne are all detailed in relation to France during the opening chapters (95-105) to ensure that the audience would associate the 'poncella's' situation with that of Isabel. True to the genre convention of the time, the narrative structure is rigid, with an expectation of the text's conclusion before the text has even begun. Thus, the audience will relate the 'poncella's' successes and the restoration of the French crown to a similar outcome to Isabel's struggles in the first years of her reign.

The most significant character in this text is the 'poncella' herself. In the *Poncella* she is used as a powerful communicative tool, but not to reiterate the history of the war between England and France as the subject matter may suggest. She is not used even as a tool to convey the divine elements of her history, or even how she can be used in French propaganda. In fact, it is clear that the true narrative that the author wants to convey is not about Joan of Arc at all. This is clearly conveyed through the title: *La Poncella de Francia*. Joan herself is relegated to a subtitle. The 'poncella' is more important as she has an allegorical role. Although she shares a similar history to Joan of Arc, she is in actual fact not Joan at all. The author conflates her identity with that of the subject of the text, Isabel. Her identity is superimposed onto Isabel so that author may indirectly address Isabel's role as a woman and a queen in a manipulative, moralistic narrative that describes how a woman must act in order to access an acceptable form of authority. The author uses the religious aspects of Joan's history to highlight the reality that for Isabel to access power and authority, in a way that is acceptable and still conforms to the contemporary gender ideology, she must do so through religious avenues.

There are arguments, however, that the *Poncella* is not a religious text, rather one that 'presents Joan as a female character devoid of religious inspiration' (Warren

2005: 107). I concur with Nancy Bradley Warren in rejecting this viewpoint for two reasons. Whilst the *Poncella* cannot be considered as a hagiography in the strictest sense, as Joan of Arc was far from sainthood at this juncture, Joan's fundamental motivation is religious. She has experienced numerous visions which are used to detail her role in the war against the English. Her fierce religious devotion presents a strong correlation to the protagonists in traditional hagiography. Her sophisticated speech and eloquence are compared to a 'persona de criança alta' (109), despite her impoverished upbringing. This adheres to genre convention and mimics other hagiographies. Furthermore, the transformation from female to male, when Joan cuts her hair and dresses as a knight is another convention seen in the hagiographies of Saints Margaret and Marina. Religious imagery permeates the text and even though the 'poncella' would have been considered a secular character at this point, what makes her an exemplary woman is not how she conducts herself on the battlefield but her obvious submission to the will of God, her piety and her chastity.

Warren highlights the significance of the 'poncella' not being referred to as 'Juana' or 'Joan' but only as 'poncella' or 'maid' (2005: 111) and in her work, she asserts that this serves to characterize her as a virgin. Her virginity and her very self are conflated in order to underline her chastity as a defining character trait. Warren is indeed correct; Joan's virginity is placed at the forefront and exemplifies the belief that though this woman is capable of great military and political deeds, she remains a woman and therefore must remain chaste to demonstrate her relationship with God and uphold her honour. It is through her religious devotion that Joan is empowered. Had Joan attempted to shed her femininity in favour of masculinity or attempted to assert her authority in the military sphere, without the motivation of her divine mission, her authority would have been greatly diminished. Her actions would have ostracized her

for breaking with rigid gender norms, and not exalted her for submitting to the will of God.

Similarities between other female hagiographies and the *Poncella* are apparent throughout. There are many similarities between it and with the hagiographies of other female saints in the Castilian expansion of Jacobus Voragine's *Legenda aurea*. The description of Saint Agnes' beauty and purity, 'Avía hermosa la cara, mas mucho era de mayor hermosura la fe de la su alma', that alludes to her close relationship to God is similar to the way in which the 'poncella' is described.<sup>4</sup> Although Joan is described as 'flaca' (108) in contrast to being described as a 'persona del cielo venido' (109), the intent is the same. Both women exhibit the extremes of femininity corporeally, through beauty and weakness, whilst they exhibit extreme piety; their souls are pure. Later when Joan's eloquence is described (109) it is clearly reminiscent of the hagiographies of Saints Catherine and Barbara (Hernández-Amez 2004: 321). The intertextuality is so strong they become almost the same text. The author uses the familiar structure of a hagiography to strengthen his textual authority and generate verisimilitude. The audience thus becomes more susceptible to the narrative's subtext. It delineates Isabel's ability to take on a masculine role, despite her inherent female qualities that would impede her competency in the role. This poses an illuminating hypothesis: can Isabel's gender be 'forgiven' by her courtiers if she embodies the true female perfection characterized by virgin saints through their closeness to God?

Joan's tale also alludes to the hagiographies of so-called transvestite saints, such as Marina, in that she adopts the appearance of a male in order to fulfil her duty to God. This act, in its historical context, is what eventually condemns her. This

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<sup>4</sup> Citation taken from Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (ed. José Manuel Macías 1999)

dissertation will relate this perceived un-natural act to the un-natural act performed by Isabel herself as Queen Regnant. Both of these acts in parallel could be interpreted as a clear message from the author who advocates Isabel's reign through the text. Joan's own unnatural act that contributes to extraordinary deeds, 'remediar el reino' (124), is a direct reference not to the actual setting of the text but to the kingdom of Castile. On Isabel's accession to power, the kingdom was suffering the consequence of weak governance and civil war. As Warren notes, Isabel was widely considered to be the saviour of the kingdom in Isabelline propaganda and was even likened to the Virgin Mary (2005: 109). In fact, this will not be the only text in this discussion to do so but *La Poncella* contributes strongly to this theme. What perhaps strengthens it still further is the identity of the author, or perhaps the lack of one. Without an identified author, this text cannot be credited to any particular person. Therefore, the motivation for writing the text cannot simply be for aspirations of favour. There is a strong case to argue the possibility that the motivation is political.

The *Poncella* relates Isabel to an even stronger religious authority. Nancy Bradley Warren (2005) and Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths (2010: 73) both believe the 'poncella' to be a messianic portent that justifies Isabel's ascent to power. This representation of Isabel serves her well as it further justifies her disputed claim to the throne. There is a stronger parallel to draw from this that neither Warren nor Guardiola-Griffiths develop fully. Although Guardiola-Griffiths does refer to Joan's humble origins, she does not explore the author's full motivations for his choice of protagonist in the form of an exemplary figure to which Isabel must aspire. She explores the author's own justifications (2010: 74) that there was simply no-one appropriate of noble birth that he believed to be sufficiently exemplary. There were very few queens regnant that could provide Isabel with a clear set of moral objectives

and behaviours. Therefore, the 'poncella', although not noble in blood, was chosen. Guardiola-Griffiths' suggestion that this comparison with a peasant girl strips Isabel of 'any arrogance or malintention' (2010: 74) is significant. She becomes a 'humble and simple maiden, devoid of any evil thought or actions' (74). This is useful and further reinforces Isabel as the pinnacle of virtue, although the motive behind this is to be disputed.

Where Guardiola-Griffiths asserts this is to form part of the carefully composed self-fashioning of Isabel, this dissertation suggests an alternative. Presenting Isabel as a humble innocent, is convincing as it attempts to absolve her of any wrong-doing pertaining to the propaganda disseminated regarding the question of her niece's legitimacy. However, it presents a problematic question once again in relation to authorship. For Guardiola-Griffiths' assumption to be completely convincing it would need to be assumed that the author was not only aware that Isabel's propaganda relating to Juana was in fact propaganda, but that the author himself was privy to the campaign during the civil war. It simply cannot be proved and begs further research into his identity.

With this in mind there is an entirely plausible reason for presenting Isabel as the humble innocent. It further endorses Isabel with the motif of the messianic portent conveyed throughout the narrative. The humble origins of the 'poncella' are comparable to the humble circumstances which surround the birth of Christ. Indeed, the 'poncella' is described on numerous occasions throughout the text as a 'pastora' (109). Explicitly stating that the 'poncella' is a shepherdess rather than simply a peasant directly associates her with the Good Shepherd. Isabel thus becomes a Christ-like figure who, by divine right, was prophesized to rule and save Castile from illegitimate usurpers to the throne. In choosing an historical figure with no other

connection to Isabel other than her transcendence of typical gender norms, the author conspires in mythicizing Isabel that alleviates any doubt or unease over her accession to the throne instead of Juana. This is further demonstrated in the author's clear references to Christ and the Antichrist, juxtaposing Christ and Isabel with the Antichrist so that Isabel's role in ridding Castile from evil and death (92) is made clear.

Does this mean, therefore that the author acknowledges Isabel's right to administer justice just as Christ exacts justice? Isabel is certainly presented as the defender of justice (Guardiola-Griffiths 2010: 76) as the narrative follows the structure of a chivalric epic in which the knights are the personification of justice and honour. However, there is little evidence that develops this theme to suggest that Isabel is within her right as ruler to claim justice as her domain, despite her gender. As a woman, she may intercede but not administer justice as this was the domain of a male sovereign. The text complies with this belief which directly contrasts with Isabel's own self-fashioning. She portrayed herself as the ruler in every sense at her proclamation in 1474 where she was preceded by the sword of justice. The author disempowers Isabel through Joan's defence of justice. Furthermore, this is generated only after Joan adopts a masculine identity. This suggests that the author clearly believes justice to be an inalienable right beyond the reach of Isabel. Again, Isabel is denied full admittance to the male sphere that she must not only be part of but dominate in order to exert her power. Instead, she is invited to participate under strict guidelines that prevent her from obtaining the full power of her sovereignty. Seemingly contradictory, the 'poncella' is seen to achieve in many areas where masculinity is a pre-requisite. She fights and claims victory on the battlefield, is a skilled tactician and is directly responsible for the French victory. This is then completely negated when she negotiates with King Juan II over an alliance that would eventually bring France

to victory. This episode shows the ‘poncella’ as an intercessor on behalf of the king of France, not dissimilar to the Virgin Mary’s celestial role. Joan at this point is conflated with the even more exemplary figure of the Virgin Mary. Thus, by extension Isabel is transformed into the Virgin Mary on Earth, the intercessor who must negotiate on behalf of her people. This is possibly a warning against the anti-French sentiment of the Aragonese and is a plea for Isabel to use her role in order to act against her husband.

The *Poncella* clearly shows that Isabel’s path to true authority is not through her lineage but through her religious devotion. As a woman, she cannot access power easily and thus must exercise an acceptable form of authority that elevates her to be able to access political power. The ‘poncella’, through her divine revelations and religious virtue is shown to be able to access political power, and even become a confidante of the king. Through being an exemplary woman, her shift to a masculine role is no longer seen as a transgression, but as a means of fulfilling her religious duty. Similarly, if Isabel is seen to be a virtuous woman who is, like Christ, ruling by divine right, she is able to reconcile both her monarchic identity and her female identity.

### 3.3 Empowering the Female or Exalting the Male?

This dissertation has shown that the author of the *Poncella* perhaps does not empower Isabel to the extent her role necessitates. Significantly, his authoring of Isabel’s identity does not exactly correlate with the self-fashioning conveyed in the *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*. However, it provides a clear insight into the impact of gender ideology on medieval Castilian society and on the definition of female sovereignty outside the confines of Isabel’s court. It also provides insight into why this text may have been written.

Marvin Lunenfeld argues that prior to the growing interest in women's history 'it has always been thought difficult and perhaps unnecessary to treat the Catholic Monarchs as independent of one another' (1977: 57). Obviously, this view has drastically changed in recent years as a result of research by Barbara Weissberger (2004) and Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths (2010). This dissertation continues and extends their trend. However, Lunenfeld's assertion nevertheless highlights a further significance of the *Poncella*.

