

María de Velasco (c. 1467-1549), Pinar's *Juego trobado*, the *Carajicomedia*, and the mystery of King Fernando's death

Roger Boase
(Queen Mary, University of London)

María de Velasco was the second of the women satirised as an old prostitute in the highly obscene *Carajicomedia* (st. 20, Varo 162), and was later a target for the more subtle humour of Francés de Zúñiga's *Crónica burlesca del Emperador Carlos V* (115). She was the foster-mother of St Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Jesuit order, who entered her large household in 1496 when he was five years old. The father of the future saint was Beltrán Yáñez de Oñaz y Loyola, an impoverished Basque relative of hers.

This court lady was a niece of Bernardino Fernández de Velasco, Constable of Castile, a daughter of Arnao de Velasco (d. c. 1492) and María de Guevara, and the wife of Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar (c. 1469-1517), Lord of Villavaquerín (1508), Chief Accountant of Castile, and governor of the fortresses of Arévalo, Madrigal, Olmedo and Trujillo. Juan Velázquez inherited from his father Licenciado Gutierre Velázquez de Cuéllar (d. c. 1493) the office of Chief Justice of Soria and the task of looking after the palace at Arévalo where Isabel de Portugal, Queen Isabel's mentally disturbed mother, lived until her death in August 1496. His mother, Catalina Franca (d. 1496), was a Portuguese lady in the service of Isabel de Portugal. He himself was born in the palace at Arévalo and educated at the royal court. During the lifetime of Queen Isabel, however, the governorship of the fortress of Arévalo was in the hands of Juan de Alvernáez (Diago Hernando 171).

After Queen Isabel's death, María de Velasco became the chief lady-in-waiting to King Fernando's second wife, Germana de Foix (1488-18 Oct 1538), daughter of Jean de Foix, Comte d'Étampes, and Marie d'Orléans, sister of Louis XII of France. Germana married Fernando in Valladolid on 19 October 1505 and was Queen of Aragon until the king died on 23 January 1516. By 1511 María de Velasco was such an influential figure at the court that Lucio Marineo Sículo wrote to her about his plans to write a book on the famous women of Spain (Lynn 229). It is doubtful that the book was ever written because two years later the king died. She then became the chief lady-in-waiting to Catherine of Habsburg (1507-1578), the youngest daughter of Philip the Fair and Juana *La Loca*. When, in 1525, Catherine married João III of Portugal, María de Velasco fostered her younger children among relatives and travelled to Portugal to enter Catherine's service (Batallas RAH I, 448), and here she was to remain for the rest of her life.

King Fernando's chief aim in marrying Germana de Foix was to produce a male heir to inherit the throne of Aragon and Naples. The marriage was consummated on 18 March 1506 at Dueñas. In 1509, three years later, Germana gave birth to a son in Valladolid, but the baby only lived for a few hours and died on 3 May. One of María de Velasco's main tasks seems to have been to attempt to restore the king's virility, and this is why she was selected to play a central role in the anonymous *Carajicomedia*, an obscene fantasy, completed shortly before or shortly after the king's death, parodying Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de Fortuna*. This work, which is ostensibly about Diego Fajardo's pursuit of a remedy for his impotence, is a satire that exposes the hypocrisy of the royal court and the corruption of church dignitaries, indirectly mocking the king's authority and caricaturing the court ladies as common prostitutes.¹ María de Velasco appears in stanza 20 as a dried-up old woman, over one hundred years of age,² who pretends

¹ Domínguez (2007-2008) identifies the old bawd María de Velasco [sic] as the wife of Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, but he does not mention any other court lady as a possible target of satire.

² If, as seems likely, the *Carajicomedia* was completed soon after 12 August 1517 when Juan Velázquez died, then María de Velasco would have been a widow in her fifties. After November 1516 her husband was in open revolt

that she is in the throes of childbirth and who restores Fajardo's penis to its former potency. She is portrayed as a procuress, who, like Celestina, is an expert in repairing hymens and in rejuvenating old men. Acting as Fajardo's guide to the prostitutes of Spain, she is the counterpart to the damsel personifying Providence in Juan de Mena's *Laberinto*. In fact she is one of the few women in this work whose identity is not disguised in any way, although her name is spelt 'Velasco'. In 1513, in Carrioncillo, near Medina del Campo, at the king's request, María de Velasco prepared a stew made of bull's testicles and certain medicines to cure his impotence. This potion seems to have permanently damaged King Fernando's health because he remained an invalid from this period onwards until his death at the age of sixty-four in an inn in the village of Madrigalejo near Cáceres in Extremadura on 23 January 1516 on his way from Guadalupe to Seville, and some people even said that María de Velasco had given him poison (Santa Cruz II, 280-81). Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal (1472-1528) says that María de Velasco and Isabel Fabra administered a potion on the advice of Germana (565) to increase the king's potency, and these rumours about his death are repeated almost verbatim in Argensola's continuation of Zurita's *Anales* (Argensola 52-53, 52 n127) and in Fray Prudencio Sandoval's history of the reign of the Emperor Charles V.³

When the king died he was suffering from a pain in the heart and hydropsy, or edema, which means that he had an abnormally high volume of serous fluid in his blood vessels and between the tissue cells, and although the swelling was reduced by diarrhoea, his health only deteriorated. Judging by the symptoms displayed, his death may have been caused by cantharides, or cantharidin (*cantharis vesicatoria*), made from the ground dust of the blister beetle (*lytta vesicatoria*), or Spanish fly (*cantárido*), a metallic green beetle found on the leaves of lime-trees and ash. This substance, which has been known since the time of Hippocrates, was widely used as an aphrodisiac in Spain and Italy at this time. It was highly toxic and was sometimes used as a poison or as an abortifacient. Andrés Laguna (581; bk VI, chap i), in his translation of Dioscorides, recounts how some men had died after taking an overdose of cantharides as an aphrodisiac.

against the authority of Charles of Habsburg and Cardinal Cisneros, which meant that she and her husband were out of favour and there was no reason to conceal her identity. This is a point also made by Domínguez (2015: 167). However, since most of the women who figure in the *Carajicomedia* are widows, it is likely it was completed after Juan Velázquez's death on 12 August 1517.

