

**Slit Noses, a Processional Dragon, and a Barbarian Chieftain  
in *Libro de buen amor* 972**

Rolando Pérez  
Hunter College

Después d'esta ventura fuime para Segovia  
non a conprar las joyas para la chata troya:  
fui ver una costilla de la serpiente groya,  
que mató al viejo Rando, segund dize en Moya.  
*Libro de buen amor*  
972a-d

A book is a labyrinth; constructed of endless corridors, it take us to unexpected places: some recognizable and others not at all. For Borges, who studied the Kabbalah, every book was a world contained within *The Book* (of The Universe); and reading meant the careful deciphering of the codes hidden in the letters, names, and dates of our universal history. Every book contained within itself endless forking paths of light and dark passages or worlds. And because *El libro de buen amor* is one such vast and complex book, this study explores the enigmatic quatrain 972a-d, and as it retraces the Archpriest of Hita's hike through the mountain ranges into Segovia to find out: who was "la chata troya"? Why does the Archpriest go to Segovia? And who was the "legendary" Rando of Moya, supposedly killed by the equally enigmatic "serpiente groya"?

The answers, doubtlessly provisional and perhaps enlightening, in turn raise significant questions concerning the transmission of knowledge in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Spain. This study will focus on certain words, names, and syntagms that until now have eluded an integrated explanation. Taking a cue from the Archpriest, a conscious attempt has been made to be more like the Greeks and less like the Romans in deciphering the signs the Archpriest cautioned us to read carefully and slowly.

*La chata troya*

Lines 972a-b follow from a series of encounters between the Archpriest and the sexually aggressive "serranas" (955). And while the Archpriest's actions are comprehensible within the logic of the narrative, the words "chata troya" are not. No other text makes the same use of these words, or puts them together in such a way. Alberto Blecua in his edition of *LBA* explains *chata* this way: "La *chata* puede interpretarse como nombre común o propio" (Ruiz 2001 238). Unfortunately Blecua's suggestion does little to clarify the meaning of *chata*. Certainly, it can be considered a proper name, but to claim this is to say very little. What kind of proper name? One immediately wants to ask. "El vocablo hispano-portugués *chato* es idéntico al adjetivo *plat* del francés, lengua de Oc, catalán y retorrománico, y al it. *piatto*, sinónimos de 'plano', 'achatado', y todos juntos obligan a postular la existencia de PLATTUS en latín vulgar," writes Corominas (1980 II 345). "Creo, por lo tanto, que en el Arcipreste *chato* y *chata* son meros sinónimos de 'serrano, habitante de las sierras'" (Ibid. 346). But Corominas problematically arrives at this conclusion from the text itself: leaving us to wonder what possible meaning can we ascribe to the sierras episode from outside the

text.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, the etymology of *chata* and *troya*, first considered separately and then together, may provide us with some clues. The *Diccionario de Autoridades* defines *chato/ta* as “plano, aplanado y llano,” adding that it is commonly used in reference to a flat nose: “como la nariz, à la cual con particularidad se le dá este nombre en siendo plana” (1963 312). This seemingly banal piece of information is anything but trivial. To *chata*, the Archpriest adds “troya” as if to emphasize the specific meaning he wants the first word to convey. In other words, he seems make it clear to the reader that his reference is not merely to someone who was born with a flat nose, but rather to a woman whose social identity was that of being a *chata*; a term that was applied in the Archpriest’s time to women who committed or were accused of adultery. The word, in fact, might have originated with the punishment of cutting the noses of adulterous women. Such a practice, prescribed by the ninth century *Ecloga of Leo III*,<sup>2</sup> continued to be carried out well into the thirteenth century in towns like Plasencia: “as an appropriate chastisement of shameless women” (Dillard 1984 204). In fact, the 1290 *Fuero de Plasencia* reads as follows: “Toda mugier que...fuer fallada con otri, tainenle las narizes...” (Ramírez Vaquero 1987 78). Hence, the Spanish “chata” and the Italian “troia” or “troya” (for whore) of *LBA*.<sup>3</sup> *The Cambridge Italian Dictionary* cites “prostitute” as the principal meaning of “troia” (1962 833);<sup>4</sup> a term which probably originates with the story of Helen of Troy, who betrayed her husband, Menelaos, with the promiscuous Paris. Though admittedly still a conjecture, this seems at least more likely than Coromina’s invention of “croya”, a word which he attributes to *LBA*, but which in fact does not appear in any of the manuscript versions of the book.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Though Gonzalo Leira essentially agrees with Coromina’s definition of “chata,” he adds that the word probably also means woman or female. “Más que por ‘serrana’ o ‘pastora’ estaría por ‘hembra’ o ‘mujer’, tal como ocurre en la zona occidental de Galicia con la voz homóloga *nacha*” (1976 197). Leira, however, provides no evidence.

<sup>2</sup>“A man who commits adultery with a woman under coverture shall have his nose slit. And also the adulteress; since thenceforward she becomes a whore and is parted from her husband and lost to her children disregarding the word of the Lord who teaches us that He has made one flesh of man and wife” (Freshfield 1927 79). In other words, the punishment was equally applied to men and women. In Trotaconventos’ attempt to convince her lady in waiting to go with the Archpriest, she says:

Tened buena esperanza, dexad vano temor,  
amad al buen amigo, quered su buen amor;  
si más ya non, fablade como a chate pastor  
dezidle: ‘¡Dios vos salve!’ dexemos el pavor (1452)

The word *chate* appears as *chato* in the Toledo manuscript. But regardless, it is clear that for Ruiz the negative quality of having a flat nose applies to both men and women.

<sup>3</sup>“Troia, s.f. La femm. del maiale che à da figliare o à figliato. § fig. Spreg. Tit. d’ingiùria a dónna” (Petrocchi 1931 II 1168).