The previous chapter focused on Isabel's identity within Pulgar's chronicle, but it is nevertheless a chronicle that focuses on both of the Catholic Monarchs. Indeed, Isabel and Fernando's motto 'tanto monta' does little to suggest their independence from one another. Furthermore, Fray Íñigo de Mendoza's *Dechado a la muy escelente reyna doña Ysabel, nuestra soberana señora*, the focus of the following chapter, is one half of a dual treatise which contains a different set of advice for Fernando. It is highly significant, therefore that the author of the *Poncella* addresses 'los Sereníssimos Reyes don Fernando y doña Isabel', 90) only to then continue to address 'Vuestra Alteza' Isabel throughout the remainder of the text. The author clearly intends to address Isabel's sovereign identity alone. Since her monarchical role is in question as a result of her gender, this is perhaps an obvious assumption. However, the author's strategy is strikingly odd. The purpose of the text is, on the surface, to retell the history of Joan of Arc in a Castilian narrative. Why has the author started with the intention of addressing both monarchs only to then abandon this in favour of establishing a discourse that actively excludes Fernando from the conversation? For an anonymous author, this is either a bold political move in recognizing Isabel as his sole Castilian sovereign (if he is even Castilian at all) or the author has very specific ideas about Isabel's identity. Perhaps the author is even a Catalan noble who uses his narrative

to display implicit disapproval of Fernando's anti-French policies by creating a text that portrays the French as victorious. Why would a possible stranger to the Castilian court see fit to assert agency over Isabel's identity through his narrative? It is safe to assume that Isabel's identity is more unstable than that of her husband. Although identity is not a fixed concept, it is even less so for a queen regnant. Isabel is a woman; medieval gender ideology is clear on this matter. Her nature derives from the corporeal, as woman was made from man at the time of Adam and Eve and is thus as malleable as the rib that was used to create her. As Weissberger (2004: 70) so aptly describes it, a woman in any position of authority produces an 'anxiety' in men since it subverts the natural order of gender roles. It is ironic, therefore that from this anxiety is produced a text that supports Isabel's claim as a Queen Regnant – within certain parameters. Whether or not the author is using the narrative as a gesture of support is irrelevant in this discussion. That it was deemed necessary to write it in the first place allows for analysis of its impact on the authoring of Isabel's identity as a whole.

However, does the author recognize that Isabel not only needs to display qualities of female perfection but that she must also exhibit overtly masculine qualities in order to be able to exercise her power? This dissertation has discussed that the author effectively disempowers Isabel only when Joan defends, but never exacts, justice. As a monarch, it is necessary that Isabel is able to do so, as deferring to anyone else in this area, even to her husband, would be weakening her rule. Therefore, does the author suggest that Isabel should masculinize her identity?

There is evidence to suggest that the 'poncella', in displaying both male and female characteristics, becomes an androgynous figure. Lunenfeld describes Isabel as 'forceful a "virago" as one is likely to encounter' (1977: 58), referring to the masculine characteristics he believed she displayed which made her able to rule at a time when

society would prevent it. However, it is difficult to separate the masculine trait of political astuteness and the belief that it is a masculine trait from the constant discourse that defined them as such. From a contemporary perspective, this would most certainly be the case, thus making the character of Joan of Arc – who became masculine through her outward appearance – a compelling comparative figure for Isabel. Is Joan therefore a masculinized woman? Lunenfeld develops the argument and asserts that for the virago to be successful she must ‘discard the façade of submissive femininity’ (1977: 60). This is exemplified at Isabel’s proclamation, which may well have taken place when the ‘poncella’ was already in print. Lunenfeld also notes that Isabel chose to wear male armour in battle zones. The ‘poncella’ sheds her femininity in the same way, allowing her to be involved directly in military and political affairs.

Further to this, Vanessa Sánchez Valat (2012) makes it clear from the outset that the *Poncella* does not follow the typical medieval pathway for a woman. Although undoubtedly Joan is exceedingly pious, she does not adopt the religious life, nor does she marry. Instead she directly disobeys her father and ‘asimila la función guerrera propia del varón’ (2012: 156). Valat, in her analysis, also makes numerous references to Joan’s perceived androgyny. She believes that the character of the ‘poncella’ represents the goddess Athena who ‘simboliza la guerra táctica y legítima’ (2012: 161) as the war that the ‘poncella’ embarks upon is the just recuperation of French territory. Furthermore, she proves herself a shrewd tactician and her capabilities are ‘equivalente e incluso superior a las de un varón’ (161). Valat’s argument is valid. The ‘poncella’ gains honour through her victories on the battlefield and whilst her virginity and piety are stressed, so are her knightly traits.

Lucila Lobato Osorio also concurs that the ‘poncella’ is an androgynous figure and believes that ‘no se constituye como un calco exacto de ningún arquetipo femenino

ni masculino [...] sino que configure como un modelo único y singular' (2009: 58) – she is both the protagonist in what can only be described as a chivalric epic and also the pure virgin. She exemplifies male honour and female chastity, implying that she is both male and female.

However, there are reasons to disagree with this argument. The 'poncella' at any one time displays overt masculinity or femininity and those states do not coincide. This shift between states is reminiscent of Isabel's position within society. Isabel must manoeuvre herself between the male political sphere and the female domestic sphere in order to satisfy her role as Queen. This instability makes her vulnerable. Her personal and political identities are constantly at odds with one another. Osorio asserts that it is her actions and not her masculinized appearance that enable her to be considered as a knightly figure: 'Su identidad y sexo no buscan ser ocultados tras la indumentaria caballeresca' (2009: 57). However, appearance cannot be separated from identity in this instance as it her is very appearance that granted her access into the male sphere in which she proved herself. The male clothing covers the 'condición femenina y humilde' (Osorio 2009: 60) and thus hides the female qualities that render her incapable of succeeding in the male sphere from the male point of view. As the masculine traits become the dominant part of her identity, her femininity is seemingly lost (62) and the principal impediment for the 'poncella' as she strives to achieve her political motives is all but eradicated.

The *Poncella's* author does indeed appear to advocate the masculine qualities that allow Joan to succeed in her endeavours. It is possible that the author is addressing the point that a masculine display of authority can be demonstrated if it is done in such a way that can be reconciled with societal norms. In other words, if femininity is discarded in an uncontroversial way. After all, as Lunenfeld (1977: 59) notes, Isabel's

boldness at her proclamation was met with complaints from her own advisors. Could it be that the author was indirectly conveying a more appropriate way in which she may achieve her objective? It is interesting to note his analysis of the ‘compensating device’ (1977: 69) that was part of the virago, or ‘mujer varonil’ image as it is similar to the author’s view on appropriate female masculinity. He writes (1977: 69) that female masculinity can only work within the confines of one of three acceptable models, that of a mother, wife or virgin, then acceptance would be more easily gained. Just as the author stresses the importance of the poncella’s chastity and piety as vital to her success in a masculine role, Lunenfeld recognizes the success of the virago to be dependent on the acceptability of her behaviours. This dissertation asserts that this could be a perfect definition of the level of agency within literature. In a way, the author justifies her agency, but it needs a man’s justification.

Vanessa Sánchez notes that Joan gains the king’s confidence when she is ‘vestida como varón’ (157). Although this is not elaborated upon sufficiently, it is a highly significant point that is worth remembering. The ‘poncella’, albeit an eloquent peasant girl, is only permitted entry to the political sphere of the king’s trust whilst taking on the identity of a man. Within the context of a performative identity model, at that moment she becomes a man. Through this act she satisfies the requisite qualities, not only to participate in the political sphere, but to move away from the passive submission of either the religious life or her father and become an agent of her own destiny and the destiny of France. This is not a unique message, but one that is exploited in many hagiographies. As a political message, it is clear. Although the author is not suggesting that Isabel ‘becomes’ a man it is certainly a clear signal to inform her that as a woman she must prove herself worthy at the very least. Naturally, if she cannot, perhaps the assumption can be made that the author is suggesting she

should thus defer to the next available male source of authority in the form of her husband. However, I would dispute this, since if it were the case, it would be safe to assume that there would be less of a discourse with Isabel and more emphasis on addressing Fernando throughout the text. It argues that the author promulgates this message to ensure that Isabel proves her worthiness to rule and her ability to do so successfully through piety.

The 'poncella' is shown to be dressed as a male throughout the text because it creates verisimilitude (Osorio 2009: 58) so that the audience is left in no doubt that the author is rewriting the story of Joan of Arc, despite the lack of her name. However, she does not become a man, nor does the author want Isabel to believe that this is so. Instead, he uses her masculinity to draw parallels to their respective situations. When questioned over her actions, she makes it clear that her male appearance is by divine sanction (Osorio 2009: 58). Again, this upholds historical fact based on contemporary accounts of Joan's trial. However, for Isabel, it is also an act of consolation (Osorio 2009: 57). The author implies that it may be acceptable to move away from established gender roles if doing so is an act of obedience to God. Therefore, by claiming her throne over her illegitimate niece, she accepts her duty as sovereign, God's secular representative on Earth. Woman or not, she cannot refuse to defer to the highest authority. The author alludes to his support of her claim in her own right. Furthermore, both Isabel and the 'poncella' do not break the structure of societal gender roles for personal motivations but for political ones. They share the same purpose of re-establishing peace and stability in their respective kingdoms. The author applauds the 'poncella's' altruism and implicitly supports that of Isabel.

The author draws a deeper and more profound comparison. Through the 'poncella's', and Isabel's political motivations to establish security and bring about

peace they, perhaps ironically, fulfil an inherently female obligation. From the perspective of Church doctrine, women play a dichotomous role in the balance of order and disorder. Where Eve brought about disorder and damnation through her decisions in the Garden of Eden, the Virgin Mary, the new Eve, brings about order and redemption through giving birth to Christ. The 'poncella's' actions, though not feminine in nature, locate her in the 'Ave' position of the Ave/Eve palindrome. Through her masculine transformation, the 'poncella' embodies idealized female perfection. As Isabel and the 'poncella' are one and the same, the author identifies Isabel in the same way.

The *Poncella's* author ensures that throughout the narrative Isabel is constantly reminded that she has invaded a male space in order to fulfil her duties as Queen Regnant. Rather than empowering her through the text, the author imposes a strict ultimatum upon her; she can fulfil a male role successfully only if she proves herself a woman held in as great esteem as the Virgin Mary. He continues to exalt masculine qualities that she cannot possess. Rather than encouraging her to strive for the full authority to which she is entitled, he exerts agency over her own identity to serve as a reminder that even a female sovereign must exercise her authority in a permitted, acceptable way. However, if we take into consideration Judith Butler's (2010) idea that 'performativity has become a way to think about the effects', the effects in this instance being Isabel's aim of her self-fashioning, even if Isabel has an identity imposed upon her, whilst she may perform it, it may be due to the fact that it assists her on her ultimate aim. In other words, it helps her to legitimize her rule. Thus, the *Poncella* could become integral to the self-fashioning of Isabel's identity even if she did not specifically endorse this.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This study of the *Poncella de Francia* has elicited a significance beyond the comparison between the identities of Joan of Arc and Isabel I. Although at first the *Poncella* may bear little connection to the political climate of late fifteenth-century Castile, it becomes quickly apparent that the text is a fictional mirror that provides Isabel with a hopeful image for the future of her kingdom. The alternative ending to the ‘poncella’s’ story implies that an ‘appropriate’ display of female power can restore Castile and stabilize the monarchy.