³ "Y a la verdad su enfermedad fué hidropesía con mal de corazón, aunque algunos quisieron decir que le habían dado yerbas, porque se le cayó parte de una quijada; pero no se pudo saber por cierto más de que muchos creyeron que aquel potaje que la reina le dió para hacerle potente, le postró la virtud natural" (Sandoval I, 63). These rumours are discussed in more detail in Frank Domínguez's recent book on the *Carajicomedia* (2015: 161-66).



Fig. 1: Blister beetle, *lytta vesicatoria*, photo by Siga, southern France, near Carcassonne (CC0-1.0-PD)

After King Fernando's death, the Archduke Charles, later Charles V, Queen Juana's eldest son, issued instructions from Brussels that Germana should be given the revenues and manorial rights of Arévalo, Madrigal and Olmedo, which until then had been enjoyed by Juan Velázquez, to replace the revenue of 30,000 ducats that she had formerly received from Naples. Juan Velázquez refused to hand over Arévalo to Germana, and from November 1516 until March 1517 the town was in a state of high military alert. Cardinal Cisneros considered the decision unjust, but he advised his friend to desist from rebellion. Juan Velázquez returned to Madrid in June, exhausted, out of favour, and heavily in debt, and he died there on 12 August 1517. His widow was left with debts amounting to 16 million mrs so that she was compelled to sell her properties in Valladolid and Arévalo (Diago Hernando 185).

There were rumours about Juan Velázquez's death as there had been about that of King Fernando. Fernández de Oviedo points an accusing finger at one of his servants, a native of Madrigal named Juan López, who left the house and was never seen again, after handing his master a jar of water with which to wash his hands and mouth. Juan Velázquez washed his hands and arms up to the elbow, and doused his head several times, although it was said that he did not drink any water. Half an hour later he developed a high fever and died five or six days later (Batallas RAH I, 448). One wonders if María de Velasco was in any way implicated. It was said that she had persuaded her husband to rebel against the royal orders because, having been improperly intimate with Queen Germana, she had later fallen out with her mistress.⁴ Fray Prudencio Sandoval informs us that Queen Isabel loved María de Velasco very much, and that María was such a close friend of Queen Germana that she could not be parted from her for a single day.⁵

⁴ "Mucho más pesó a Doña María de Velasco, su muger, que desamaba ya a la Reina Germana, habiendo sido poco antes su grande servidora y amiga más de lo que era honesto" (Sáinz de Baranda 385) (this caused his wife, Doña María de Velasco, much more sorrow, for she had now ceased to love Queen Germana, having been not long before her close servant and friend, much more than was considered decent).

⁵ "Fué muy hermosa, generosa y virtuosa, y muy querida de la reina doña Isabel. Con la reina doña Germana, tuvo tanta amistad que no podía estar un día sin ella; y doña María no se ocupaba en otra cosa sino en servirla y banquetearla costosamente" (Fita 504).

The court jester Francés de Zúñiga reports some amusing anecdotes about María de Velasco in his *Crónica burlesca*. In 1523 she was appointed lady-in-waiting to the Infanta Catharine of Austria, who had lived in total seclusion with her mother, Juana *la Loca*, in Tordesillas, and she accompanied the Infanta when she departed from Tordesillas on 3 January 1525 in order to marry João III of Portugal. On the way to Portugal they visited Doña María de Aragón, one of King Fernando's illegitimate daughters, at the Convent of Nuestra Señora de Gracia in Madrigal,⁶ and Catalina there received a gift of sugared cookies to take with her on the journey (Zúñiga 108-09). These were entrusted to the care of María de Velasco, and most of them were stolen by her grandson Juan Velázquez.

Later, in this satirical chronicle, there is a pathetic portrait of María de Velasco, seated on a rock beside the flooding waters of the river Tagus, which she had to cross en route to Portugal, complaining about her children and her financial problems. In a parody of the biblical story of King David and his rebellious son Absalom, she addresses her fourth son and heir Miguel de Velasco as Miguel Absalonazo, and begs her grandson Juan Velázquez, Commander of Monroy in the Order of Calatrava, not to gamble away her clothes. According to Francés de Zúñiga, she died of grief caused by the cost of marrying off her daughters, and was buried in Guernica in the Basque country, whence her corpse was transported to La Hinojosa outside Ciudad Rodrigo. In a parody of a speech made by Jesus to the women of Jerusalem as he is being led to the crucifixion, he reports that the following words were inscribed on María de Velasco's tomb: '¡*Mulieres de España, nolite flere super me sed super filios meos!*' (Zúñiga 115) (O women of Spain, do not weep over me, but over my children!).⁷ One also here thinks of Psalm 137: 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion'.

About fifty years after María de Velasco's death, Alfonso Velázquez de Velasco (c. 1560-c. 1620), a native of Valladolid who fought in Flanders and Italy, and who, to judge by his name, was one of her direct descendants, combined her literary persona with that of the go-between Celestina in his depiction of the main character of his play *La Lena, o el celoso* (Milan 1602).⁸ In a monologue forming the prologue to the work, Lena recounts how she had set up shop in Naples and had lived there for thirty years under the name of *La Buiza*. This, curiously enough, is the very name by which María de Velasco was known in Valladolid, according to the commentary on stanza 20 of the *Carajicomedia*:

Out of shame, the author does not make it known who the old woman is. But you should know that in the old days she was called María de Vellasco [sic]. On account of her iniquities that name perished. Now, speaking with reverence, she goes by, and is known as, La Buiza, a name which is certainly as fearful to hear in the town of Valladolid as that of Celestina. [...] Her life is so ignominious that I did not wish to set it down here in writing lest the treatise be further defiled. Enough!, for I swear to God, I believe that since the world began no greater prostitute, nor go-between, nor witch, with so many exposed blemishes, has ever been born, faults that she still retains to this day as an innkeeper on the banks of the Esgueva, and she herself is the signboard. [...] Among those born of women never did there arise a greater old whore than María La Buiza.⁹

⁶ Not 'el monasterio de Santa Clara', as mentioned in the text (Zúñiga 108),

⁷ "Conversus autem ad illas Iesus dixit: 'Filiae Ierusalem, nolite flere super me, sed super vos ipsas flete et super filios vestres, quoniam ecce venient dies, in quibus dicent: "Beatae steriles et ventres, qui non genuerunt, et ubera, quae non lactaverunt!"' (Luke 23: 28-29).