<sup>4</sup>In the summer of 2002 I came across a car, in a small Tuscan town, with the word “troia” written on its windshield. Writ large with red lipstick, it was meant for everyone to see. When I inquired about it, I was told that the car belonged to a woman who had had an affair with a married man in town, and the wife in revenge had made certain that she—the *troia*—was publicly denounced.

<sup>5</sup>Coromina defines CROYO as “ruin, de malas costumbres, del célt. CRŪDIUS (<CROUDIUS) duro, inflexible, firme,” (251) and cites *LBA* (699c, 972b) as the first document to use it. He quotes line 972b of *LBA*: ““Despues desta ventura fuime para Segovia,/ non a comprar joyas para la chata *croya*” (1980 II

It is interesting to note that the Don Melón-Doña Endrina episode precedes the story of the Archpriest's adventures in the sierras. For while Doña Endrina represents the civilized woman (of the city), concerned with what others will think about her involvement with Don Melón<sup>6</sup> (971), the serranas represent the unbridled, amoral sexuality of the wild. In both cases, sex, and "loco amor" (904d) is expressed primarily through instinct and violence. Don Melón nearly breaks down the door (874) and forces himself on Doña Endrina; and the "serranas" threaten the Archpriest (964a-d), through assault (958) and force (971a-g) into having sex with them. In the absence of any reference to *buen amor*, the name they give the sex act—in all its physicality—is "la lucha" (969g). The only way for the Archpriest to survive the *serranas* is by either helplessly submitting to their assaults, or by promising that on his return from Segovia, he will regale them with precious jewels—a promise which, by his own admission, he does not intend to keep (972b). Instead, he travels to Segovia to see a rib (*una costilla*) from a serpent he calls "la serpiente groya" (972c).

*Costilla de la serpiente groya*

By "serpiente," however, we are to understand not the slithering reptile with which we are all familiar, but the mythical dragon of the medieval bestiary. "El dragón es el mayor de todas las serpientes, e incluso de todos los animales que habitan en la tierra," writes Isidoro of Seville in his *Etimologías*. "Log griegos le dan el nombre de *drákon*, derivado del cual es el latino draco"<sup>7</sup> (2000 I 81). But San Isidoro's etymology only helps us to answer part of the question. For example, Cejador y Frauca conjectured that the said "costilla" of "la serpiente groya" was that of a mythic antediluvian dragon that hung in some cathedral as a symbolic relic of the triumph of good versus evil (Ruiz 1967 Vol II 40). And Tomás Calleja Guijarro's idea that "la serpiente<sup>8</sup> groya"<sup>9</sup> was a metaphorical

251). But again, *croya* is Corominas' word, not the Archpriest's.

<sup>6</sup>Doña Endrina is significantly a widow, who is as worried about being "enfamada" (760a) as she is about losing the inheritance or "mandada" (760b) from her husband's estate. Trotaconventos attempts to assuage Endrina's worries by reminding her that the requisite waiting time for remarriage has already passed:

"'Fija,' dixo la vieja, 'el año ya es pasado...'" (761a). "...Doña Endrina's situation accurately reflects the conditions faced by widows in society: the ban on remarriage for a year, the risk of loss of status through marriage to a man of lesser status through a man of lesser station, and her vulnerability to litigation against her estate..." (Gericke 1992 295). But perhaps even more important for Juan Ruiz was the theological interpretation of widowhood established by the church fathers (Tertulian, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, and others). St. Jerome, for one, in his letter to Ageruchia, a widowed noble woman of Gaul, advises her that she do not remarry. "The creation of the first man should teach to reject more marriages than one. There was but one Adam and but one Eve: in fact, the woman was fashioned from a rib of Adam. Thus divided they were subsequently joined together in marriage; in the words of the scripture 'the twain shall be one flesh' not two or three" (Jerome 1954 234). "Prima hominis creatura nos doceat, plures nuptias refutare. Vnus Adam, et una Eua, immo una ex eo costa, separatur in feminam. Rursumque quod diuisum fuerat, nuptiis copalatur, dicente Scriptura: 'Erunt duo in carne una'; non in duas, nec in tres" (Jerome 1961 85) A woman then was only to remarry if she burned with uncontrollable lust; for according to St. Jerome the only difference between a prostitute and a remarried woman was that the latter surrendered herself to only one man: "non pluribus" (1961 83) or "not to a number" (1954 233) of men.

<sup>7</sup>"Draco maior cunctorum serpentium, sive omnium animantium super terram. Hunc Graeci δράκοντα vocant; unde et derivatum est in Latinum ut draco diceretur" (Ibid. 80).

<sup>8</sup>"A nuestro juicio todo tiene una explicación lógica si la 'costiella' de esa serpiente fue parte de un arco o pilar desprendido de tan maravillosa puente. Basta considerar con una imaginación poética la grandísima

reference to the “serpentine” shape of the aqueduct in Segovia is even less helpful, for it fails to answer what is the possible meaning or function of this passage with respect to the semantic field of the rest of the text.