The ‘poncella’ herself is not only a fictionalized Joan of Arc but an idealized version of Isabel. More importantly, the author seeks to create an emblematic figure in the Joan, one that imposes a limited empowerment of Isabel’s identity. The ‘poncella’s’ identity is not superimposed onto Isabel because the author deems them to be comparable figures but because the author is able to use the ‘poncella’ to instruct and advise Isabel on how she must reconcile her monarchical power with her identity as a woman. Although the author is indeed a firm supporter of Isabel’s claim to the throne, he is not a supporter of unregulated female power and duly warns her against this. This partly contradictory viewpoint highlights the patent sense of unease towards a queen regnant that permeated Castilian society.

Although the ‘poncella’ exhibits clear masculine traits alluding to Isabel’s masculine role of sovereign, these traits are juxtaposed with the ‘poncella’s’ extreme piety and closeness to God through the perpetual virgin status that is often used to define her. Her religious devotion and strong defence of her chastity idealize her as a woman, enabling her to transcend traditional gender roles as she has proven herself to be an example of perfect womanly virtue. The intertextuality between Joan’s narrative

and the narrative conventions found in the contemporary hagiographies of female saints allude to the 'poncella's' sanctity and thus to Isabel's sanctity by association. The 'poncella's' entry into the male sphere through adopting a masculinized appearance is reminiscent of the 'transgendered' saints, whose masculinity afford them the authority they could not gain as women. The author constantly juxtaposes the 'poncella's' masculine appearance with her virginity and chastity to serve as a constant reminder to Isabel that she is performing a masculine role. However, the author's implicit allusion to the Virgin Mary further transforms Isabel into the perfect woman. This ensures that she is now sufficiently worthy enough to enter the male political sphere and rule as Queen Regnant.

The 'poncella's' portrayal as a messianic portent both further exalts Isabel further and justifies her claim to the throne. The comparisons to Christ and the Virgin Mary imply that Isabel is not only a worthy queen, but she is the sole person who can bring Castile to glory. The author conspires in mythologizing Isabel, which furthers her own self-fashioning.

With regard to how this text can be reconciled with Greenblatt's (1980) model for self-fashioning it is clear his latter two criteria are fulfilled throughout, offering an in-depth analysis into the concept of female sovereignty. Whilst this text does not convey Isabel's own deeds, in its superimposition of Joan onto Isabel offers an idea of how Isabel should act. Since there is no distinction between literature and reality in the concept of self-fashioning, the *Poncella* nevertheless makes significant contributions to the fashioning of Isabel's identity.

Although the author goes to extreme lengths to prove that Isabel is capable of ruling, and is complementary to Isabel's authoring of her identity, his words do not

fully empower her. He asserts agency over her identity in the text through his portrayal of the 'poncella'. Isabel is unable to take control of the author's perceptions because he is anonymous and thus removed from her direct control. He disempowers her by ensuring that the 'poncella' is merely a defender of justice, contrary to a ruler's duties. Thus, he does not permit Isabel her full sovereign powers. Without them, he ensures that Isabel's identity is not fully that of a monarch in order to redress the imbalance caused by a female monarch. It is thus more difficult for Isabel to assert control over her identity when it is formed through the interpretation of another character. The very nature of a literary text gives more power and agency to the writer than it does to the Queen.

The next chapter will continue the exploration of Marian imagery in Isabel's representation. It will examine how the Virgin Mary is used not as a tool to elevate her to a 'sanctified' status but to remind her of the limitations of her sex. In Fray Íñigo de Mendoza's *Dechado a la muy escelente reina Doña Isabel, nuestra soberana señora*, the Virgin Mary serves as a reminder of Isabel's imperfections in order that they may be rectified.

## Chapter 4

### **Feminine Metaphor in the *Dechado a la muy escelente reina Doña Isabel, nuestra soberana señora***

Unlike most of the other authors studied in this dissertation, it is known that Fray Íñigo de Mendoza (c1430-c1508) had access both to the Castilian court and to Isabel as one of her confessors (Twomey 2008: 2). This afforded him great power, with authority in both the secular and spiritual spheres. Therefore, he may exert the greatest influence over the shaping of her identity over any of the authors that this dissertation explores. His *Dechado a la muy escelente reina Doña Isabel, nuestra soberana señora* is one of three treatises dedicated to Queen Isabel and her husband. Although his other works, most notably his *Coplas de Vita Christi*, have benefitted from extensive critical analysis, these political works have been largely neglected.

Nevertheless, the *Dechado*, and the two subsequent treatises, shed light on the shaping of Isabel's identity when she is part of a discourse of knowledge. The nature of didactical writing necessitates that Isabel must become the passive agent as she receives the advice given to her by Fray Íñigo. He, therefore, is able to assert agency over Isabel's sovereign identity by virtue of the genre in which he writes. As Fray Íñigo possesses the knowledge Isabel may need to become a successful monarch, he is at liberty to define her role as queen according to his own theorization of queenship.

This chapter will analyse how Fray Íñigo de Mendoza's Franciscan beliefs affected his attitudes towards female sovereignty. Coupled with Barbara Weissberger's (2008) theory of 'anxious masculinity', it will argue that Fray Íñigo's attitudes surrounding the issue of female sovereignty affect the way in which he structures the treatise. It will address his use of extended metaphor that ensures Isabel

is enclosed in the female sphere, ensuring that the shaping of her identity is focused on her femininity over her sovereignty. This cloistering mirrors the Franciscan beliefs on female spirituality. The chapter will go on to assert that Fray Íñigo denies Isabel further authority over her sovereignty. He implies that she is one part of a whole with her husband and not a sole ruler in her own right through the three-part structure of the treatise addressed to the monarchs separately and then together. Although superficially this adheres to Isabel's own 'tanto monta' policy, it implies that Isabel, as a woman, cannot be considered a monarch without the support of her husband. Is Fray Íñigo attempting to confine Isabel so that her political authority is unable to develop fully? Or does he propose to Isabel a secular queenship which mirrors that in heaven?

This dissertation will further argue that because the treatise is the product of Fray Íñigo's own perceptions, Isabel is unable to assert agency over how she is portrayed. It will also examine the role of the nobility on the self-fashioning of Isabel's queenship. There will be a focus on how Fray Íñigo achieves agency over the shaping of Isabel's identity. Additionally, it will discuss Fray Íñigo's authorship and motivations. It will argue that as a result of his political position at the Castilian court, Fray Íñigo does not require the level of favour and prestige that would encourage him to adhere to Isabel's own shaping of her sovereign identity. Given that he writes from a secure position of power, this chapter will argue that Fray Íñigo has more freedom over the way he conveys his beliefs regarding female rule.

#### 4.1 Franciscan Influences

Franciscan attitudes towards female authority and spirituality have greatly influenced the core themes of the *Dechado*. First, it must be noted that the problematic

role of Franciscan *beatas*, in many ways, mirrors Isabel own problematic role of Queen Regnant. Geraldine McKendrick (1988) considers these female Franciscans shared a 'hybrid status' (297). That is to say, they 'observed the simple vows of chastity and obedience' (297) expected of any female wishing to enter the religious life, but with one significant difference: that of enclosure. Whilst it was commonly practiced for nuns and other spiritual figures to observe in addition the vow of enclosure, thus cutting them off from the outside world, this was not the case for the Franciscan *beatas*. The 'hybrid status' that McKendrick discusses refers to their enjoyment of a male freedom that allows them to engage with the wider community. This contradicts the traditional view that outlines 'celibacy, invisibility and silence' (299) as the defining traits of female spirituality, and even sanctity, and calls into question 'the identification of all women in terms of their bodies, or as sources of sexual temptation' (McKendrick 1988: 299) leading to their exclusion from the public and political world. The *beatas*, whilst celibate, are neither invisible nor silent if they are free to interact with the outside community. If they are not excluded from the public sphere, then their spiritual practices are neither male nor female. McKendrick's work can be used perfectly to describe Isabel's position, as she too simultaneously occupies and is excluded from both spheres. Does this then mean that Fray Íñigo, who belongs to the same religious order as the *beatas*, may consider himself to be an authority that can assist Isabel in navigating her own role? Or does it mean that as a Franciscan he is more sympathetic to Isabel's quest for true political authority?

Second, the Franciscan attitude towards the Virgin Mary shows that it was highly unlikely that Fray Íñigo would indeed advocate a politically autonomous queen. Lesley K. Twomey's (2008) research on the Castilian attitude towards the Virgin and towards the Immaculate Conception has proven critical in this discussion. There was

some debate between various religious orders, including the Franciscans, over the conceptualization of the Immaculate Conception, despite the fact that there existed a large consensus to its veracity. According to Twomey (2008: 53), Fray Íñigo was vocally opposed to all those who did not believe in the Immaculate Conception to the extent that he considered them damned. His fervent belief in the Immaculate Conception is highly significant in two ways. First, whilst it may seem a core Catholic belief, it does affect how Fray Íñigo will choose to identify Isabel. The belief in the Immaculate Conception means that the Virgin Mary is the perfect woman and celestial Queen and therefore the perfect model for Isabel to emulate. What will be shown later in the chapter is how *Dechado* uses this concept both to provide a role model for Isabel and a model for her political position, which would ultimately diminish the political authority due to her as Queen.

However, one can argue that this belief could also imply that as Mary is the epitome of female perfection, so much so that she is completely free of sin, granting her the position of celestial Queen of Heaven, she is also utterly unique in this role. Therefore, whilst the author of the *Poncella*, attempts to sanctify Isabel in the text, Fray Íñigo will not emulate this due to his fundamental beliefs. We know from the outset that Isabel will be portrayed as a woman in need of guidance in her role and not as a queen of near mythic status. His assessment of her is less grandiose. However, that also ensures that his treatise to her is necessary. Were she already the perfect earthly queen, she would not have been in need of his guidance. Therefore, Fray Íñigo would have not had the opportunity to assess fully the role of a queen regnant.

Isabel's upbringing (Salvador Miguel 2004) translated to the appointments of notable Franciscans, such as Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, who became her confessor and later Archbishop of Toledo. Men such as him wielded great influence

over Isabel. Therefore, it is reasonable to surmise that Fray Íñigo, by virtue of the order to which he belonged, would be able to exert influence through his treatise from outset. This is before considering his appointment as another of Isabel's confessors. Whether or not the writing was working from a position of power, as I will discuss later in the chapter, presents both advantages and challenges different to those faced by the lesser known authors discussed in this dissertation.

#### 4.2 Authority in the *speculum principum* Genre

Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths (2011) has included Fray Íñigo's *Dechado* in her analysis of Isabel's political legitimization. She believes that his work is an example of the *speculum principum* written in order to uphold the ideology 'necessary to legitimize and sustain Isabelline claims to the throne' (12). This furthered the political power for both writer and patron (12), resulting in a mutually beneficial endeavour. Whilst this is, of course, the prime motive for utilizing the *speculum principum* genre, it does not engage with the subject matter of the *Dechado*. Although Fray Íñigo makes repeated references to the seemingly disastrous reign of Enrique IV that forms the basis of Isabelline propaganda, his focus is not to legitimize Isabel's claim. Therefore, the intended "effect" (Butler 2010: 147) of his work differs from that of Isabel's from the outset. Instead, its focus is on helping to shape Isabel's identity into one worthy of the position of sovereign according to his conceptualization of the role.