⁸ For a discussion of his literary sources, see Gutiérrez.

⁹ "Quien esta vieja sea, el autor, por vergonçoso, no lo declara; pero es de saber qu'ella se llamó en tempos antigos María de Vellasco. Ya por discurso de sus maldades pereció aquel nombre. Solamente agora se conosce y llama,

Buiza is a remote village in the province of León, the site of a hermitage, whence, it seems, some of María de Velasco's ancestors originated, and Esgueva is the river that runs through Valladolid, which is where the fictitious Lena retires and makes a living by running a small inn with four beds because, as she says, "siempre la ramera muere tercera, o mesonera" (the harlot always dies as a go-between or as an innkeeper).

If we turn now to stanza 17 of Pinar's *Juego trobado*, a card game in the form of a poem that was completed shortly before 22 August 1496 when the Infanta Juana, Archduchess of Austria, embarked for Flanders (Boase 2017: 1-7), we will find that María de Velasco's character is clearly evoked by the four elements that are allotted to her: an orchard of quinces, a peacock, the song 'Bive leda [si podrás]', and the proverb 'Don Ximeno por su mal vee el ageno':

De otra damu

Vos tomad un membrillar,
 porque sois dama discreta,
 pues la carne más perfeta
 se haze d'aquel lugar.
 Y ell ave será un pavón
 haziendo siempre la rueda,
 cantando con lindo son
 la canción de 'Bive leda'.
 Y el refrán, que 'Don Ximeno
 por su mal vee el ageno'.

(You must take an orchard of quinces / because you are a discreet lady, / since the most perfect sweet-meat / is manufactured in that place. / And the bird will be a peacock / always opening up its tail, / singing with a pretty sound / the song 'Live joyfully'. / And the proverb, that 'Don Ximeno, / to his detriment, sees the defects of others'.)

It would seem highly appropriate, bearing in mind what we know concerning María de Velasco's future role in endeavouring to revive King Fernando's sexual appetite and her love of banquets, that she be given an orchard of quinces. Quince paste, or quince cheese, 'dulce de membrillo', *marmelada* (Portuguese), *marmelo* (Galician), *codonyat* (Catalan), *cotognata* (Italian), a very thick deep red jelly, made with either sugar or honey, has long been prized, like partridge and peacock, as an aphrodisiac, and in ancient Greece this tree was sacred to Aphrodite. At the end of banquets organised by princes and aristocrats in sixteenth-century Europe, it was customary to pass round the table quince pastes known as quiddiny or cotoniack pressed into decorative seals. The word 'marmalade', from *marmelo*, Portuguese for quince, now used for any jam made from citrus fruit, entered the English language from Portuguese in the late fifteenth century, and London prostitutes in the seventeenth century were often called 'marmalade madams' because they would entice customers with their quince marmalade

hablando con reverencia, la Buyça, que cierto es en la villa de Valladolid tan temeroso de oír como el de Celestina [...] Su vida es tan ynominiosa que no la quise aquí poner, por no inficionar más el tratado. ¡Baste!, que juro a Dios que creo *ab inicio* no nació mayor puta, ni alcahueta, ni hechicera, sin más tachas descubiertas, con las cuales oy en día permanece en la ribera d'Esgueva mesonera, y ella es la tablilla. [...] *Inter natus* [sic] *mulierum non surrexit* major puta vieja que María la Buyça' (Varo 162-63). These last words are clearly a travesty of the words of Jesus: 'Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist' (Matt. 11: 11).

(Wilson 1991: 23, 147-151; Wilson 1999: 32; Hemery & Simblet 135-37). This is the real reason why, according to Alciato, Solon recommended the quince as a gift for newly-weds, not merely because it makes the breath sweet (López, *Emblema* 202). It was perhaps also as a wedding gift that quince-jelly, *carne de membrillo*, and a pea-hen were among several items sent to the poet Juan Álvarez Gato by Alonso Carrillo's lady-friend, mentioned in the poem "El presente que me distes", SV2-58c, ID 2745).¹⁰



Fig. 2: Francisco de Zurbarán, Still Life with Dish of Quince (Wikimedia Commons)

This whole line of reasoning is, however, insufficient as evidence that the quince was María de Velasco's special emblem. In my investigation of Pinar's *Juego trobado*, I discovered that one should expect to find at least three good reasons for assigning to each court lady a particular tree or bird. The answer lies concealed in Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Batallas y quinquagenas*. In his portrait of Juan de Velázquez, Fernández de Oviedo informs us that he wore a piece of jewellery made of beryl in honour of his wife:

I never saw Juan Velázquez when he was a lad; but I saw him when he was a fresh and handsome man, good humoured, and already stout and commanding; and he had evidently been fine-looking in his youth. And they say that he had been a noble jouster and a very gallant courtier. And he wore on his helmet an apple made of beryl, to avail himself of [the word] *veril* (for Velasco); because, as you already know, in Castile it is commonly the practice for the jousting *invención* to allude to the name of the lady for whom it is composed. And here the apple corresponds to María, and the beryl to Velasco. And the beryl was made of glass (*vidrio*), which is also appropriate. And on this same apple a corpse was drawn. And on the trappings of the helmet there were some skeletons, signifying death, which is the most certain thing that men have in this world, and an inscription that said: "Here you may see, mortal one, / what you are, mortal as you are".¹¹

¹⁰ The French poet François Villons was evidently fully aware of the erotic significance of this fruit: "Planter me fault aultres complans / et frapper en ung aultre coing" (Now I must plant my complaints elsewhere / and ply my tools in another corner). These lines were composed in 1456 (*Lais*, st. 4, Villons 12). There is here a pun on the word *coing* (quince), *coin* (corner), and *con* (cunt).