Interestingly enough, one possible answer may reside in the twelfth century French folkloric tradition of rogation processions. Beginning with Saint John the Divine’s book of *Revelation* 12: 1-17; 13:1-4), the dragon becomes a symbol of lust and evil. Medieval hagiographies often involve heroic saints (e.g., Saint George) who slay fire spewing dragons, and save their respective communities from the threatening evil. Of these evil creatures, one of the best known was the French dragon, “Grouilly”--a name that sounds a lot like *groya*. According to Henri Dontenville the name Grouilly, also spelled “Graouilly” or “Graouilli” probably comes from the German “gräulich” (1973 164), meaning “frightening.” Told by different writers, the story of this dragon involves two different saints (St. Marcellus and St. Clement) in two different cities (Paris and Metz). The first to write of “Grouilly” was Venantius Fortunatus in the sixth century, who “was asked by Saint Germain, bishop of Paris, to write a biography of his predecessor, Marcellus, who probably died in 436” (Le Goff 1980 159). Fortunatus’ story of Marcellus’ victory over the dragon, *Vita Sancti Marcelli*<sup>10</sup> contains all of the

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semejanza del Acueducto con el esqueleto descarnado de uno de esos reptiles y se verá todo con meridiana claridad. (Véase el dibujo esquemático y la fotografía aérea, donde el Acueducto semeja el esqueleto fósil de una gran serpiente varada entre las casas de la ciudad.) (1973 380).

<sup>9</sup> Calleja Guijarro proposes, on the other hand, that there may be a connection between Coromina’s “croyo” (see note 5) and “grullo” or “groyo” as in the hardness of the stone in the Segovia aqueduct. “¿Es acaso este ‘grullo’ una variante fonética actual o comarcal de ‘groyo’? Caso de que así fuera, ‘groyo’ querría decir igualmente piedra dura, cuarzosa o llena de granos. Y ‘serpiente groya’ equivaldría a serpiente de piedras cuarzosas o serpiente granítica. ¿Y qué otra cosa es el Acueducto, metafóricamente hablando, y según hemos dicho antes, que una gigantesca serpiente hecha con piedras duras, graníticas o cuarzosas?” (Ibid). The problem here as with the “serpiente” is that the postulated thesis remains a-contextual.

<sup>10</sup>“Exequamur et illud triumphale mysterium quod, cum sit ultimum ordine, anteponitur in virtute. *Matrona, quaedam, prosapia quidem nobilis, opinione vilis, malo maculans crimine quod fulgebat ex genere, postquam dies fugitivae vitae, rapta, luce, conclusit, ad tumulum, pompa comitante, sed non profutura, processit. Quo condita, horresco referens hoc contigisse post funera, quia duplex nascitur lamentatio de defuncta. Ergo ad consumendum ejus cadaver, coepit serpens immanissimus frequentare, et ut dicam clarius, mulieri, cujus membra bestia decorabat, ipse draco factus est sepultura*” (1991 547). Note that Fortunatus’ dragon devours the cadaver of an adulterous woman. The serpent as a symbol of lust goes back to *Genesis* wherein, as is well known, the serpent seduces Eve in the Garden of Eden. This myth “persisted throughout the Middle Ages, and became the iconographic symbol of lust” (Le Goff 162). The passage continues: “Sic infelices exsequias serpentinus bajulus impendebat, ut post mortem quiescere cadaveri non liceret: et cui vitae finis in poena. O casum execrabilem, et valde timendum! Mulier quae conjugii integritatem non servavit in mundo, integra non meruit jacere in sepulcro. Nam serpens, qui viventem in crimine traxerat, adhuc in cadaver desaevebat. Tunc ex ejus familia qui in civitate manebant, audientes strepitum, et pariter concurrentes, viderunt ingentem belluam de tumulosis anfractibus exeuntem, et vasta mole cadaver flagellante labentem. Quo nimis perterriti homines de suis sedibus migraverunt. Hoc, cognito, beatus Marcellus intelligens de hoste triumphum acquirere, collecta plebe, de civitate progreditur, et relictis civibus, in prospectu populi solus, Christo duce, ad locum pugnaturus accessit: et cum coluber de sylva rediret ad tumulum, obviantes se invicem, dante orationem beato Marcello, ille capite supplici coepit veniam blandiente cauda precari. Tunc beatus Marcellus caput ejus baculo ter percutiens, misso in cervicem serpentis orario, triumphum suum ante civium oculos extrahebat. Sic in spiritali *theatro spectante*, solus cum dracone pugnavit. Hinc confortatus populus, cucurrit ad episcopum, cupiens hostem summ

ingredients that will later be repeated in subsequent hagiographies. “Six centuries later, Saint Marcellus and his dragon appear. At the end of the twelfth century, a sculpture clearly inspired by Fortunatus’ text was in evidence at the cathedral of Notre Dame” (Ibid. 174). But this was only one of many such stories. In the eighth century Paul the Deacon on the suggestion of Angilram, Bishop of Metz, wrote a history of the bishops of Metz, entitled *Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*,<sup>11</sup> in which Saint Clement, theoretically the first bishop of Metz, saved the city from an evil dragon. Like Fortunatus’ serpent, Paul the Deacon’s dragon also found a home in the amphitheater:<sup>12</sup> from which it emerged to threaten the populace. The way in which St. Clement’s nameless dragon becomes the Grouilly of the Metz legend is complicated and unclear. Sometime in the twelfth century, at the height of dragon processions, the village of Woippy, under the auspices of the cathedral of Metz, began having festivals in which banners with the emblem of a dragon were carried about the town in the processions of Saint Mark. A century later, reports de Westphalen, the dragon had been transformed into the “Grolli” defeated by St. Clement, first bishop of Metz (1934 Col. 317).<sup>13</sup>

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videre captivum. Tunc praecedente pontifice, bestiam fere tribus millibus omnes prosecuti sunt, reddentes gratias Domino, et solventes exequias inimicis” (Op. Cit. 547, my italics).