Nor does Fray Íñigo necessarily require further favour bestowed to him by Isabel. The Franciscans were dedicated to a contemplative and ascetic way of life. Their teachings of poverty, humility, and penitence made them unlikely to look to further their own power.

Unlike the other authors studied in this dissertation, Fray Íñigo writes from a position of secure power and prestige. He was a prolific writer and highly valued member of the Castilian court. He was also a vocally loyal subject to Isabel and Fernando and was known for his ‘violent criticisms’ of those nobles who did not recognize the authority of the monarchs (Rodríguez-Puértolas 1969: LXVI). Neither proof of loyalty nor the search for political power are convincing motivations for his authorship. Butler states that for performativity to occur the person ‘needs to occupy a position of recognised and efficacious authority’ (2010: 150). Fray Íñigo is in a prime position to craft an identity for Isabel that she must perform due to the authority and agency he can assert over her.

It will be assumed that Fray Íñigo wished to exploit the *speculum principum* genre in its purest form: to advise. He does not intend to uphold a political viewpoint favourable to Isabel, rather contribute new knowledge that will assist her in her role. He wishes to establish a discourse of knowledge whereby the power dynamics between the subject and the sovereign are reversed; Fray Íñigo’s authority derived from his authorship allows him to assert agency over Isabel who must in turn become his subject.

It is important to note that when the recipient of a *speculum principum* is a woman and not the typical prince as was standard at this time, what may be persuasive writing with the purpose to advise develops a much stronger didactical tone. It becomes clear that it is gender, not political legitimization, at the centre of this treatise. This concurs with Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths’ approach to the mirror for princes genre as an ‘ideal location from which to expose gender’ (13). The natural hierarchy between a man and a woman is exploited, allowing Fray Íñigo a higher level of authorial authority over Isabel from the outset. Coupled with the authority he can exert

as the subject of the discourse of knowledge, Fray Íñigo has scope to assert agency over Isabel's identity as he is able to set the parameters for ideal queenship.

#### 4.3 Anxious Masculinity

Fray Íñigo places gender at the centre of the treatise. This is apparent from the first stanza of his prologue where he refers to humankind's precarious position 'por culpa de una muger' (1, 282) alluding to the story of Adam and Eve. He juxtaposes Eve's role in The Fall with Isabel's role to 'remediar nuestros males' (1, 282), establishing the Ave/Eva palindrome so commonly used in relation to Isabel. Conflating the political role of sovereign with the religious role of Eve (and of the Virgin Mary's antithetical role) suggests that Fray Íñigo's treatise will focus its advice to Isabel on the reconciliation of her gender with her political and societal role. He does not solely identify her with the role of sovereign.

This is further apparent through the extended metaphor through which Fray Íñigo conveys his ideas. The entire poem advises Isabel through the context of needlework. This immediately draws parallels with Saint Anne, the patron saint of needlework. He therefore subtly associates Isabel with spirituality from the start, and affiliates her with the highest levels of female authority. However, more significantly, by utilizing what was considered to be a quintessentially female pursuit, Fray Íñigo genders her sovereignty. He equates each mention of embroidery with a characteristic essential to a successful ruler. That he genders these traits in this way is highly significant.

When considering Fray Íñigo's extended metaphor within the confines of Barbara Weissberger's (2008) 'anxious masculinity' it becomes clear that he attempts

to reconcile femininity with leadership in a more palatable way. He thus attempts to theorize an unfamiliar, potentially unsettling concept using feminine coded language. He does this before he even begins to deliver his advice to Isabel, implying that the most pertinent matter in which he wants to address is not how Isabel must display characteristics that enable her to be a successful sovereign but how a woman must display requisite characteristics that enable her capacity to rule. In many ways, this is not unique to Isabelline literature. Of the texts analysed in this discussion, each one addresses the issue of female sovereignty differently, although often opting to use masculine language to grant her access to the androcentric political sphere. However, Fray Íñigo does the opposite and generates a locus through which to conduct his treatise on sovereignty. This is reminiscent of Fray Martín de Córdoba's *Jardín de nobles donzellas* (1468 – 69), whose virtuous ladies are enclosed within a metaphorical garden and thus contained within the female sphere. In so doing, Fray Íñigo succeeds in diminishing Isabel's personal power, contrary to the self-fashioning demonstrated in Fernando del Pulgar's historiographical writings. Thus, Fray Íñigo begins to set the parameters of queenship to be lesser than the absolute authority that Isabel hopes to retain as Queen Regnant.

#### 4.4 Theorizing Female Sovereignty

Whilst the extended metaphor succeeds in containing the concept of queenship fully within the female sphere, it also succeeds in feminizing the virtues that Fray Íñigo believes Isabel must possess. The first virtue is 'la justicia' (5, 283). Rather than

explaining exactly how Isabel must be a just ruler, or indeed exact justice, Fray Íñigo describes the virtue through use of colour. Although traditional iconography depicts justice as a woman holding scales, it must be remembered that justice, and justice in relation to sovereignty, cannot be equated. Justice in relation to a monarch was the sole domain of a king. In the *Dechado*, justice is described as ‘grana’ and ‘sangriento’ (5, 283), implying justice to be of a bloody nature. This is further reinforced with the repetition of ‘espada’ (5, 283), referring to the symbolic sword of justice. What is highly significant is there is no reference made to Isabel herself exacting justice. Fray Íñigo explains its necessity and importance in creating a stable society but never advises Isabel to embody this virtue actively. It appears, therefore, that Fray Íñigo is providing a subtle reminder to traditional societal roles where the king is the only one with the authority to exact justice. As Isabel has a husband to which to defer this act, this indicates that Fray Íñigo attempts to curtail her authority as sovereign. In the prologue Fray Íñigo alludes to Isabel’s redemptive capacity in ‘remediar nuestros males’ (1, 281) when indirectly mentioning her restoration of the kingdom after Enrique IV’s reign. This does appear to give Isabel an active role in exacting justice but without reference to the aforementioned symbols of justice. This suggests Fray Íñigo’s possible reluctance in endorsing Isabel as the sole exacter of justice, instead advising that Fernando, as king, should exact justice in the more traditional sense on her behalf. Fray Íñigo’s metaphor allows him to explain what justice is and why it is important whilst ensuring Isabel is not an active agent in the embodiment of the virtue.

The next virtue, ‘la Fortaleza’ (13, 286) is described in a similar way. The thread that Fray Íñigo describes is ‘torcida’, referring to the need to remain steadfast. Its colour is described as ‘pardilla’ which signifies concern and sorrow (Rodríguez-Puértolas 1968: 286). The significance of this is twofold. First, by combining fortitude

with sorrow, Fray Íñigo invokes imagery of the Virgin Mary, whose epithets include ‘Our Lady of Sorrows’ and whose sorrow allows her to intercede on behalf of sinners in Heaven. Although subtle, it implies that, in order to be a strong queen, Isabel must emulate the Virgin Mary in her strength of character. Fray Íñigo provides an ideal in the Virgin for Isabel to follow. Second, Fray Íñigo juxtaposes the virtue of fortitude with a warning against the inherent weakness of women: their variable nature. He advises that she must look to fortitude ‘quando se viere afligida’ (13, 286). The verb ‘afligir’ is used with a subtly patronizing tone, using ‘when’ to imply that Isabel may be ‘upset’ or ‘bothered’ frequently. This refers to the intrinsic nature of women which Fray Íñigo wishes to assist Isabel in overcoming. This virtue is made female so that it no longer applies to Isabel as a sovereign, but Isabel as an imperfect woman who must actively defy her nature to achieve sovereign authority. He later orders her to ‘mostrad la cara serena’ (15, 287), once again authoring her as an emotional figure, perhaps lacking in control, and undermining her as sovereign. He encloses her in the female sphere, rendering her powerless against his authority within the text. Again, it likely alludes to a spiritual model. Just as the Virgin Mary, the celestial Queen, defers to Christ’s authority in heaven, Fray Íñigo suggests that Isabel should do the same as her earthly counterpart. This is the third instance in this discussion that the Virgin Mary is made comparable to Isabel. Fray Íñigo invites her to use Mary upon which to model her actions. He ensures that his depiction of Isabel remains an imperfect woman who must aspire to be like her celestial counterpart. To identify her in this way ensures that Isabel is in need of his counsel; if she is not yet perfect but must become so in order to rule successfully. Therefore, Fray Íñigo has reason to engage her in a discourse of knowledge, providing a situation in which an exploration of Isabel’s sovereignty would be acceptable; it is in her interest.

This entrapment within the female sphere is most strongly demonstrated with the virtue of ‘temperança’ (25, 291). Fray Íñigo describes temperance as a harsh bridle against ‘el carnal movimiento’ (25, 291). Here, Fray Íñigo separates sovereignty with female sovereignty. Where a male sovereign would be expected to demonstrate virility, Fray Íñigo advises the opposite, as she is not a ruler but a female ruler. He immediately equates temperance with female honour and chastity, reinforcing this message in the colour he chooses to symbolize temperance: ‘de blanca color por honor’ (26, 291). Displaying this virtue is described as ‘más segura y mejor’ (26, 292), indicating the importance of upholding female virtue. By reminding Isabel to be an honourable woman, he once again draws attention to the female aspect of her identity over her identity as Queen Regnant. He reduces her from sovereign to woman, one that must be contained in accordance to the conduct about which he writes.

Although Isabel, described as ‘tanto sana’ (30, 293), clearly already exhibits temperance, Fray Íñigo continues to focus on temperance as a basis for other virtues. That he equates temperance with brocade (29, 292) demonstrates this clearly, conveying it as a virtue that is interwoven with similar characteristics that Isabel must exhibit. This is shown through Fray Íñigo’s reference to the Castilian court. Fray Íñigo would be aware of the inner workings of the court through his own position and through his family. He implies that Isabel should use her temperance to control the court and their actions (34, 295), even as far as to discourage ‘el bailar en el tiempo de las fiestas’ (34, 295). He crafts Isabel as a role model to her subjects. Whilst it was the sovereign’s duty to be the ideal role model for their subjects (Guardiola-Griffiths 2011: 17), she is not a role model as sovereign, but, again, as a woman whose piety and virtue will ensure the court is not tempted to sin. Temperance becomes the defining virtue that characterizes Isabel, identifying her as woman and not a ruler.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

Fray Íñigo de Mendoza's *Dechado a la muy escelente reina Doña Isabel, nuestra soberana señora*, although a work in praise of Isabel's rule, succeeds in asserting authority over how her rule is portrayed. He exploits his position at the Castilian court to produce a treatise undermining Isabel as a monarch in her own right, instead focusing his work on his theorization of female sovereignty. Although there is substantial evidence that demonstrates his loyalty to her political cause, his use of the extended metaphor of needlework and embroidery ensures that Isabel's identity is shaped within the confines of the female sphere, thus limiting her power and forcing her reliance on her husband to be a successful sovereign. This is seen through the subsequent treatises devoted to Fernando and to their shared sovereignty. Whilst Fray Íñigo's advice to Isabel is shrouded in metaphor and overly descriptive phrases, his advice to Fernando is more pertinent, indicating that he is perhaps more at ease engaging with the typical *speculum principum* recipient.