¹¹ "Johan Velázquez yo no le vi moço; pero vile fresco e hermoso ombre, de buen jesto, e ya gordo e de auctoridad; e mostrava aver sido quando mançebo de linda dispusiçión. E dezían que avía seydo gentil justador e muy galán cortesano. E trahía sobre el yelmo una mançana de veril, por aprovecharse de veril (por Velasco). Porque, como

Fernández de Oviedo then explains, citing from the encyclopedia of Bartholomaeus Anglicus,¹² that, according to Dioscorides, beryl, like glass, burns the hand of the person carrying it by magnifying the rays of the sun, and it is thus a stone imputed with the property of increasing conjugal love between husband and wife. The same information is found in the *Liber lapidum seu gemmis* by Marbod (c. 1035-1123), Bishop of Rennes: “This stone comes to us from the Indies. It is said that it promotes conjugal love and that it strengthens those who wear it. It burns, they say, the hand of those who hide it in the palm” (James 2013: 99).

It is almost certain, however, that Fernández de Oviedo made a pardonable mistake: the piece of jewellery worn by Juan Velázquez, made of green or yellow beryl, was intended to represent a quince, *membrilla*, not an apple, because in other *invenciones* the apple, *manzana*, signifies the name Ana rather than María. I would also suggest that if the word for beryl in Castilian is spelt with a *v*, *veril*, this surely indicates that María de Velasco was *viril*, virile, an adjective often applied to Queen Isabel as a term of approbation (Boase 1978: 112-13).

Finally, by assigning an orchard of quinces to María de Velasco, it would seem that Pinar is predicting that her husband will be offered the post of Comendador de La Membrilla del Tocón in the Order of Santiago, a fortress in Castilla-La Mancha, near Ciudad Real, although it was not until 1507 that this office was conferred on him by King Fernando, when his son Gutierre Velázquez (c. 1484-1517) was assured the right to succeed to La Membrilla. The father apparently renounced his right to this office between 1511 and 1515 (Porrás Arboledas 1997: 336; Diago Hernando 170 n36).

Turning now to the peacock assigned to María de Velasco, this bird no doubt conveys this lady’s vain and narcissistic character and her ability to flirt and display her beauty and finery, and may also allude to her love of fine banquets, because as we know from Platina’s famous cook-book, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine*, this bird was often an eye-catching centrepiece standing upright on iron rods, and sometimes covered with gold leaf to make it even more magnificent.¹³ But here again we have to find an explanation that is specifically applicable to the lady in question, and the phrase ‘haziendo siempre la rueda’ provides the key. The idiom ‘hacer la rueda’, which means to court or to woo someone, derives from the courtship ritual of the peacock when it opens up its splendid tail (*rueda*), and this phrase occurs twice in poems that I believe were addressed by Nicolás de Guevara to María de Guevara, María de Velasco’s mother.¹⁴

In the third stanza of ‘El seso turvio pensando’ (11CG-210) (The mind turbulent with thought), one of his finest poems, Guevara writes:

Y las aves, dulces, ledas,
cantarán sus alboradas,
y, a vista de sus amadas,
harán los pavos las ruedas.
Pues a mí, triste, no queda
sino suerte

ya sabéys, en Castilla es cosa muy usada que la invención se conforme con el nombre de la dama por quien se invinçiona. E aquí quadra la mançana con María, y el veril con Velasco. Y ese veril es vidro, que también es a propósito. Y en la misma mançana debuxada una muerte. E por las dependencias del yelmo o baúl, çiertas calaveras humanas, significando la muerte, que es la más çierta cosa que los ombres tienen en este mundo, y una letra que dezía: ‘Aquí puedes ver, mortal, / quién tú eres siendo tal’” (Batallas RAH I, 452).

¹² In citing *De proprietatibus rerum*, bk 16, chap 21, Fernández de Oviedo was almost certainly using the Spanish translation by Fray Vicente de Burgos (Bartholomaeus Anglicus 1494).

¹³ This work was completed in Naples by 1465 and printed in many editions from 1470 onwards. Platina informs us that the meat of this bird is in fact only moderately nourishing and increases melancholy (242-45, 274-77).

¹⁴ It should be noted that the poet Guevara had a daughter, also named María de Guevara, who was in service of Queen Isabel. She was paid 10,000 mrs for her wages on 30 April 1499 (Baeza II, 415).

de, sin verte, ver la rueda
de mi muerte.

(And the sweet and merry birds / will sing their dawn-songs, / and within the sight of their loved ones, / the peacocks will raise their tails. / But to me there remains, sadly, / only the good fortune, / if I don't see you, of seeing / the wheel of my death.)

The poet's sense of solitude and despair is intensified by the joyful sound of the birds, serenading their partners, and by the sight of peacocks displaying their fantails. If he does not see the lady whom he loves, he predicts that he will see another kind of *rueda*, his own downfall,¹⁵ and this metaphor, evoking the idea of the Wheel of Fortune, links up with the last stanza about rowing in a dangerous sea, suggesting that what the poet had in mind was the Sea of Fortune.

Guevara condenses the eight stanzas of this poem into one short *esparsa* (11CG-215), in which he again mentions the peacocks and blames himself for bringing about his own misfortune:

Las aves andan volando,
cantando canciones ledas,
las verdes hojas temblando,
las aguas dulces sonando,
los pavos hazen las ruedas.
Yo, sin ventura amador,
contemplando mi tristura,
deshago, por mi dolor,
la gentil rueda d'amor,
que hize por mi ventura.

(The birds go flying, / singing their merry songs, / the green leaves are trembling, / the sweet waters babbling, / the peacocks are raising their tales. / I, the unfortunate lover, / contemplating my sadness, / undo through my sorrow / the graceful wheel of love / that I made by my good fortune.)

In 'El seso turvijo pensando' (11CG-210, st. 4, lines 25-28), Guevara hints, as Pinar so often does, that his poems contain hidden messages that need to be deciphered:

Y verás cómo s'encienden
las mis coplas en tormentos,
tan altas en pensamientos
que muy pocos las entienden.

(And you will see how my verses / are catching fire in torments, / in thoughts that are so lofty / that very few understand them.)