<sup>11</sup>“Cum ergo pervenisset beatus Clemens Mediomatricum civitatem, in cavernis, ut ferunt, *amphitheatri* quo extra eandem urbem situm est, hospitium habuit; in quo etiam loco oratorium Domino construens, altare in eo statuit, ac beati Petri apostoli praeceptoris sui nomine consecravit. Is igitur venerandus sacerdos dum dedula admonitione eiusdem urbis populis praedicaret, cooperante sibi divina misericordia, maximam ex eis multitudinem a sordidis idolorum cultibus et erroris caecitate liberatam ad verae fidei splendorem perduxit, primusque in illis regionibus ostensor iustitiae et index veritatis enituit. Denique asseverant qui eiusdem loci cognitionem habent, quod in amphiteatro, ubi primitus aeveniens habitavi, usque in praesentem diem nec *serpens* consistere queat, sed et omnino noxiae pestes locum illum refugiant, unde olim verae salutis insignia” (Warnefridi 1963 261, my italics).

<sup>12</sup>From the second century after Christ, starting with Tertullian, the Roman amphitheater becomes a subject of condemnation. With its roots in the pagan Greco-Roman tradition of the Circus and the Bacchanal, the amphitheater was viewed as an evil place. “The theater is a especially the shrine of Venus. In fact it was in this manner that this sort of performance came up in the world. For the censors were often wont to destroy, in their very birth, the theatres more than any other thing, consulting for the morals of the people, as foreseeing a great peril accruing to them from licentiousness....For the amphitheater is consecrated to deities more numerous and more barbarous than the Capitol. It is the temple of all daemons. As many unclean spirits sit together as the place containeth men. To speak finally of the ‘performances’ also, we know that Mars and Diana are the presiding deities at each game” (Tertullian 1842 200, 203; for the Latin text see “De Sepectaculis,” in Vol. 66 of *Patrologiae Latinae* 1879). And the fifth century Salvian the Presbyter writing in his book *On the Government of God* says: “...since indeed it would take too long to tell of all these snares, that is, the amphitheatres, the concert halls, games, parades, athletes, rope dancers, pantomimes and other monstrosities of which one is ashamed to speak, since it is shameful even to know of such wickedness, I shall describe only the vices of the circuses. For the evils that are performed in these are such that no one can mention them, or even think of them without being polluted” (1930 163; for the Latin see *De Gubernatione Dei*, Book VI, *Patrologiae Latinae*, Vol. 53, 1865 111). For Salvian and Rando see below.

<sup>13</sup>“Should one see a historical relationship between Saint Clement of Metz and his Grouilly on the one hand, and Saint Marcellus of Paris and his dragon on the other? According to the tradition, the suburban church of Saint-Marcel was constructed on the site of a chapel originally dedicated to Saint Clement...[I]t is stated that the cult of Saint Clement appeared in Saint-Marcel only in the twelfth century, i.e., during the period which we believe to be critical for the processional dragons (a seal of Saint-Marcel affixed to an act of 1202 bears the image of Saint Clement and Saint Marcellus). But it could be Saint Clement, pope, rather

With regard to Spain, one of the earliest religious processions, mixing ecclesiastical themes with non-Christian symbolism took place at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>14</sup> According to Michael J. McGrath, “the first recorded Corpus Christi processions in Spain took place in the kingdom of Aragon,” (2002 15) under King James II (1291-1327)<sup>15</sup>. The dragon, also called a “tarasca”<sup>16</sup> in the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais and in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine “excited as well as intrigued the people for its allegorical implications” (Ibid. 25). However, if we return to *LBA* for a moment, we are reminded that it is not to attend a procession that the Archpriest travels to Segovia, but rather to satisfy his curiosity concerning “la serpiente groya”, or more accurately “una costilla”—a word that bears a phonic similarity to the *tarasquilla(s)* of seventeenth century Segovia.<sup>17</sup> Used ambiguously in the singular and the plural, it could either refer to a *tarasca* (a processional dragon made of wood, strings, and paper), or “the allegorical figures (Pride, Lust, Envy, etc.) that accompanied the dragon on foot” (Ibid. 2002 29-30). But as both Very and McGrath point out, the *tarasquilla* was also a woman who sat astride the dragon, “dressed in the latest fashion to symbolize Pride and Lust (Ibid. 29).<sup>18</sup>” It is plausible that the scribe of the *LBA*, unfamiliar with the

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than Saint Clement of Metz” (Le Goff 1980 340 note 135).

<sup>14</sup>Le Goff places the interest in dragons with the growth of popular culture, which transformed ecclesiastical high culture into quasi pagan folklore (Ibid. 185).

<sup>15</sup>To this list may also be added the dragon or *tarasca* of Jaén, which became part of the Corpus Christi celebrations at the end of the fourteenth century (Eslava Galán 1980 138-139).

<sup>16</sup>Francis George Very writes: “The etymology of the modern Provençal *tarasco*, French *tarasque*, and Spanish *tarasca*, is by no means clear. The simplest explanation is that the word as we know it is a regressive development from the place name, Tarascon... The Greek name found in Strabo and Ptolemy, from the region of Tarascon was *Tarusco*, whence the Latin *Trasconen*, French *Tarascon*; it has been thought that from the Greek name came the Latin *Tauriscus*: a cruel tyrant whom Ammianus Marcellinus [1982 178/179], writing in the fourth century A.D. mentions as a destroyer of Gaul, at length slain by Hercules. The chief difficulty in attempting to derive the modern *tarasque* from *tauriscus* is that the latter is masculine; if it had survived linguistically it would in all likelihood have given a (learned) French form *taurisque*, popular *torisque*, Spanish *torisco*; the three modern Romance forms all feminine. What may be a more satisfying etymon for *tarasca* is the Old Provençal *drasca*, found in the *Roman de Flamenca* (composed ca. 1213) with the meaning of ‘un serpen...o cerastes.’ A variant *drusca* then might be responsible for the form which occurs in the *Acta Sanctorum*: ‘Existimaverunt aliqui nomen habuisse ab horrendo dracone regionem infestante, vulgo Tarusca cognominato.’...Professor Corominas feels that the noun *tarasca* shows an “obvious connection with the verb *tarascar* (or *atarascar*) ‘morder y herir con los dientes’ of which *tarasca* may simply be a derivative. Well and good; but as the noun *tarasca* first appears in Spanish in 1530, and the verbs *atarascar* and *tarascar* do not seem to be employed until the time of...Quevedo, we are posed with yet another dilemma” (1962 58-59). And yet there is evidence that the word was known at least two centuries before the time of Quevedo. “[A] Vesper hymn found in a MS breviary of the 14<sup>th</sup> century [*Analecta Hymnica* XVI, no. 400] from Lérida contains these lines: Tarasconem inhabitat/Tarascam mox praccipitat/Omnis plebs eam visitat/Submersum amne suscitit. The resolution of this problem must be left to the philologists” (Ibid. 59-60).