This 'anxious masculinity' (Weissberger 2008) is the driving force in Fray Íñigo's *Dechado* and is apparent through the way in which he conveys his wisdom to Isabel. Although using an extended metaphor for needlework is undoubtedly clever, it is not clear in its explanations of the requisite virtues for Isabel to possess as a successful sovereign. The 'anxiety' that Fray Íñigo has towards the concept of a female ruler, however competent, renders his theorization of female sovereignty useless as he himself is unable to define a queen regnant. He hides behind his metaphor that both

diminishes Isabel's personal power and further complicates the definition of a queen regnant.

Fray Íñigo's choice of requisite characteristics for Isabel further demonstrates his reluctance to define Isabel as a sovereign. He focuses on justice as an abstract concept and not one that Isabel can actively embody. This implies that Isabel, as a woman, cannot exact justice and thus must defer to her husband in his own sovereign authority. The later traits of fortitude and temperance mitigate the natural flaws belonging to women, implying that only if Isabel overcomes them that she may succeed in her role. The didactic rhetoric in the text places him in a position of authorial authority over Isabel. He succeeds in asserting agency over her identity by containing her in the female sphere and renders her a passive object for Fray Íñigo to mould.

Fray Íñigo's choice to allude to the Virgin Mary ensures that Isabel is presented further as a flawed woman. The Virgin Mary becomes a role model, both in her identity and the way in she defers to Christ in Heaven. This again alludes to Isabel's deference to her husband as the most appropriate political set-up. However, this does nothing to extend her political power and renders her role as Queen Regnant completely diminished.

Fray Íñigo's text does not entirely fulfil Greenblatt's criteria for self-fashioning as, once again, it does not pertain to Isabel's past actions but rather to Isabel's future behaviour. However, it succeeds in fulfilling the other two criteria and it fulfils Greenblatt's argument that self-fashioning is dependent on submission to a higher authority (1980: 9) through his reliance on crafting Isabel's identity through church doctrine. His agency over Isabel is strong due to the didactical nature of the work and thus ensuring that she will perform the identity he creates for her.

In the next chapter, Diego de San Pedro will follow on from Fray Íñigo in providing the Virgin Mary as a mirror for Isabel. The chapter will explore the extent to which Isabel is idealized as both a queen and a woman, ultimately transforming her into an archetype through the poetry that he dedicates to her.

## Chapter 5

### Poetic Digressions in the *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda*

#### 5.1 Introduction

A narrative of courtly love, the *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda* is the only text in this discussion that does not pertain directly to the identity of Isabel. However, an analysis of her sovereignty is possible through a key structural element of Diego de San Pedro's writing, which shows that *Arnalte y Lucenda* is a highly significant text to consider.

Scholarship to date considers *Arnalte y Lucenda* an inferior text in comparison to the highly praised *Cárcel de Amor* (Vivanco 2008: 131). Indeed, the incorporation of two lengthy *canciones* into the traditional structure of a courtly love narrative has led critics such as Keith Whinnom (1974) to categorize the work from unsophisticated to downright cumbersome to read. He considers them to be 'digresiones totalmente inconexas' to the main body of the text (63) while Laura Vivanco initially defers to Alan Deyermond's suggestion that the poems are of 'virtual irrelevance' (Vivanco 2008:131) to the main text. In fact, they were deemed so irrelevant that they were eliminated from later editions after Isabel's death (Whinnom 1960: 8). However, it is the very inclusion of both poems that makes *Arnalte y Lucenda* worthy of discussion. This chapter, whilst still considering the narrative as a whole, will focus on the two poems, not as unnecessary additions, but as cleverly juxtaposed analyses of female

identity which, in turn, fulfil the second two criteria of Greenblatt's model for self-fashioning.

Diego de San Pedro presents a dual narrative in the text. First, is the tale of the unsuccessful Arnalte in his pursuit of the beautiful Lucenda. It is a narrative that closely follows the structure of the most popular romances in the fifteenth-century Castilian court. In fact, the court and the tale are linked through the narrator, who proves himself to be a member of the Castilian court when he meets Arnalte (Vivanco 2008: 131). It is, therefore, unsurprising that Diego de San Pedro dedicates the text to the ladies of Isabel's court, commencing the narrative with the address 'virtuosas señoras' (3); the tale is a natural addition to what was heard at court and indeed what formed part of Isabel's extensive library.<sup>5</sup> The conventional subject matter and structure ensures that criticism often does not extend beyond thematic comparisons with other texts. The prevailing conclusion is that *Arnalte y Lucenda* is simply another Castilian narrative written by the author famed for his more successful Castilian narrative.

Its limited focus means that analysis to date has been unable to reconcile the main narrative with its structurally inconsistent inclusion of poetry. The first poem is a panegyric to Isabel and the second, lengthier poem, is dedicated to the Virgin Mary named *Las siete angustias*. They both differ vastly in structure and form from the interspersed use of lyric that pertains to the character of Lucenda, which is often considered closer to the conventional style found within a tale of courtly love. Laura Vivanco (2008) is one of relatively few who speculates on its wider significance. Her theory relates to linking the text's intended audience, the ladies of the court and Isabel

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations from Ivy A. Corfis' 1985 edition Diego de San Pedro, *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda* will be cited by line number.

herself, to its distant Theban setting by including themes more familiar to them. Although her consideration of the wider implications of the text is laudable, this analysis is nevertheless unconvincing. The inclusion of a classical setting serves to demonstrate San Pedro's education and knowledge of the literature that formed the basis of the medieval works. This in turn helped him gain authority in his authorship that could then be used to perpetuate his ideas.

The very structure of the sentimental romance genre lends itself well to Greenblatt's assessment of self-fashioning as it provides the platform for a discussion. Smith views the *novela sentimental* as "a fictional mode for the staging the gender debate" (Smith 2015: 183) which can be linked to Greenblatt's second and third criteria whereby societal norms are discussed and analysed. Diego de San Pedro is able to do this in his text and thus engage with the crafting of Isabel's identity in a more subtle, but still didactic way.

The poems themselves may not be simple additions at all but rather deliberate commentaries on different facets of womanhood and the treatment of female identity – above all, a treatment of Isabel's identity. Diego de San Pedro's emphasis on the thankless woman (23) during the opening pages of the text suggests a subtext that helps to educate the ladies of the court on virtuous femininity. Later analysis between the praise for Lucenda and the praise for Isabel will highlight Diego de San Pedro's idealized model of womanhood that Isabel appears to uphold. On reflection, it is significant that Diego de San Pedro uses verse to comment on three different women, even if Lucenda does not have an entire poem devoted to her, merely snippets of letters and songs that Arnalte uses in his attempts to gain her affection. The fact that Arnalte and the narrator, the author himself, share in voicing the poems will also be discussed later in the chapter. It will discuss the inadequate courtly praise for Lucenda, the praise

for Isabel from the perspective of a subject to his monarch and the praise for the Virgin Mary. The poetry discussed in isolation would offer little upon which to comment. However, embedded within the main narrative structure, Diego de San Pedro establishes a subtle discourse, one that addresses Isabel's identity in three distinct ways: the sovereign, the saint, and the maiden.

This chapter will analyse the panegyric and *Las siete angustias* in turn, followed by a study of the portrayal of Lucenda through the small excerpts of poetry found throughout the narrative. Diego de San Pedro's portrayal of the women's identity will be assessed in relation to how Isabel portrayed herself, and the political implications of his representation of her. Through a comparative exploration of the three women, this chapter will argue the extent to which Isabel becomes an archetypal figure, where Diego de San Pedro parodies her identity in order to transform her into an object which her ladies can emulate: an object of courtly love that he conveys through his use of lyric. It will be further argued that Diego de San Pedro's narrative style weakens his assertion of agency over Isabel; the message he attempts to convey is overshadowed by his primary purpose to entertain. As the narrative focuses on Arnalte's courtly love for Lucenda, Diego de San Pedro cannot develop his assessment of Isabel's identity. Although the narrative reveals a possible insight into Isabel by virtue of her artistic taste, her sovereignty remains unaffected.

## 5.2 An 'Erroneous' Panegyric

The narrative of *Arnalte y Lucenda* opens with a dedication to the 'damas de la Rreyna' (1) before commencing with the tale as told by Diego de San Pedro through the protagonist, Arnalte. It is here that the panegyric to Isabel is placed, as evidence of

the narrator's court credentials to Arnalte. There is a definitive trend that rejects the panegyric as anything other than the digressions of, at that stage, an inexperienced author. Why then does this dissertation argue the opposite? There is evidence that suggests the two poems offer an analysis of Isabel's identity and also provide an insight into Diego de San Pedro's authorship and motivation beyond Whinnom's suggestion of declaring allegiance after his patron's earlier treachery (1960: 8). Vivanco proposes a possible greater significance of the poems by cleverly using Diego de San Pedro's own words. She refers to the following passage at the opening of the text:

Las cosas en todo y todo buenas, por mucho que con gentil estilo y discreta orden ordenadas sean, no pueden a todos contentar, antes de muchos son por no tales juzgados; de unos porque no las alcance, de otros porque en ellas no están atentos, de otros no por las faltas que hallan, mas porque sepan que saben.  
(23-27)

I concur with Vivanco (2008: 132) that Diego de San Pedro advises the readers to be 'atentos' and consider carefully the meaning and significance of poems. In other words, he explicitly states that the inclusion of both poems was not only a deliberate stylistic choice, it provides an alternative significance to the primary purpose of the text itself.

It is this alternative significance that this chapter will examine. As previously mentioned, it is especially interesting that Diego de San Pedro's forays into extended lyric both pertain to women, the two most important women in Castilian society. It is entirely plausible to suggest that Diego de San Pedro has taken an opportunity to offer his own analysis of Isabel's sovereignty through the lyric. What Diego de San Pedro hopes to achieve from this is more difficult to ascertain. It is possible that he wishes to

offer his perspective on Isabel in the hope of forming a discourse of knowledge in order to gain indirect influence over her, just as the other authors studied in this dissertation attempt to do through their respective works. Or, perhaps he wishes to offer his support, just as Whinnom (1960) suggests, and demonstrates it not only by dedicating *Arnalte y Lucenda* to Isabel's ladies, but by portraying Isabel as the perfect Queen Regnant. This would dispel any doubt over his loyalty to her. As for the main narrative, it provides an opportunity to portray Isabel indirectly, without dedicating an entire treatise to her, one that she may not actually read. Within the structure of a courtly love narrative, San Pedro is able to demonstrate his authorship. The allusions to classical works, such as setting his tale in Thebes, show that San Pedro is highly educated and a more trustworthy source of knowledge. Therefore, any conclusions that he draws pertaining to Isabel's identity are that of an established author of merit. His authorship thus ensures that others would trust his judgement, including his judgement regarding Isabel.

San Pedro's poetic framework is clear and ensures that his panegyric is memorable. Each stanza is composed of ten lines with a *quintillas dobles* rhyme scheme. This rhyme scheme allows him to foreground the most important adjective by placing it as the phrase's rhyming word. This emphasizes the identity that he wishes to convey. The adjectives are more memorable, increasing their impact by shaping the view of the audience. The rhyming words themselves are characterized by soft consonants, such as the 'd' in 'sabida' (189), the 's' in 'buenos' and 'malos' (206 – 7) and the 'c' in 'excellencia' (231). These sounds are euphonious and melodic; the tone is almost intimate and draws parallels with the lofty verses often found in courtly love traditions. The audience is thereby subtly manipulated, believing Isabel to be a queen worthy of such praise.