The word *rueda* and the phrase *ver la rueda* offer a further clue to the identity of the lady to whom the poem is addressed. Rueda de Velasco is a place in Asturias, whence one branch of

¹⁵ González Cuenca (II, 236 n1) suggests that *rueda* here means 'ruin' or 'downfall', as in the verb *ruedar* in another poem by Guevara, "¡Ó desastrada fortuna!" (11CG-211, line 11), but, bearing in mind the last two lines of "Las aves andan volando", one should not discard the idea of the Wheel of Fortune.

the Velasco family was said to have originated: ‘And those who owned and now own Rueda de Velasco have always been called and are called de Velasco’.¹⁶ The line “bogaré en las altas ondas” (I shall row in the high waves) (line 60) evokes the idea of sailing, *hacer vela*, and the first two syllables of Velasco. Note that there are two other significant words that are found in stanza 17 of the *Juego trobado* and in both the passages by Guevara cited above: the verb *cantar* and the adjective *leda*, suggesting that María de Velasco enjoyed singing and taking part in festivities.



Fig. 3: Peacock Feast, © Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, from Jean Wauquelin, *La geste ou histoire du noble roy Alixandre, roy de Macedonne*, commissioned by Jean de Bourgogne, comte d’Estampes, Français MS 9342, c. 1455, fol. 55^v

The words ‘Vive leda’, or ‘Bive leda’, the opening half-line of a famous *canción* by the Galician poet Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, beginning with *V* for Velasco, obviously convey the same message about María de Velasco’s fun-loving character, with the warning in the unquoted words ‘si podrás’, ‘if you can’, that the flesh, like the ripe quince, will one day rot, ‘pudrirás’. But there is a more important reason why Pinar selected this *canción*. He is surely alluding to the Greek legend of Leda who was raped by Zeus in the form of a swan. This was a popular theme in Italian Renaissance art even before Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. The allusion here is, I believe, to Cardinal Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (*cisne*, swan + *eros*, love), a friend and patron, *padrón*, to María de Velasco’s mother and her family, a person who, like the poet Rodríguez del Padrón, was a member of the Franciscan Order, and who incorporated the swan into his personal coat-of-arms. The *canción* ‘Vive leda si podrás’ was supposedly composed by Juan Rodríguez del Padrón when he bade farewell to his wife before setting out to become a monk in Jerusalem, and María de Velasco’s husband, also named Juan, may have had similar thoughts of taking holy orders.

¹⁶ “Y siempre han llamado y llaman de Velasco los que han tenido y tienen aora la Rueda de Velasco” (Fernández de Velasco, *Origen de la Yllustrísima Casa de Velasco*, fol. 4^r) (<http://www.creloc.net/admin/archivo/docdow.php?id=29>).

Guevara uses the same archaic adjective *leda*, from *laeta*, Latin ‘happy’, in “¡O desastrada ventura!” (O disastrous fortune!) (11CG-211, lines 69-80), to describe the lady whom he loved joyfully dancing beneath an arbour of climbing roses:

Qu'en tal tiempo hast' agora
me hirieron crudos males
bien allí do mi señora
vi dançar so los rosales.

A la qual vi yo muy leda
con las damas y sus bríos,
en las fuentes y en los ríos
de la muy verde arboleda,
donde vi bien acordados
muchos dulces isturmentos,
con los quales vi mezclados
mis cativos pensamientos.

(From that time until today / harsh injuries struck me / there where I saw my lady dancing under the roses; / whom I saw very merry / with the ladies and their verve, / among the fountains and streams / of the very green arbour, / where I saw many well-tuned / sweet instruments of music, / amongst which I saw mingled / my imprisoned thoughts.)

Guevara, as we know from the rubric of another poem with the same opening line (11CG-232), first set eyes on this lady, whom he remembers with Petrarchan melancholy and nostalgia, at the royal monastery of Guadalupe, near Cáceres in Extremadura, a place that Queen Isabel often visited and which she called ‘my paradise’. Guevara must have been well acquainted with Juan Velázquez’s father Licenciado Gutierre Velázquez de Cuéllar, because, since the period when Isabel was an unmarried princess (1464-68), he had been a visitor to Arévalo, where the Velázquez family looked after the affairs of the Queen Mother. Hence it is likely, especially in the light of stanza 17 of the *Juego trobado*, that María de Velasco’s mother was the object of Guevara’s youthful affections.

The words ‘Vive leda’, or ‘Bive leda’, the opening half-line of a famous *canCIÓN* by the Galician poet Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, beginning with *V* for Velasco, obviously convey the same message about María de Velasco’s fun-loving character, with the warning in the unquoted words ‘si podrás’, ‘if you can’, that the flesh, like the ripe quince, will one day rot, ‘pudrirás’. But there is a more important reason why Pinar selected this *canCIÓN*. He is surely alluding to the Greek legend of Leda, who was raped by Zeus in the form of a swan. This was a popular theme in Italian Renaissance art even before Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. The allusion here is to Cardinal Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (*cisne*, swan + *eros*, love), a friend and patron, *padrón*, to María de Velasco’s mother and her family, a person who, like the poet Rodríguez del Padrón, was a member of the Franciscan Order, and who incorporated the swan into his personal coat-of-arms. The *canCIÓN* ‘Vive leda si podrás’ was supposedly composed by Juan Rodríguez del Padrón when he bade farewell to his wife before setting out to become a monk in Jerusalem, and María de Velasco’s husband, also named Juan, may have had similar thoughts of taking holy orders.

Guevara uses the same archaic adjective *leda*, from *laeta*, Latin ‘happy’, in ‘¡O desastrada ventura!’ (O disastrous fortune!) (11CG-211, lines 69-80), to describe the lady whom he loved joyfully dancing beneath an arbour of climbing roses:

Qu'en tal tiempo hast' agora
 me hirieron crudos males
 bien allí do mi señora
 vi dançar so los rosales.

A la qual vi yo muy leda
 con las damas y sus bríos,
 en las fuentes y en los ríos
 de la muy verde arboleda,
 donde vi bien acordados
 muchos dulces isturmentos,
 con los quales vi mezclados
 mis cativos pensamientos.

(From that time until today / harsh injuries struck me / there where I saw my lady / dancing under the roses; / whom I saw very merry / with the ladies and their verve, / among the fountains and streams / of the very green arbour, / where I saw many well-tuned / sweet instruments of music, / amongst which I saw mingled / my imprisoned thoughts.)