<sup>17</sup>“The earliest reference to the dragon in Segovia is from a contract dated 1607: ‘parecieron presentes Cristobal Diez Pedro Hernandez Alonso Bibad Francisco Paisano Antonio Gonçales ganapanes desta ciudad se obligan de que todo el dho dia traeran una tarasca por todas las calles que anduviere la procesion del dho dia y toda la mañana del’” (McGrath 2002 27).

<sup>18</sup>Perhaps the Archpriest’s refusal to buy *joyas* or “objeto placentero” (Corominas 1980 III 530) can be interpreted as his refusal to indulge “la chata troya” in her lust and vanity. Jewelry and luxurious items of dress often appear in the Bible as symbols of vanity, pride, and lust—in short, of everything that distances

relatively new word, *tarasquilla*, may have replaced it with *costilla*, a word he knew and made sense to him. Regardless of how far we can take these conjectures, the fact remains that our quatrain (972)—coincidentally or not—with its references to “chatas” and “serpiente” is sandwiched, as it were, between the Doña Endrina and the Quaresma (or Lent) episode. The Corpus Christi festival of the *tarascas* was organized in the liturgical calendar to take place on the ninth Thursday after Easter Sunday: the *Jueves Lardero* (Don Carnal/Santa Quaresma) of *LBA* (1067-1224), which follows the “serranas” episodes.

#### *Rando and Moya*

In 368 c.e., Moguntiacum’s<sup>19</sup> or Mainz’s Christian community, still had roots in its not too distant pagan past. A Christian festival like Easter combined newly adopted Christian practices with pagan rituals. It was also a time of incursions into border territories, of cruel and bloody battles between the Romans and the Goths. It was the age of Valentinian, a time in history well known to St. Augustine, but most importantly for us, the age of Rando: the barbarian chieftain who in 368 invaded Mainz by surprise during one of its Christian festivals. This was also the age of the Greek-born historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, without whose *Rerum gestarum libri* we would not know anything about our character, Rando,<sup>20</sup> who appears only once in all of known literature (until the eighteenth century).<sup>21</sup> Marcellinus writes:

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the believer from God. The following is a fitting example from the book of “Hosea”: “I will punish her for the festival days of Baal, when she offered incense to them and decked herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the Lord” (Metzger and Murphy 1994 1150). And the same chapter has Hosea talking to his children thus: “Plead with your mother [Gomer], plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from her breasts...” (Ibid. 1149-50) In effect, most of the book of “Hosea” deals with fornication and adultery.

<sup>19</sup> See note 33.

<sup>20</sup>The Germanic names Rando, Randolff and Randt are variants of each other, sharing the same root *rand* meaning “rim of a shield” or in the case of its homonym *rant* “also the shield itself” (Hans Bahlow 2002 395, 396). The first known, recorded instance of a “Rando” can be found in a Visigothic *Conditiones sacramentorum* cited in Pierre de Marca’s *Marca Hispanica*. And it pertains to a trial concerning a dispute over land (donations) belonging to the monastery of Eixalda. Some time around the year 879 the monastery of Eixalda suffered a flood in which many of its documents were destroyed. Some individuals who had donated land to the monastery saw this as an opportunity to deny that they had ever made such gifts to the monastery. In what is a perfect example of the workings of Visigothic law, a *Saio*, or an officer of the law was hired to swear in witnesses in much the same way that jurors are sworn in today before a trial. Whether Rando disputed his donation to the monastery or not, is not clear, but what is clear is that he was a land owner who had donated land to the monastery years earlier: “...Et alia carta donationis quod fecit Bellus & Ardaricus & Feriola & Durabilis & Rando & Chinilo, & Theodildes & Honnone, ubi insertum habet qualiter donaverat in villare Onceanias simul Eles ad Barone Abbate & Protasio & ceteris monachis terras & casas, curtes, vel hortos, omnem illorum hereditatem quod habetant in dicto villare vel infra fines suos; & habetant in datarum anno primo imperante Carulo Rege...” (Marca 1972 Column 807). The other recorded instance of the name Rando occurs in the *Cartae de Saiaco*, a charter concerning the construction and consecration of the Church of Saint Aubin. The charter signed by a certain Rainaldus, founder of the church, includes the names of the monks belonging to the church, wherein appears the name of S. Randonis (Broussillon and Lelong 1903 Vol I 158).