From the first stanza, San Pedro establishes Isabel as the ideal ruler. He introduces her as 'la reyna de Castilla' (172) to Arnalte, with no further mention of her name. Immediately she is characterized by her societal role, assuming that she is of such fame that her reputation precedes her, even to a man of Grecian origin. She is presented as distant, a legend, whose power extends beyond her immediate political domain. Diego de San Pedro justifies this by describing her as 'la sin falta' (171) and 'la más maravilla' (169) to indicate that she is without fault. These phrases hint that she is the perfect sovereign. She is no longer a person but the embodiment of a role.

It is in this way that the poem adheres to much of the propaganda that was perpetuated throughout Isabel's reign. Most significantly, it describes Isabel as a remedy to 'discordia' and 'injusticia' (346-48), perhaps a reference to the discord and injustice that characterized Castile before her reign. This indirectly refers to the turbulent reign of her brother, Enrique IV. It also makes reference to 'nuestra guerra' which, considering the date of the text, could only refer to the conquest of Granada. The inclusive pronoun 'nuestra', implies that the war is a war of the people, with Isabel leading the cause at the helm. This most certainly corresponds with the political rhetoric that Isabel ensured permeated the writings of her official chroniclers. Furthermore, it is certainly suggestive of a cause that Diego de San Pedro wholeheartedly supports. The dating of the text concurs with this, as it was written after their allegiance to Juana ended (Whinnom 1960: 12). It even suggests an act of support on behalf of his noble patron who was a reformed rebel. Consequently, an act of support exploited through his narrative could be a means of securing further patronage and favour by means of his verses. This is crucial in assessing Diego de San Pedro's motivation in writing *Arnalte y Lucenda*. He will need to prove his loyalty in order for him to be in a position conducive to providing advice. By demonstrating his

support, and by including himself as part of the 'nuestra' in 'nuestra guerra', he presents himself as a model subject and confirms that he is no longer a supporter of rival claimants to the throne. Furthermore, the fact that he recites the panegyric to Arnalte, a foreign-born man, reveals that his praise and support for Isabel is not confined to Castile but universally. This shows that his support is not superficial and that any praise he gives to Isabel is also sincere. Thus, both his character and his words in the panegyric are to be trusted implicitly.

Throughout the panegyric, Diego de San Pedro alters his structure either to reinforce a sense of sincerity or to heighten his praise of Isabel through a thematic change. In lines 200-09 there are several repetitions of 'es'. This use of polysyndeton conveys a sense of great excitement, presenting Diego de San Pedro as so overcome by his praise for Isabel, that variation in lexical choice and in syntax is forgotten in favour of a succession of adjectives. It alludes to spontaneous discourse which generates verisimilitude in his praise. He then proceeds to utilize balanced opposites that restore stylistic control and indicate sophisticated crafting. Isabel is described as 'gozo para los buenos, es pena para los malos' (207-08). The double dichotomies of 'gozo/pena' and 'buenos/malos' show that Isabel's sovereignty extends to all subjects of the realm. Later, he describes the many ways in which Isabel demonstrates the archetypal traits of a monarch, describing each trait citing how Isabel displays them to generate verisimilitude (255-79). Each trait is developed to show how Isabel uses these traits to rule successfully. This provides additional authority to his authorship as he must know the requisite traits of an exemplary monarch if he discerns and recognizes the traits that Isabel's sovereignty demonstrates – 'ánima con la franqueza, sojuzga con fortaleza' (261-62). San Pedro is careful in his treatment of Isabel. It is overly

positive, almost reverent, in style, as each description of her transforms her from an imperfect woman, to the perfect Queen.

This theme is continually strengthened throughout the preceding verse (209-18) where his descriptions begin to create an ecclesiastical semantic field. His lexical choice is significant – ‘gloria para la tierra’ (209) – as it denotes the glory of Christ. Her identity is thus compared with that of Christ. This then elevates her beyond that of a human and she becomes greater than a single person, she is the glory of the land. The theme continues in ‘el bien de nuestra mal’ (213) to indicate that she is the salvation of her Castilian subjects. The semantic field is further enforced in ‘es vida en nuestras muertes’ (218). The imagery pertains to the Resurrection and the promise of life in death. Diego de San Pedro grows bold, drawing connotations of Christ in his treatment of Isabel’s identity, much as the author of the *Poncella* depicts Isabel as a messianic figure. Her depiction as a saviour is strengthened further still in a later stanza with ‘allega los virtuosos quita daños de entre nos’ (270-71). This alludes to the Virgin Mary and her celestial role as intercessor on behalf of humankind. Just as she intercedes on behalf of all souls from heaven, Isabel is the advocate of the people of Castile. Her identity develops from woman, to Queen with a divine cause throughout the course of the text.

Lines 239-48 are bolder still, referring to the future death of the Queen and describing it as a great loss for the people of Castile (248). He suggests that her ‘gloria’ will be ‘cobrada’ and ‘su pena quitada’ (246 – 47) suggesting a bereft and bleak future without Isabel. His over-exaggeration mirrors his narrative and the lovesickness that Arnalte suffers in his desire for Lucenda. Although the tone is melodramatic, it is very effective in transforming Isabel into the object of his own affections, the Lucenda to Diego de San Pedro’s Arnalte. Keith Whinnom describes the panegyric as ‘quite

clearly the same style as his conceptist amatory verse' (1960: 12), which is evidently true. She is utterly idealized; rather than a developed identity, she becomes a one-dimensional character and thus a reflection of herself.

The final lines of the following verse are highly evocative. Though San Pedro has already identified Isabel as a saviour figure, he does not address her gender until this point, and does so in a very surprising way. He explains that she 'castiga con la justicia' (258), a markedly masculine trait that was the domain solely of male sovereigns. As Isabel flouted this trait as part of her self-image, Diego de San Pedro mirrors the image that Isabel was determined to convey, demonstrating support for and fulfilment of her wishes.

As Isabel is inserted into the narrative, she effectively becomes another of Diego de San Pedro's characters. He thus gains a creative authority over her which enables him to shape how she is portrayed. However, this cannot be fully realized. Firstly, this text was produced for Isabel's court. Diego de San Pedro must enter her space in order for his work to be taken seriously. Therefore, he must craft Isabel's representation whilst mindful of her reaction to his work. Secondly, as has been suggested, Diego de San Pedro must present himself as a loyal subject to Isabel's crown. He must prove his loyalty through praise of her or of her sovereignty. In *Arnalte e Lucenda* he does both; her character and her performance as a monarch is clearly presented as without fault to such an extent, she becomes an example to her ladies and all others who may read the text. The poem is so obsequious it runs the risk of sycophancy, even perhaps insincerity. Isabel becomes the archetypal perfect queen, befitting to a narrative with a generic convention that allows scope for a melodramatic tone. Thus, his analysis of her character can be easily dismissed as the writing of an

overly flattering courtier seeking her favour. Isabel's agency to some extent remains intact simply because it cannot be taken seriously.

### 5.3 The *Siete angustias*

The *Siete angustias* must also be analysed as a poem that can exist outside the narrative structure. Diego de San Pedro's second break away from the main narrative, voiced this time by Arnalte, is in praise of the Virgin Mary throughout the 'seven sorrows' of her life. Poetry in praise of the Virgin Mary was popular in Castilian society and certainly would not be out of place in some narratives. However, with regard to *Arnalte y Lucenda*, the poem is more complex than simply praise to the Virgin Mary. Let us consider first the context in which the *Siete angustias* is placed.

The poem is found towards the end of the narrative, mirroring the position in which the panegyric to Isabel is found. The *Siete angustias* is largely voiced by Arnalte. This is a highly important detail. Where the panegyric to Isabel credits 'el auctor', who we infer to be San Pedro himself, this longer, more ambitious, work credits the protagonist, who we know by now is a weak and inept character. Why is it that the weaker of the two men is credited with the more sophisticated poem? There are two arguments to consider. First, an adherence to genre convention. Second, how this poem treats the identity of Mary as an example that Isabel must follow.

The *Siete angustias* goes beyond the traditional praise to the Virgin Mary. However, its first stanza does contain the expected rhetorical devices with words as 'adora' (1729) and 'preciosa esperança' (1731) to describe the love and adulation of the people towards the Virgin. The audience's expectations and San Pedro's poem at this point do not differ. The poem's opening lines imply that Arnalte intends to beg for

solace in his suffering from the Virgin. The rest of the stanza follows through with that assumption and provides a semantic field of suffering and consolation, uniting the Virgin with ‘las tristes’ (1746) who look to her to aid them in their suffering. This is the justification that Arnalte gives for reciting this poem. At this point, it is no different from other examples of Marian poetry. The final three lines of the stanza, ‘te plega de mi ayudar para que pueda trobar sin angustia tus angustias’ (1735–37), indicate that Arnalte attempts to experience his pain vicariously through the Virgin, by juxtaposing his ‘angustia’ at his situation with her ‘angustias’, in an attempt to relieve his love-induced anguish. This is reinforced in lines 1746-47, ‘oluidar las tristes mias y acordar las graues tuyas’. This phrase is beseeching, almost prayer-like, in tone as though by reciting his *canción* Arnalte will be purged of his pain.

Seeking solace from the Virgin Mary is not unusual. A comparison is being made between Arnalte’s suffering and that of the Virgin – one that seeks to equate his sufferings to those of the Virgin Mary, whose own sufferings are equated to those of Christ, thus bringing her closer to the divine. The poem foregrounds suffering to praise the Virgin Mary and to fulfil his second authorial purpose: to examine the question of female sovereignty and provide Isabel with guidance on the matter.

San Pedro ensures that the Virgin’s sufferings are continuously reinforced. ‘Madre triste’ (1883) denotes the emotions that characterize women: maternal instinct and the implied loss of control that arises from sadness and suffering. These are emotions with which the audience is able to identify, closing the distance between the audience and the Virgin. Later, she partakes in ritualized grief (1891) described as tearing out her hair, physically illustrating her internal pain. Louise Haywood’s (2010) critical analysis of *Celestina* examines the female voice lament tradition and the topos of grief which provide inter-textuality for the Virgin Mary’s actions in the *Siete*

*angustias*. The display of outward signs of grief, or ‘self-wounding’ (2010: 82) that she shows in tearing out her hair adhere to Haywood’s analysis of the basic elements in medieval lament (84). Later, her assessment of the Greek lament tradition (2010: 84) adheres to the Virgin’s mournful anger (1945-55) at her son’s crucifixion. The audience will be familiar with such displays of grieving and identify the Virgin Mary with characters found in Castilian literature, canciones, and classical literature. Again, the audience is able to identify with these actions and, linked to Arnalte’s lamentations of his own situation. For Laura Vivanco, the *Siete angustias* represents an indirect comment on the courtly love tradition (2008: 141). To compare the desire for Lucenda with Christ’s passion is a pertinent example of sacra-profane hyperbole. This analysis also concurs with Patricia Grieve’s (1987: 38) analysis that San Pedro wishes to convey the connection between love and death. Arnalte compares his ‘living death’ with the death of Christ. Therefore, the audience is invited to think about this and reach the same conclusion, namely that Arnalte’s situation is trivial within a greater perspective. The presence of the Virgin Mary in the text, therefore, implies that Arnalte’s passion is trivial and unimportant compared to a more holy, devout love. In comparison, the Virgin’s anguish is far from trivial and adheres to Isidore of Seville’s etymology of Marian lamentations of the Virgin to ensure it is compared to Christ’s, bringing her closer to the divine. Isabel can then observe this as a model for queenship to which she must adhere.