Guevara, as we know from the rubric of another poem with the same opening line (11CG-232), first set eyes on this lady, whom he remembers with Petrarchan melancholy and nostalgia, at the royal monastery of Guadalupe, near Cáceres in Extremadura, a place that Queen Isabel often visited and which she called 'my paradise'. Guevara must have been well acquainted with Juan Velázquez's father Licenciado Gutierre Velázquez de Cuéllar, because, since the period when Isabel was an unmarried princess (1464-68), he had been a visitor to Arévalo, where the Velázquez family looked after the affairs of the Queen Mother. Hence it is likely, especially in the light of stanza 17 of the *Juego trobado*, that María de Velasco's mother was the object of Guevara's youthful affections.

Finally, we have to consider why the proverb "Don Ximeno por su mal vee el ajeno" was assigned to María de Velasco. There are various versions of this proverb about the effect that other people's troubles may have on oneself, ranging from sympathy to indifference and even to *schadenfreude*: 'Don Ximeno, por su mal sabe el ajeno' (Correas 238; O'Kane no. 151) (Don Ximeno, to his own detriment, knows another's misfortune); 'Mal ageno no pone consuelo' (García de Castro 207; Nuñez II, 335) (Another's trouble is no consolation), or its opposite 'Mal ajeno pone consuelo', or 'Mal de muchos gozo es', or 'conorte es' (Correas 482-83; García de Castro 2006: 208). This proverb is found in Santillana's and Hernán Núñez's collections of proverbs in the form 'Domingo Ximeno, por su mal vido el ageno' (Bizzarri 85, no. 201; Nuñez I, no. 2304, fol. 37r),¹⁷ and is cited in the card game poem *En Ávila por la A* (ID 2304, LB2-200) under the letter X: 'Ximeno, por su mal, vió el ageno' (lines 417-18) (Ximeno to his detriment saw another's misfortune). In this Navarrese *Juego* the name of the town where the king is a guest is Xixena, the royal monastery of Sijena at Villanueva, near Huesca, and he listens to Torre¹⁸ singing *Xaboneros de Sevilla* (Soapmakers of Seville), which is a reference to the ballad usually known as *La Prisión de don Juan de la Cerda*, 'Nunca viera jaboneros tan bien vender su jabón' (ID 2319), about the beautiful Doña María Coronel, who in 1357 took refuge in the Convent of Santa Clara in Seville to escape the attentions of King Pedro *el Cruel*, after her husband, Juan de la Cerda (1327-1357), Chief Constable of Seville

¹⁷ Núñez comments: "Otros dizen: Ximeno, con su mal non vee el ageno".

¹⁸ Probably Fernando de la Torre, whose father was Carlos de Viana's tutor (Rodado Ruiz 79).

and Lord of Gibraleón, had been imprisoned and murdered on the king's orders, and who, when the king came to seize her, preserved her chastity by pouring boiling oil over her body so that she looked like a leper (Ortiz de Zúñiga II, 145-48).

Don Ximeno almost certainly alludes to Cardinal Ximénez de Cisneros (1436-1517), who was a firm supporter of María de Velasco's family and one of her husband's close friends. By citing this proverb, Pinar seems to be hinting that Cardinal Cisneros was troubled by the moral corruption that he witnessed in both the royal court and the Church. Furthermore, bearing in mind the legend of Leda and the swan, and the ballad about María Coronel, there is possibly the suggestion of a liaison between King Fernando and María de Velasco. The ballad may also point to the Sevillian origins of the Velázquez family: Seville was renowned for the manufacture of soap, and hence the terms *jabonero* and *sevillano* were often used as synonyms; and Juan Velázquez's grandfather, Doctor Ortón Velázquez, was an alderman of Seville.

Cardinal Cisneros was keen to promote the religious education of women and in 1495 was charged by the Catholic Kings with the task of reforming all female convents in Spain (Lehfeldt 162-64). One of his protégées was Beatriz de Silva, formerly a lady-in-waiting to Queen Isabel's mother in Arévalo, who founded the Order of the Immaculate Conception in Toledo, which, in 1494, was placed under the Rule of Saint Clare. Another of his protégées was María de Velasco's mother, María de Guevara, who had been a lady-in-waiting to Queen Isabel's mother for forty-two years. After the death of the Queen Mother, on 15 August 1496, and with the support of Cardinal Cisneros, this lady dedicated herself to a life of piety and eventually entered the Franciscan order in 1510. María de Velasco's sister, Sancha de Velasco, Abbess of the convent in Medina de Pomar, was probably also one of the cardinal's protégées.

The obvious question is whether the information that can be gleaned from my analysis of the four lots, or *suertes*, allotted to María de Velasco may shed any further light on the intentions of the anonymous author of the *Carajicomedia*. It would seem that the chief reason for satirising retired court ladies, such as María de Velasco, as common prostitutes was their association with Cardinal Cisneros and the reforming zeal of the Observant Franciscans, whose growing influence in court and university circles was much resented. The majority of the women whom I have identified in this misogynistic, anti-clerical and anti-monarchic work were widows who had sought refuge in convents, or were engaged as nurses in hospitals run by the religious orders (Boase 2017: chap. 6). By portraying these women as primarily the victims and gratifiers of the sexual appetites of the clergy, it seems to have been the author's intention to expose the moral depravity and hypocrisy that prevailed in the Church and in society as a whole. It should be noted that Stanzas 1-92 of the *Carajicomedia* are mockingly attributed to Fray Bugeo Montesino, whom we are told has just finished correcting 'el Cartuxano', a clear reference to the translation of Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*, done by the Franciscan friar Ambrosio Montesino (c. 1448-1514), Queen Isabel's favourite confessor (Ibid. 439-440). Since Bugía, Bujía, or Bijayah, whence the Spanish word *bujía* and French *bougie* (wax candle) derive, is an ancient town in present-day Algeria that was conquered by Spanish troops financed by Cardinal Cisneros and the archbishopric of Toledo in 1510, one reason why the author gave Fray Montesino the nickname Bugeo was to remind his readers of the role played by the Franciscans in this military adventure. Stanzas 93-117 are attributed to Fray Juan de Hempudia, another Franciscan and a devotee of the Virgin Mary: Fray Juan de Ampudia (c. 1450-1531/34) was a popular preacher of Valladolid, much favoured by ladies of the aristocracy (406), and the author of two short treatises of religious instruction.