<sup>21</sup>Rando, the Alemanni prince, appears in Volume II of Edward Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1976 489) in a citation of Marcellinus’ text. Neither the *Breviarium* of Festus (Eadie 1967) nor that of Eutropius (Watson 1890)—who were both fourth century historians under Valens, and

1. At about the same time, Valentinian had begun his campaign with weariness, as he himself thought, when a prince of the Alemmani called Rando, after long preparation for his design, with a light-armed band equipped for plundering, secretly made his way into Mogontiacus, which had no garrison. 2. And since he chanced to find that a festival of the Christian religion was being celebrated, he was not hindered in carrying off defenseless men and women of every kind of station along with no small amount of household goods<sup>22</sup>. (Marcellinus 1972 63/65)

Whether Marcellinus' Rando is in fact the Rando of line 972d of *LBA* is impossible to prove, though even as a conjecture it is quite compelling<sup>23</sup>. Firstly, the Rando of Marcellinus' *Rerum gestarum libri* invades Mainz during a Christian festival—possibly during Easter<sup>24</sup>—as though anticipating the allegorical “pelea que ovo Don Carnal con la Quaresma” (265). Salvian describes the carnal, sinful paganism of Gall circa 439 thus:

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contemporaries of Marcellinus—make any mention of anyone by the name of Rando in the countless incursions that took place in Gaul between the years 364 and 369 AD. What Eutropius does say is that the incompetence of the Roman princes in the region made it possible for the Germans to succeed in their invasions time and again (Ibid. 518-519). “The Germans made their way as far as Spain and took the noble city of Tarraco [Tarragona],” reports Eutropius (519).

<sup>22</sup>“1. Sub idem fere tempus, Valentiniano ad expeditionem caute (ut rebatur ipse) profecto. Alamanus regalis (Rando nomine) diu praestruens quod cogitabat, Mogontiacum praesidiis vacuum cum expeditis ad latrocinandum irrepsit. 2. Et quoniam casu Christiani ritus invenit celebrari sollemnitate, impraepecte, cuiusce modi fortunae virile et muliebre secus cum supellectili non parva indefensum adduxit” (Marcellinus 1972 62/64)

<sup>23</sup> Calleja Guijarro (1973) believes that the name “Rando” comes from “Prado Rando,” the name of a place—a farm—in the province of Segovia, who took the name of its owner; and that the Archpriest must have either heard about him or met him at some point in his travels. The problem here is that such a personage does not seem to correspond to the role of the heroic warrior of line 972d. Guijarro is correct, however, in that such a “prado” or land did exist in the province of Segovia. In fact, the Segovian town of Cantalejo boasts of such a place. Francisco Fuentenebro Zamarro, a local historian of Cantalejo claims that “Prado Rando” is most likely of Visigothic origins. “De la estancia de los visigodos en Cantalejo son prueba topónimos como Prado Rando ...” (1994 16). Prado Rando is adjacent to the Ermita de Santa María del Pinar where, in 1956-1957 in the process of planting trees around the chapel, the workers unearthed the remains of Visigothic tombs, jars, belt buckles, and bracelets. “...[E]s muy probable que la Ermita de Santa María del Pinar esté construida sobre una necrópolis visigoda” (Ibid). Perhaps, then, the story of Rando, a Germanic prince, was passed down from pre-Christian Visigoth folklore to Christian Visigoth culture some time in the seventh or eighth century, as a cautionary tale to be told during some such day as *Jueves Lardero* or Fat Thursday, a day of sensual indulgence when careless people let their guard down. It is interesting to note that in the year 378 while Gratian defeated the Alemmani, the Visigoths defeated Gratian's uncle, Valens—a decisive turning point for the Visigoths, who in time would march into Gaul and later Spain.

<sup>24</sup>J. Vanderspoel believes that Rando's invasion,—“perhaps, though not necessarily” during Easter—may have served as the model for other such battles against the Christians in later years (1986 253).

I myself have seen men of lofty birth and honor, though already despoiled and plundered, still less ruined in fortunes than in morality; for ravaged and stripped though they were, something still remained to them of their property, but nothing of their character. They were so much more hostile to themselves than to alien enemies, though they had been ruined by barbarians, they now completed their own destruction. It is sad to tell what we saw there; honored old men, feeble Christians, when the ruin of their state was already imminent, making themselves slaves to appetite and lust.... They reclined at feasts, forgetful of their honor, forgetting justice, forgetting their faith and the name they bore. There were the leaders of the state, gorged with food, dissolute from winebibbing, wild with shouting, giddy with revelry, completely out of their senses...In spite of all this, what I have to say next is still worse: not even the destruction of their own towns put an end to their excesses. The wealthiest city of Gall [Trèves] was taken by storm no less than four times. (1930 179-180)<sup>25</sup>

And later he likens the evil of Gallic Christian paganism to the hydra, whose heads multiply as they are cut off.<sup>26</sup> Certainly Salvian's description of licentiousness differs from the Archpriest's, but there is a puritanical streak even in the Archpriest's playful Don Carnal/Quarema episode that is often missed by critics who want to turn our author into a fun loving libertine. The fact that Rando attacked Mainz during a Christian festival, which, as we can tell from Salvian, was perhaps more pagan in nature than Christian, is markedly significant. As suggested earlier, the story of Rando was probably reformulated by the fourteenth century to be told in the form of an *exemplum*<sup>27</sup> delivered in a sermon as a warning to Christians during or before Lent.<sup>28</sup> It possibly reached the Archpriest in the form of a religious commentary, a *florilegium*, a piece of local folklore, or as an

<sup>25</sup>For the Latin text see Salviani, *De Gubernatione Dei* (1865 123).

<sup>26</sup>"Like that fabulous monster whose heads multiplied as they were cut off, so also in the most excellent city of Gaul, wickedness gathered from the very blows that punished it" (1930 180-181; 1865 124).