Mary is described as ‘gloriosa’ (1780), ‘sagrada’ (1876), and ‘Rreyna’ (2162), all of which convey respect to her, and provide stylistic symmetry to the way in which San Pedro describes Isabel. This provides a comparison between the two women wherein Isabel views her own queenship is reflected back to her. San Pedro attempts to succeed through this poem what Fray Íñigo achieves in the *Dechado*. Their prime

similarity is that they both embody advocacy and justice. As these traits are fundamental both to Mary's role as Celestial Queen and Isabel's role as Queen Regnant, therefore Isabel must observe and emulate her in order to fulfil her role successfully. From this, it can be ascertained that Diego de San Pedro is actively attempting to portray Isabel as a woman who embodies the pinnacle of virtue and sanctity but who must always strive for the ultimate model of queenship. This further idealization of Isabel's potential if she heeds his advice implies that San Pedro is eager to ensure that his absolute loyalty to her is conveyed, whilst also seeking to exert authorial agency over the shaping of her identity. If we take Greenblatt's self-fashioning into consideration, where the distinction between literature and reality is blurred, Isabel's potential to emulate the Virgin Mary to become the perfect earthly Queen becomes a given. She becomes his perfect character, the exemplary figure for all. This, coupled with Isabel's own intentions concerning her self-fashioning, is in keeping with the identity Isabel seeks to perform.

The *Siete angustias* both comments upon the courtly love tradition as a whole and provides an additional analysis of Isabel's identity. Whilst it appears to adhere to the genre convention of a traditional Marian lyric, it succeeds in criticizing courtly love through Arnalte's comparison of his hopeless situation with the seven sorrows of Mary.

This comparison is crucial to San Pedro's dual narrative. Arnalte's vicarious suffering through the Virgin Mary renders Arnalte's situation as trivial when juxtaposed with the death of Christ. From this, San Pedro critiques the courtly love narrative, ensuring that Arnalte is a weak, although sympathetic character. It also provides scope for San Pedro to compare the identities of the Virgin Mary and Isabel.

San Pedro deliberately portrays Mary's anguish to remind the reader of the ideal that all must strive to emulate, above all Isabel.

However, his characterization is not fully developed. In isolation, the poem conveys far more about Arnalte's character than it does that of Isabel. Only when it is directly compared with Isabel's panegyric are the subtle allusions to her extrapolated from Mary's characterization apparent. Within the body of the main narrative the poem highlights that Arnalte is not the best example of a romantic hero. Once again, San Pedro's choice of text fails to help him to develop fully his analysis of Isabel.

#### 5.4 Lucenda and Idealized Femininity

In contrast to the panegyric to Isabel and the *Siete angustias*, Lucenda's identity is not explored through a single poem. Instead, her identity is conveyed to the audience through fragments of lyric and through the letters Arnalte sends to Lucenda during his attempts to gain her affections. It is immediately apparent, therefore, that when comparing San Pedro's two poems, and the characterization of Lucenda, it is not a like-for-like comparison. As Patricia Grieve notes (1987: 29) there are instances in *Arnalte y Lucenda* that allude more to the fifteenth century *cancionero* tradition than they do to the traditional courtly love narrative. Therefore, those parts of the text that allude most to the *cancionero* should not be analysed as this genre. Thus, the poetry in *Arnalte e Lucenda* is worthy of study outside this sphere. There is a definite contrast between the two poems and the snippets of poetry that adhere to the courtly love tradition. The *cancionero* poems display greater crafting and suggests that Arnalte's attempts to adhere to convention in his letters and lyrics do little to make him appear the romantic hero and are often followed by actions that border on the comic (Grieve

1987: 30). As previously discussed, the contrast reinforces the criticism of this genre that San Pedro attempts to convey through Arnalte. This could be an attempt to appeal to Isabel. However, there is more than sufficient evidence to suggest that she enjoyed this style of literature. It does strongly suggest an exaltation of the idealized woman and a rejection of the superficially perfect woman portrayed in this tradition. He does this by using two different narrative traditions to convey structural separation between the two ideals.

Through the main characters, Diego de San Pedro reinforces ideals propagated in the Castilian courtly love tradition. Through Arnalte, he is able to explore a primary feminine characteristic, that of the intercessor. Arnalte entreats his sister with ‘con tu seso tu flaqueza esfuerçes’ (2306), citing a woman’s ‘flaqueza’ to emphasize Belisa’s capabilities to intercede on his behalf. Belisa’s failure to intercede successfully on Arnalte’s behalf is directly compared with more successful intercessors: Isabel, who, according to San Pedro, advocates for all her people and Mary, whom Arnalte beseeches to assuage his suffering through her own. San Pedro attempts to act as Isabel’s guide, addressing the concept of female sovereignty, reminding her of an important characteristic to include in her self-fashioning.

Through Arnalte, San Pedro also explores the identity of Lucenda. Although she does not have an entire *canción* dedicated to her, there are twelve lines of lyric that Arnalte dedicates to her. However, in contrast to the two other poems, it does not directly explore her identity, but rather the affect her very existence has upon Arnalte himself. It adequately describes his suffering as a ‘dolor tan fuerte’ (632) and describes Lucenda as ‘la vida’ (634). These certainly suggest that Arnalte idealizes Lucenda as if he considers her to be life itself. These lofty descriptions are, of course, typical of the courtly love tradition. Arnalte’s passion implies that Lucenda must in some way

warrant such a response. However, from the audience's perspective, this is left unresolved. Even in Arnalte's letters to Lucenda, the focus is on Arnalte's torment at her rebuffs. During one of their initial meetings, Arnalte mentions her 'honrra' (568) and her 'hermosura' (575) but it cannot compare to the twenty-one-verse poem that explores every facet of Isabel's identity. Indeed, little more is gleaned from Lucenda's own actions. Her rebuffs adhere to genre convention. Her removal from society upon her entrance into a convent at the end of the narrative, again fulfils genre specific expectations of her. However, San Pedro does not provide any analytical focus of her identity. This is to be expected within the constraints of the text and also suggests that her lack of identity serves another purpose.

Lucenda could not only be a contrasting character with which to compare Isabel but in actual fact an antithetical double (Grieve 1987), not solely in characterization but also what their characters inspire in others. It is difficult to provide a full analysis of Lucenda's character as she has little voice in the narrative beyond her response to Arnalte and his actions. Arnalte's response to Lucenda is central to the text. His desire for her incites chaos and eventual violence, resulting in Arnalte's self-imposed exile and Lucenda's widowhood. Isabel, however, inspires restoration, shown in San Pedro's carefully contained *canción*. San Pedro describes Isabel's ability to restore order (209-18). Comparing the two women in this way reminds the audience of San Pedro's address to the ladies of the court, reminding them not to be a 'thankless woman'. He invites the audience to consider the opposite of the thankless woman, and thus prepares the audience to consider two opposing characters – one who is virtuous and one who is not. Although Lucenda never exhibits unvirtuous behaviour, her only failing was to accept Arnalte's love to then marry Elierso after the former had left Thebes, she is by virtue of comparison the 'thankless woman' to Isabel's perfection.

San Pedro alludes to biblical imagery, most crucially the Ave/Eva palindrome which has been discussed at length during this discussion. Lucenda, the Eva in this dichotomy, although not actively so, causes suffering and Isabel, the Ave, grants solace and restores peace.

Lucenda's characterization is not at all comprehensive, especially in comparison to Isabel and the Virgin Mary. In fact, rather than a character in her own right, it could be argued that Lucenda is a device to project the identities of other characters. Her identity is superficial. The perfection that Arnalte believes her to have is never justified, rather perpetuated by a man who has been driven to the verge of madness by desire. As there is no evidence cited in the text, or described through other characters, she cannot be truly perfect. The contrast between her and Isabel is stark. There is an abundance of evidence in the panegyric to justify San Pedro's praise of Isabel. San Pedro both criticizes the courtly love tradition and uses Lucenda as a warning to the ladies of the court not to emulate her, but to seek higher aspiration in emulating Isabel.

Although this warning is not as subtle, since San Pedro foreshadows his message in his initial address, it remains secondary to the narrative's core structure. As is the case with the other two poems, the subtext is simple not strong enough to be of any significant merit. Isabel's identity, although obviously lauded in comparison to Lucenda, is not the prevailing presence within the text that San Pedro needed it to be for it to affect how she is perceived. The comparison between the two women provides an interesting insight into the perceptions of female identity, but it is not one that is entirely convincing. The core focus of the text remains the courtly love tradition.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Diego de San Pedro's poetical interludes might appear to be irrelevant when analysing *Arnalte y Lucenda* simply as a courtly love narrative. However, their greater significance is highlighted by means of San Pedro's warning in his opening lines. Diego de San Pedro exploits generic convention which allows him to utilize poetry in a text that permits the use of *canciones*. In so doing, he can use an ambiguous narrative structure that enables him to analyse Isabel's character under the guise of praise. Since the message is sophisticatedly subtle, it is lost amidst an entertaining tale of unrequited love. What is seemingly a poem of little analytical substance, in fact provides Isabel with a standard by which to live – a standard that continues the tradition of using the Virgin Mary as a mirror reflecting the way in which Isabel must behave. Isabel must continue to uphold an idealized portrayal that Diego de San Pedro creates, or she fails to become what he envisions.

In the *Siete angustias*, Diego de San Pedro both glorifies the Virgin Mary, whilst creating parallels between her and Isabel in order to ensure the former is held up as an example for the latter. His poem highlights how the cult of the Virgin Mary prevalent in fifteenth-century society shaped standards for women. By conveying Mary's anguish, San Pedro ensures that her sufferings are equated with those of her son and thus she is brought closer to the divine. In doing so, San Pedro provides a higher authority to which Isabel must defer. This adheres to Greenblatt's self-fashioning whereby Isabel not only submits to a higher authority but she herself becomes the "other" to that authority and consequently must seek to "destroy" this part

of her identity in order to be closer to San Pedro's vision of the ideal monarch. He shapes her queenship with the Virgin Mary as an example. However, it does not have the same effect as Fray Íñigo de Mendoza, who, holding more authority than San Pedro, is able to exploit a more didactical genre and thus hold more authorial agency over Isabel.

Finally, in the characterization of Lucenda we see Diego de San Pedro's indirect rejection of the maiden archetype in favour of Isabel and the Virgin Mary. First, the conspicuous absence of a *canción* dedicated to Lucenda shows that she is unimportant to the author and thus unworthy of analysis. The snippets we read from Arnalte's love letters simply adhere to generic conventions and gives little of Lucenda's character. She is little more than a device that allows Diego de San Pedro to convey Arnalte as a highly flawed character who was incapable of adhering to the code of courtly love.

With regard to Isabel, Diego de San Pedro subtly informs his audience that the most important part of Isabel's identity is not her femininity, or even her sex, but her sovereignty and role as monarch. His lengthy panegyric is comparable to the lengthy *Siete angustias*, which implies that he intends to foreground her sovereignty and compare it to the Virgin Mary's sovereignty in heaven. This is a timely display of undeniable support as Isabel endeavours to conquer Granada.