Through his association with these women and his reputation for womanising, King Fernando is also obviously a target for ridicule. Since, however, it would have been too dangerous, even after his death, to assign the role of an impotent pimp to the king, this role is played by Diego Fajardo. One can see the obvious parallel between the two: Fernando had, in addition to his four legitimate daughters and his one legitimate son, four illegitimate children,

three daughters and a son; Fajardo, we are told, wished to spread his offspring across the land (“que no dexa casa / que no tenga cuna”, st. 7). Both were womanisers who were anxious about their loss of sexual prowess and were obsessed by the thought of not leaving a male heir. It is for this reason that both his mistress Aldonza Roig de Iborre i Alemany (1452–1516) and his second wife Germana de Foix figure in the work.

‘Ibora Beteta’ (st. 81), who is at the centre of the group of ten Valencian sibyls, can be identified as King Fernando’s Catalan mistress Aldonza Roig de Iborre, who married Francisco Galceran Castre-Pinós, VII Viscount of Ebol, and whose illegitimate daughter (by the king) Juana married Bernardino de Velasco, Constable of Castile. It is said in the commentary that she is a man. I suggest that this is a reference not merely to her virile character and appearance, but to the fact that she used to accompany the king disguised as a man. It is also said that she has the ‘noblest name’, and we know that the king’s mistress came from a noble family in Cervera near Lleida. Parodying a sentence from a textbook on grammar by Antonio de Nebrija about the rule that the masculine gender should predominate in the plural form, the anonymous author makes the following pronouncement: *in omnibus de nobiliori debet fieri relacio* [sic] (in all one should agree with what is nobler).¹⁹ He adds that he has placed a *b* before Iborra, her nobler name. This is not merely because she is a treacherous viper (*bíbora*, or *víbora*) but also, I suggest, because she is a *beata*, a lady living in pious retirement, and a viscountess (*bizcondesa*). The poet was no doubt titillated by the idea of combining the Greek prefix *bi* (two) with *teta* (nipple).²⁰ The Betetas were a well-known family of Sephardic origin. For example, Gonzalo de Beteta, Alcalde de Soria, was a knight of Santiago, and the first Spanish ambassador to the Vatican in 1480.

The celebrated and very plump courtesan named ‘La Napolitana’ (st. 34) who is married to a groom (*moço d’espuelas*) in the service of Queen Isabel clearly refers to Germana de Foix: Fernando disguised himself as a groom when he first entered Castile to marry Princess Isabel, and Germana had formerly been Queen of Naples. Her northern ancestry is indicated by the word *aquilonal*, from *aquilón*, the North Wind, a synonym, so we are told, for her large rump, a water-canal that produces wind, and perhaps also alluding to her large aquiline nose. The author’s comment “es una de las nueve de la fama” offers another clue to her identity. The concept of ‘les Neufs Preux’, or ‘Nine Worthies’, three pagans, three Jews and three Christians, representing the ideals of chivalry in the three main phases of European history, was first conceived by Jacques de Longuyon in his *Voeux du paon* in 1312, and it is significant that María de Velasco, who loved good food and finery and was Germana’s favourite lady-in-waiting, was assigned a peacock by Pinar in his *Juego*, a bird symbolising vanity and gluttony. In the interests of symmetry, Eustache Deschamps later in the fourteenth century introduced nine female warrior counterparts, but these usually end with Penthesilea, the Amazon Queen, and are not linked in a systematic way to historical periods. The key word here is *fama*, the Spanish translation of the French *foi*, phonetically identical to the name Foix.

It is to be hoped that this research will illustrate the importance of viewing history within the context of literature. This is especially true of poetry with a ludic or satirical function, such

¹⁹ See *Quotiens [. . .] semper de nobiliori fit relatio*, in the section *De ordine partium orationis* in the third edition of Nebrija’s *Introductiones latinae* (Logroño: Arnau Guillén de Brocar, c. 1505, and Barcelona: Juan Luschnier, 1505), and *Tractatus octavus: De modo construendi*, in Daniel Sisón’s *Compendium grammaticale* (Zaragoza: Juan Hurus, 1990), fols 15v–16v, prepared for his pupil Francisco de Luna, cited in Asenjo 2010: 25 n42; cf. Gutiérrez 224. The same rule is applied in Spanish and French. The Jesuit Dominique Bouhours summed up this rule in the same misogynistic fashion in 1675: “Lorsque les deux genres se rencontrent, il faut que le plus noble l’emporte”.

²⁰ Compare this with the feminine shape of the musical sign of *b* flat discussed with reference to an *invención* by Rodrigo Girón, addressed to his mistress (Boase 2017: 496).

as the anonymous *Carajicomedia* and Pinar's *Juego trobado*, which, as I have demonstrated, are both repositories of hidden or secret knowledge.



Fig. 4: Germana de Foix, when Duchess of Calabria, daughter of Jean de Foix and Marie d'Orléans, by Antonio Bisquert, © Museo de Bellas Artes, Valencia, 2016; photo: Francisco Alcántara Benavent