<sup>27</sup>"The Romans habitually taught by example and argued through example; and the strong, ethical colouring, as well as the anecdotal structure, which this process imparts, comes through in many of their writings./In over 100 places in his History Ammianus introduces *exempla*. Since in many places there are more than one *exemplum*, the actual number of *exempla* is about 200" (Blockley 1994 53/54). Though told in a cold, analytically descriptive style, Marcellinus' point of view in the History is often judgmental, albeit subtle. "In his obituary for Valentinian Ammianus lists among the emperor's virtues that he was cautious in both offensive and defensive wars (30.9.4) In isolation this sound like unreserved praise, but what is said elsewhere about Valentinian's caution robs the compliment of much of its force. The account of his expedition against the Alemanni begins with the remark that he set out cautiously—in his own estimation—by which time a German prince [Rando] had already occupied Mogontiacum, which had been left ungarrisoned (27.10.1)" (Seager 1986 74).

<sup>28</sup>Evident as it is—from a reading of the History--that Marcellinus did not have a very high opinion of Christian culture; he did admire what he considered the "strictness of Christians in matters of food and drink, as well as their pursuit of justice" (Neri 1992 62).

example in a treatise on the art of preaching, or *ars predicand*<sup>29</sup>.

Consistent with Charles Upson Clark the only two writers who might have been familiar with the work of Marcellinus prior to the high middle ages were Priscian (491-518) and Cassiodorus (ca. 495-ca. 583) (1904 63),<sup>30</sup> but I found no references to Ammianus Marcellinus in Cassiodorus' *De Orthographia*, and only a passing reference in Priscian's *Institutionum Grammaticarum* (Book VIII 487: 1-4) to Marcellinus' use of language in his *Rerum Gestarum*. Moreover, the extant parts of Marcellinus's history (books XIV-XXXII: 345-378 C.E.) known to us today were found in a monastery by Poggius Bracciolini in the fifteenth century<sup>31</sup>.

To add to the confusion the Archpriest informs us that in the Moya "legend," "el viejo Rando" (972d) was killed by "la serpiente groya." And Heliodoro Cordente Martínez suggests that the word "moya" comes from molar, or mountain. Cordente Martínez argues: "La derivación fonética de 'moya' viene del latino 'mola' (muela) que significa 'cerro escarpado en lo alto y con la cima plana, descripción exacta de esta montaña'" (Cordente Martínez 1981 156). This is particularly interesting if we recall that Rando is mentioned in the section on the sierras, which raises the following question: is the "Moya" of the poem, a reference to *muelas* in the sense of sierras, or instead a reference to the Moya of Cuenca? "La palabra 'mola' originó los topónimos de Molina, Mola, El Molar, La Muela, etc., y pudo transformarla la lengua romance en 'molía' o 'molla' o 'moia' de donde surgió la palabra 'moya,'" writes Cordente Martínez (Ibid). But here is where it gets interesting, because the Moya of Cuenca was vanquished in the year 1200 by Christian forces.<sup>32</sup> "La toma de Moya fue encargada a Don Álvaro Muriño o Das Mariñas, quien al mando de un fuerte ejército la combatió en el año 1200, empresa nada fácil debido a la dura resistencia y oposición ofrecida por sus defensores que, aunque lucharon bravamente, nada pudieron hacer frente al poderoso ejército cristiano"(Ibid). Thus, in contrast to Rando's invasion of Mainz's<sup>33</sup> Christian community, in this case it is

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<sup>29</sup>"Some preachers...realizing that many listeners who were not moved by bare doctrine could be stirred by illustrative stories with pointed morals, used...*exempla* with great effectiveness," writes Harry Caplan. "Some of these tales were of the Saints; many concerned the devil. Almost all were full of superstition, but great numbers were characterized by genuine morality, shrewd knowledge of the world, and fancy and humor. Great collections of fables, bestiaries, and exempla were available for the preacher and were used throughout Europe" (1962 67-68). Two characteristics of this rhetorical art was the use of *historia* and *allegoria* (Caplan 1929 285) to dissuade potential sinners "from vice" and persuade them "to virtue" (Caplan 1933). According to Caplan, the largest number of *ars predicandi* treatises were written in the fourteenth century (Ibid. 78).

<sup>30</sup>St. Jerome (Hieronymi, ca. 340-420) who took over Eusebius' (Eusebii, ca. 260-ca. 340) *Chronicorum* in the 330s and finished it in 382 has an entry for the year 368, where he briefly mentions Valentinian, but says nothing of Marcellinus. See "Eusebii Chronicorum" Lib. II in Vol. VIII of *Patrologiae Latinae* (503-506).

<sup>31</sup>See the letters of Poggius to Niccoli (Bracciolini 1974) written from the Council of Constance (November 5, 1414-April 22, 1418) regarding his manuscript finds. In letter XLIX (dated December 15, 1416) he writes of being offered money by a monk for the Ammianus Marcellinus (1974 113).

<sup>32</sup>According to Alfonso X, Moya was repopulated by Alfonso VIII in 1210 (*Primera crónica general* 1955 II 686), and was one of the first towns that the Infantes de Carrión passed through after leaving Valencia with the Cid's daughters (Ibid. 608).

<sup>33</sup>I have considered the possibility that Moya may have been a variation on the Latin names for Mainz. Benedict and Plechl Graesse's *Orbis Latinus* gives the following Latin variations of Mainz: Moguntiacum,

the Christians who are the invaders and the victors against the pagans.