However, is this comparison effective and does it interfere with Isabel's own self-fashioning? Based on the findings of this chapter, the immediate answer is that it does not. This is because of the genre which Diego de San Pedro chooses to convey his investigation of Isabel's sovereignty. The main narrative is the analytical focal point of the text for many scholars. Thus, the poetry is overlooked as it appears to be

an unnecessary deviation from the text's principal structure. If Diego de San Pedro hoped to influence how Isabel is perceived, he has failed. Not only because the poetry is considered a mere courtesy to Isabel, but because it undermines the impact of his authorship and causes scholars to condemn the work as unsophisticated.

Whilst *Arnalte y Lucenda* contains an interesting analysis of Isabel's identity, its only real success is in providing an insight into Isabel's artistic tastes. Despite the fact that it provides insight into the personality of the sovereign, it is a limited analysis, with no lasting impact upon how Isabel is perceived.

## **Conclusion**

This dissertation sought to explore the queenship of Isabel la Católica through literature produced in her lifetime. It has raised questions pertaining to the agency, identity, and the very definition of female sovereignty, which have provided a theoretical framework for this dissertation.

Investigating how Isabel's identity has been both self-fashioned and fashioned by others has led to the consideration of queenship as a concept. Isabel's reign was anomalous to the period, where she wielded considerable power in her own right. Therefore, this dissertation has addressed the principal epistemological concerns that have arisen from this – largely in the way in which research is conducted on medieval queens regnant, defining a role that actively moved away from the traditional. Chapter One addressed the limitations of previous scholarship that included the study of queen consorts and queen regents within the study of queenship. Whilst the impact of queen regents and consorts is most certainly worthy of study, this discussion has highlighted it to be a problematic approach when taking into consideration the role of queens regnant. However, using the queenship of non-ruling queens in the research of their ruling counterparts does raise a significant theoretical point: the origin of a queen's power. It demonstrated that whilst it is beneficial for a queen regent or consort to use the political power of their nearest male kin, either to further their own power or that of the king, the same cannot be said for a queen regnant. The dissertation has established that the fundamental problem in conflating the queenship of ruling with the queenship of non-ruling queens is one of authority. If a queen regnant would adhere

to a similar queenship of a consort, it would mean severely limiting their political power. This means that the absence of a male ruling figure, which resulted in the accession of a queen regnant, creates a void in the political sphere and problematizes defining the role of queen, whose position traditionally relies upon the king. What this dissertation has explored is how this void is used by Isabel in her self-fashioning and by the four authors studied, who have sought to rationalize her role of Queen through their writing.

With regard to Isabel's self-fashioning, this dissertation first outlined the way in which her political role could be conceptualized. Once this was established it was important to define the characteristics of the role of a ruling queen. This brought into consideration Barbara Weissberger's (2004) work that equates queenship with 'female kingship.' That is to say, it defines Isabel's role through her political position and not through the limitations of her gender. This dissertation notes that whilst it was highly useful to attempt to theorize Isabel's queenship in terms of the political power she must wield successfully, this must be done so in a way that avoids masculinizing Isabel. In fact, to do so would limit the scope for further research into the implications of queenship both on research pertaining to self-fashioning of queens and to the political success of queens regnant. Although the texts studied in this dissertation do, at times, attempt to masculinize Isabel, those instances are not as successful as exploring her role as Queen to reconcile her femininity, the prime issue for any queen regnant at that time.

This discussion has sought to conceptualize identity in relation to queenship. The initial difficulties lay in the relationship between perception and projection in shaping identity. The work of Judith Butler (2010) proved to be significant. Examining identity as a performative act was particularly pertinent in this dissertation. The idea

that identity could be considered as a performance alongside gender was particularly significant in demonstrating how Isabel's identity could be considered as unstable due to her role as monarch. As a result of the undefined nature of her queenship, it meant that it was open to further interpretation, implying that Isabel would have to perform her own interpretation of the role. Furthermore, it allowed the concept of identity to be conceptualized as a performance, which made the link between identity and self-fashioning more securely defined.

Significantly, the strength of Isabel's self-representation fluctuated according to the type of text. It became immediately clear that the historiographical writing of Pulgar in the *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos* held the greatest scope for Isabel to assert agency over the author's creative output. This was unsurprising given the tradition of historiography established by Alfonso X, although it was nevertheless highly important. The initial chapters of the chronicle proved to be a clear example of Isabelline propaganda that was created in order to legitimize her reign by strengthening her claim to the throne. Isabel was able to exploit Pulgar's reliance on her favour to ensure that the chronicle shaped her identity based directly upon her actions. With the author of the *Poncella* however, Isabel was not able to exert her agency over what was written first and foremost because the author was anonymous. Although the author's perception of her identity was favourable to her own self-fashioning, the lack of accountability by virtue of his anonymity enables him to maintain full agency over what is written. This results in a disempowering narrative able to take liberties due without consequence.

Isabel's artistic agency diminishes further still with Fray Íñigo's treatise. The very nature of a didactic narrative ensures that full agency is granted to its writer, who engages Isabel in a discourse of knowledge. As Fray Íñigo is disseminating knowledge

that he believes Isabel needs to rule, Isabel cannot exert agency over him. Her total lack of agency is apparent through the way in which Fray Íñigo endeavours to position Isabel solely in the female sphere, where her political power is at its weakest. His allusions to the Virgin Mary's relationship with Christ in Heaven implies that Isabel cannot rule without her husband. It is this text that authors Isabel as politically inferior to her husband, despite the fact she is the legitimate ruler of Castile.

Likewise, Isabel's artistic agency is diminished in Diego de San Pedro's *Arnalte y Lucenda*. However, unlike Fray Íñigo's *Dechado*, the text is far less effective in crafting Isabel's identity. His choice of genre masks his assessment of Isabel and her queenship. His choice to explore Isabel's identity through poetry interspersed throughout the narrative is ineffective and has resulted in critical analysis to consider his work as convoluted and unsophisticated.

Uniting the past with the present featured highly in representations of Isabelline identity. Isabel herself used this to legitimize her claim to the throne in Pulgar's chronicle. References to a more turbulent past before her reign were present in the prologue of the *Poncella* where the political situation in France acted as an allegorical device to allude to the Castilian court under Enrique IV. Diego de San Pedro's panegyric to Isabel implied that she has restored the kingdom to glory. In fact, it was one of few features that were found in all four of the texts studied. Identifying Isabel as the undisputed successor was portrayed strongly throughout and unanimously agreed upon. This demonstrates that Isabel was able to exert complete agency over this aspect of her identity and of her queenship. Whilst she was able to control this directly in *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos* through her absolute artistic authority over Pulgar, the remaining three authors adhered to her self-fashioning either as gestures of support or as a conciliatory gesture that proved they were now loyal to her cause. Isabel

achieved in exerting agency over her prime political identity. It was only once it had been established that she was Enrique's legitimate successor that the authors differed in their approach to her identity.

This disparity in assessment is testament to the ever shifting and highly subjective nature of queenship in a queen regnant. Whilst this dissertation has argued for a change in the way queenship in queens regnant is studied and conceptualized, the same can be said of each author examined in this discussion. Once Isabel was secure in her identity as rightful heir, the authors varied greatly in what that meant for the rule of Castile. As a queen regnant was a novel concept, many deferred to religious authority in order to help them establish the parameters of Isabel's queenship.

It was a recurring trend throughout to use the Virgin Mary as the perfect example for Isabel to follow, although, their individual approach to this was varied. Pulgar's allusion was subtle by juxtaposing the virtuous Isabel with the previous Queen, Juana. Contrasting the comparative virtue and vice of the two women left it to the audience to draw the conclusion that Isabel, like the Virgin Mary, was sent to restore the kingdom. He manipulated the audience into drawing their own conclusions. Diego de San Pedro, on the other hand, used the Virgin Mary to elevate Isabel to that of a perfect earthly Queen. Fray Íñigo advised Isabel to model both her female identity and her political identity on the Virgin Mary. The author of the *Poncella* used a variety of holy figures to which to compare Isabel, including Christ. It was here that female spirituality was exploited as a means of empowering Isabel in a way more acceptable to the society in which she lived. It is important to highlight that where Isabel was able to exert the most agency over how she was portrayed, there was a lesser focus on 'sanctifying' or depicting her akin to any saintly figure. Whilst Pulgar's chronicle alluded to the Virgin Mary in order to strengthen Isabel's claim to the throne, it was

for a purpose to ultimately strengthen Isabel's undisputed right to rule. Although the *Poncella* used Joan of Arc to demonstrate how Isabel may be empowered, the criteria for this was clear and relied solely on how Isabel must self-fashion her queenship in relation to sanctity. In other words, in order to be a queen capable of rule, she must demonstrate her worthiness through her piety and through embodying the author's critique of the perfect woman. In reality, this diminishes her power as it focuses on the limitations of her sex and not how she must rule. Diego de San Pedro's poetry provides Isabel with a standard against which to model her own sovereignty.

Ultimately, Isabel's agency over Pulgar is successful not only because she chooses to self-fashion her queenship through a genre with the scope for greatest authorial control, but because the focus is on her actions, and not the attempt to justify femininity with political power. She thus has more control over how she is portrayed. The authors exploited the genre in which they were writing to diminish Isabel's artistic control. Therefore, it was easier for them to explore the nature of a female monarch. However, that all of the authors identified her as a ruling queen in the first place is critical. The agency that Isabel demonstrated over her self-fashioning in legitimizing her reign proved crucial in ensuring she was seen as such despite the 'anxious masculinity' endemic in each of the texts studied. Whilst the authors may argue over how she may rule, there is no denying that they believe her to be the sole legitimate ruler of Castile.

This dissertation has given insight into the complexities of fashioning the identity of a medieval queen regnant. Studying Isabel's identity through literature has allowed for the exploration of authorial agency between those writing and Isabel herself. This has been useful particularly in examining how identity is perceived and shaped by others, and whether the subject permits this or not. Whilst conducting this

study through literature has been successful, it could be argued that literature does provide a wide enough scope for which to examine Isabel's identity fully. A similar investigation into the iconography and portraiture during her reign, for example, would be a useful comparative study that would provide this scope over multiple media.

Whilst literature has elicited how Isabel was portrayed to a large extent, the prevailing problem with it as a medium for study is that of readership. Whilst it can be assumed that Isabel would have been read Pulgar's chronicle, and would have been aware of San Pedro's writings, and possibly Fray Íñigo's treatise, it is nevertheless uncertain that she read them. It is even more likely that she did not read the *Poncella de Francia*. This means that even though how her identity is shaped can be assessed, how she responded, or how this affected her self-fashioning cannot be assessed.

However, this dissertation has highlighted epistemological problems relating to the study of medieval queenship by previous scholarship. The instability of the identity of queens regnant is highlighted when the definition of queenship shifts depending on whether the queen is a regnant or a consort. It is important that queens regnant are not compared with their consort and regent counterpart due to the way in which their power arises. Doing so would expand the research of queens regnant, especially of their success in navigating a sphere that was not traditionally theirs. Further research into the early queens regnant of the Iberian Peninsula, and indeed of Europe, is greatly needed. With regard to Isabel la Católica, this dissertation has attempted to demonstrate the importance of research into one of the most politically astute monarchs of Spain. Whilst research into her queenship on a practical level remains nevertheless of great value, greater insight into how she so successfully legitimized her claim to throne and maintained her political authority throughout her reign would be of greater value still.

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