Works Cited

- Argensola, Bartolomé Leonardo. *Anales de Aragón* [continuation of Zurita's *Anales*]. II. Javier Ordovás Esteban ed. Zaragoza: Institución 'Fernando el Católico', 2013.
- Asenjo, Julio Alonso. "Notas a la glosa de la copla XXVIII de la *Carajicomedia*." *Lemir* 14 (2010): 1-27.
- Baeza, Gonzalo de. *Cuentas de Gonzalo de Baeza, tesorero de Isabel la Católica*. Antonio de la Torre & E. A. de la Torre eds. Madrid: CSIC, 1955-1956. 2 vols.
- Bartholomaeus Anglicus. *De proprietatibus rerum*. Fray Vicente de Burgos trans. as *Libro de las propiedades de todas las cosas*. Toulouse: Henricus Meyer de Alemania, 1494.
- Batallas RAH: Fernández de Oviedo, Gonzalo. *Batallas y quinquagenas*. Juan Pérez de Tudela y Bueso ed. Madrid: RAH, 1983-2002. 3 vols.
- Bizzarri, Hugo Oscar ed. Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana. *Refranes que dizen las viejas tras el fuego* Kassel: Reichenberger, 1995 [Seville: Jacobo Cromberger, 1508].
- Boase, Roger. *The Troubadour Revival: A Study of Social Change and Traditionalism in Late Medieval Spain*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.
- . *Secrets of Punar's Game: Court Ladies and Courtly Verse in Fifteenth-Century Spain*. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Correas, Gonzalo. *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales (1627)*. Louis Combet. Ed. Rev. Robert Jammes & Maïte Mir-Andreu. Madrid Castalia, 2000.
- Diago Hernando, Máximo. "El Contador Mayor Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar: ascenso y caída de un influyente cortesano en la Castilla de comienzos del siglo XVI." *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 83 (2009): 157-85.
- Domínguez, Frank A. "Carajicomedia and Fernando el Católico's Body: The Identities of Diego Fajardo and María de Vellasco." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 84 (2007-2008): 725-44; 85: 397-416.
- . *Carajicomedia: Parody and Satire in Early Modern Spain, with an Edition and Translation of the Text*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis, 2015.
- Fita, Fidel. "San Ignacio de Loyola en la corte de los Reyes de Castilla. Estudio crítico." *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 17 (1890): 492-520.
- Fernández de Velasco, Pedro, Duke of Frías, c. 1550. *Origen de la Yllustrísima Casa de Velasco por Don Pedro Fernández de Velasco, condestable de Castilla, duque de Frías [d. 1559]*. Biblioteca Nacional de España, 16th century [c. 1550]. Ms 3238 (<http://www.creloc.net/admin/archivo/docdow.php?id=29>).
- Galíndez de Carvajal, Lorenzo. *Anales breves del reinado de los Reyes Católicos D. Fernando y Doña Isabel*. Cayetano Rosell ed. In *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla*, III, BAE, 70. Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1878. 533-65.
- García de Castro, Diego. *Seniloquium: Refranes que dicen los viejos*. Fernando Cantalpieira Erostarbe & Juan Moreno Uclés eds. Valencia: Anexos de la Revista Lemir, 2006.
- González Cuenca, Joaquín ed. Hernando del Castillo. *Cancionero general*. Nueva Biblioteca de Erudición y Crítica, 25. Madrid: Castalia, 2004. 5 vols.
- Gutiérrez, Jesús, 1992. "El Celoso, entre *La Celestina* y *El Decamerone*." In *Actas del X Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, Barcelona 21-26 agosto de 1989*. 1: 233-40.
- Gutiérrez, Marco A. "Influencias, adaptaciones y plagios en Nebrija: el capítulo *De ordine partium orationis de las Introducciones latinae*." *Península: Revista de Estudios Ibéricos* 4 (2007): 215-34.
- Gutiérrez Coronel, Diego. *Historia genealógica de la casa de Mendoza*. Ángel González Palencia ed. Biblioteca Conquense, 3-4. Cuenca: CSIC & Ayuntamiento, 1946. 2 vols.

- Hemery, Gabriel, & Sarah Simblet. *The New Sylva: A Discourse of Forest and Orchard Trees for the Twenty-First Century*. London: A & C Black, 2014.
- James, Richard. *The Medieval Natural World*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Lehfeltdt, Elizabeth A. *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.
- López, Diego. *Declaración magistral sobre las Emblemas de Andrés Alciato*. Nájera: Juan de Mongastón, 1615.
- Lynn, Caro. *A College Professor of the Renaissance: Lucio Marineo Sículo among the Spanish Humanists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937.
- Núñez, Hernán. *Refranes o proverbios en romance* [Salamanca 1555]. Louis Combet, Julia Sevilla Muñoz, Germán Conde Tarrió & Josep Guia i Marín eds. Madrid: Guillermo Blázquez, 2001. 2 vols.
- O’Kane, Eleanor S. *Refranes y frases proverbiales españolas de la Edad Media*. Anejos del BRAE, 2. Madrid: RAE, 1959.
- Ortiz de Zúñiga, Diego. *Anales eclesiásticos y seculares de la muy noble y muy leal Ciudad de Sevilla*. Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1795. Vol. 2.
- Platina, Bartholomaeus. *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* [Venice: Laurentius de Aquila and Sibyllinus Umber, 1475]. Mary Ella Milham ed. Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts, 1998.
- Porras Arboledas, Pedro A. “El secretario real Francisco Ramírez de Madrid. Apuntes para un biografía.” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, Serie III 8 (1995): 169-81.
- . *El Orden de Santiago en el siglo XV*. Madrid: Dykinson, 1997.
- Rodado Ruiz, Ana María. *Juegos trovados de los cancioneros cuatrocentistas*. PMHRS 61. Queen Mary, University of London, 2012.
- Sáinz de Baranda, Pedro ed. *Cronicón de Valladolid*. CODOIN, 13. Madrid: Viuda de Calero, 1848.
- Sandoval, Fray Prudencio de. *Historia de la vida y hechos del Emperador Carlos V [...]*. Ed. Carlos Seco Serrano ed. BAE, 80-82. Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1955-1956. 3 vols.
- Santa Cruz, Alonso de. *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo. Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1951.
- Varo, Carlos ed. *Carajicomedia: texto facsimilar*. Madrid: Playor, 1981.
- Velázquez de Velasco, Alfonso. *La Lena, o el celoso*. Milán: Herederos de Pacifico Poncio et Ian Bautista Picalia, 1602.
- Villons, François. *Le Lai Villons et les poèmes varies*. Albert Henry & Jean Rychner eds. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1977.
- Wilson, C. Anne. “Banqueting Stuff”: *The Fame and Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991.
- . *The Book of Marmalade*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Zúñiga, Francés de. *Crónica burlesca del Emperador Carlos V*. Diane Pamp de Avalor-Arce ed. Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1981.