And because all of this takes us into the area of military invasion, a return to the “costilla” of 972b may prove fruitful. For on closer examination, there may be a linguistic connection between the Spanish “costilla” and *costiller* and the medieval French *costillier*, meaning: “soldado armado de un sable de tipo especial, que acompañaba a un caballero”, derivado de *coustille* o *coustelle*, nombre de dicho sable, de origen incierto, quizá del lat. CULTELLUS, ‘cuchillo’” (Corominas 1980 II 223). The *Emile Littré Dictionnaire de la Langue Française* cites *coutille* as a “sorte d’arme tranchante”; of the fourteenth century (1963 1055). Now, if we assume for argument’s sake, that once again our scribe made a mistake--and instead of copying *costiller* or *coutille* (foreign and unknown words to him) he copied *costilla*--doesn’t the quatrain all of a sudden make more sense? Does it not make more narrative sense that the Archpriest goes to Segovia to see the knife with which the legendary Rando killed “la serpiente groya,” rather than to see a rib from the dragon that killed Rando?<sup>34</sup> Greater mistakes have been made; and the plausible textual corruption, though semantically significant, may have been quite innocent, involving the substitution of *e* by *a*: from “que mató *e*l viejo Rando” to “que mató *a*l viejo Rando”(972d). Considering this hypothesis, then, it is not the case that Rando is killed by the dragon, but more logically, that Rando, the warrior (albeit pagan) kills the evil creature of Christian-pagan folklore.

Conjecture as all of the above may be, this study marks a first attempt at offering a holistic explanation of the six crucial terms of quatrain 972 a-d. Chata troya, serpiente groya, Rando, and Moya are placed within a plausible contextual framework. Past hypotheses have failed to provide us with a connective tissue, leaving us with more questions than answers as to how these enigmatic words may be related to each other. We know, for instance, that a processional dragon by the name of “Grouilly” did in fact exist. Thus it is very likely that “la serpiente groya” was the Archpriest’s Castilianization of the French dragon. We also know that the name Rando had a historical correlative in the Alemmani prince who, according to Marcellinus, invaded a Christian community in Mainz in the year 368. And further that in all likelihood “chata troya,” refers to the practice of slitting the noses of women accused of adultery. Obviously, many questions remain unanswered, though the one thing that is clear--beyond any doubt--is that far from being “un clerigo ajugarado,” the Archpriest was a man of great erudition.

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Mogancia, Mogantia, Moguntia, Mogontiacensis civ., Maguntia, Maguntinus, Magontia, and Magentiacum (243). Marcellinus uses Mogontiacum. Parenthetically, I also investigated the possibility that the Moya or *Maya* of the Gayoso MS (page 281 of the diplomatic edition of *LBA* by Criado del Val and Naylor 1965) may have been the Roman date (Kalend Maius) on which Rando attacked Mainz, but this turned out not to be case. Also considered was the phrase “segund dize en Moya” as a possible reference--not to a place but--to a text such as Vincent de Beauvais’ *Speculum Maius* (1964), or Roger Bacon’s *Opus Maius*. However, none of the numerous references to serpents and dragons in either the *Speculum* or the *Opus Maius* (1967) mention anything about Rando or “la serpiente groya”.

<sup>34</sup>Investigated was the possibility that the Archpriest had gone to Segovia to see some kind of ornament depicting a fight between a dragon and a soldier, such as the one extant in the cathedral of Jaén. For this the *Documentación Medieval de la Catedral de Segovia: 1115-1300*, María Asenjo Gonzalez’s *Segovia: La Ciudad y Su Tierra a Fines del Medioevo* (1986), and Diego de Colmenares’ *Historia de la Insigne Ciudad de Segovia* (1969) were consulted, to no satisfactory results.

In recent years, we have learned from H.A. Kelly and P. Cherchi that the author of *LBA* was a man well versed in civil and canon law; from F. Rico and R. Burkard in medieval elegiac comedy; and from Jenaro-MacLennan and Rico in Aristotelian thought. Lately O. For instance, Di Camillo has noted that the reference to *puntos* in lines 69c-d of *LBA* betrays the Archpriest's knowledge of Horace's *Ars Poetica*. The *puntos* of *LBA* correspond to the *punctos* of Horace's poetics, whereby a poet judged by an audience constituted by the five sectors of Roman society was given points in much the same way that points are awarded in Olympic competitions today. "This reasonable assumption necessarily implies that the author of *LBA* had to have had a certain familiarity with Horace..." (Di Camillo 1990 263); and we may well add, with early Roman history, French folklore, troubadour poetry<sup>35</sup>, and sundry other things.

If the Archpriest displays such a vast knowledge of medieval law, Aristotelian ideas, medieval Latin literature, familiarity with Horace's *Ars Poetica*, and more importantly still, with its commentaries, and if he also reworks into his poem notions from rare texts such as Marcellinus' *Rerum gestarum libri*, this indicates that we have barely begun to sound the depths of the Archpriest's learning, for as he has encouragingly been telling us all along, "en la obra de dentro ay tanto de fazer..." (1269c).

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<sup>35</sup>Brian Dutton has suggested the troubadour poetry of Guiraut Riquier and Bernart de Ventadorn as a likely source for the Archpriest's notion of "buen amor." (1970 103-104). He does, however, caution against a too hasty identification of the Provençal *fin' amor* with the more religious, moral notion of *LBA*'s *buen amor*. Yet, as Dutton points out, these varied conceptions of love may very well have been in the air in fourteenth century Spain, since both Bernart de Ventadorn and Riquier had once "frequented the court of Alfonso X" (1970 103). And though it may not be possible to know with any degree of certainty whether or not our author was familiar with the poetry of these troubadours, Bernard de Ventadour's poem, "Tant ai mo cor ple de joya" does suggest such a possibility. Note the close resemblance between the rhyming pattern of the Archpriest's quatrain (972a-d) and that of Bernard de Ventadour:

Tan tai mo cor de ple de joya  
 Tot me desnatura  
 Flor blanca, vermelh' e groya...  
 (Bernard de Ventadour 1966 72)

As such, a comparative structural analysis of Ruiz's and Bernard de Ventadour's poetry, rather than a thematic comparison, may prove much more fruitful and interesting with regards to the probable literary and poetic sources of *LBA*.

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